

How do career fairs fit into the recruiting process?

- For some employers, this is their only presence on Grounds to conduct recruiting and meet potential candidates.
- Other employers use career fairs as a part of their overall recruiting efforts at UVA. Taking this opportunity to make face-to-face contact with employers can make the difference as to whether you are included on their on-Grounds interview schedule. This is an additional opportunity to indicate your interest in these firms.
- Some companies will collect resumes; others might simply collect contact information of interested students via an electronic form.

BEFORE THE FAIR

Prepare your resume

- Have your resume reviewed! You are encouraged to have your resume reviewed by a variety of individuals, but be sure to include Commerce Career Services!
- Other helpful reviewers are employers on Grounds for Employer-in-Residence programs, alumni in your industries of choice and any mentors you may have.
- See the [Resume Writing Tips Handout](#) as well as the [Resume & Cover Letter Samples Handout](#) to get you started.
- Be sure your resume highlights the results of your work and is not just a job description for your experiences or roles. What impact have you made and what outcomes can you highlight?

Do your research

- Know which organizations will be represented. Thoroughly researching the organizations prior to meeting company representatives at the fair will enable you to ask informed questions and respond to questions with confidence.
- Commerce Career Services provides a searchable database of the employers attending the Career Fair on Handshake. Click on “Events”, then “Fair Search” and choose “Commerce Career Day”. There is a button to link you to all employers scheduled to attend.

Practice your “elevator pitch”

- Your elevator pitch is your introduction to the company representatives and should be well rehearsed and tailored to highlight your strengths.
- The pitch shouldn't be longer than 60 seconds and should reflect your unique personality, interests, and skills set.
- Avoid statements such as “I know I don't have a lot of experience yet” or “I'm really not sure what I want to do” as they express a lack of confidence or lack of direction.
- Frame your experiences in a positive way and come visit a CCS adviser for specific feedback on your approach.

Practice answering commonly asked questions

- This practice will not only prove helpful at the career fair, but for interviewing as well!
- Practice answering questions out loud and/or with a friend to ensure a strong delivery.

- Sample questions include “What can you tell me about yourself?” “What kinds of positions are you looking for?” and “Why are you here?”

Set yourself up for success!

- Get plenty of rest, eat well, and plan to arrive with plenty of time to take advantage of the event.
- Plan to travel light to the event. Many of the companies will offer you swag, so it may be helpful to have a bag to store your things. Avoid bringing a laptop, books, or other heavy materials to carry unless you must come straight from class.
- If you are not as comfortable in situations with heavy interaction and crowds of people, plan accordingly so you can take breaks during the day as needed.
- Be sure to practice great personal hygiene, especially since you will be speaking with so many people in proximity. Fresh breath cannot be overemphasized!

DURING THE FAIR

Dress professionally

- You will succeed in creating the impression that you are serious about your future employment opportunities if you dress in appropriate business formal attire.
- Aim for clean, pressed, and professional. Avoid strong perfumes/colognes and distracting accessories or hairstyles.
- Refer to [Dressing for the Interview: Women](#) and [Dressing for the Interview: Men](#) on the CCS website for more information.

Bring hard copies of your resume

- With roughly 100 companies being represented at Career Day, having enough resumes to last through the day is essential.
- Not all companies will collect hard copies of resumes, nor will you be interested in sharing your resume with all companies. Draw on your research of the attendee list to inform the number you choose to print.
- Keep your resumes in a padfolio or folder of some kind. Padfolios with the McIntire logo can be purchased at the University Bookstore.

Use your time effectively

- Bring a list of the companies you want to meet. Prioritize them. Don't meet with your top choices first. Try out your greeting and introduction on two or three that are nearer to the bottom of your list so that you will have a chance to practice before you approach your top-choice employers. You can approach companies you have not researched, though you'll want to avoid asking what the company does. If you have the time, do a quick search on your phone to glean relevant information, actively listen as the company representative speaks to other students, or peruse the company handouts to find out more.

Approach employers

- The purpose of a career fair is for students and employers to meet and exchange information. Carry yourself with professionalism and remember that first impressions begin from the moment you approach an employer.
- Make that moment count! Walk up confidently, say hello, introduce yourself, and shake the representative's hand. Be sure to establish eye contact and smile.

- Plan to give your elevator pitch after you introduce yourself, but be conversational and watch the recruiter for cues.
- The more recruiters you speak with, the more skilled you will become at these first introductions.
- Have one or two questions in mind for each employer. The questions should reflect the research you have done on the employer and your interest. Show them that you have a purpose in being there.
- Ask questions about their hiring plans, employee training programs/professional development opportunities, their organization's upcoming projects, goals, or future areas of growth, the organizational culture and environment, and what skills are valued most at the company. Be able to relate your experiences and skills to the position and company.
- Representatives at the fair are often alumni, so take that opportunity to ask about their individual experiences and advice as a McIntire and/or UVA graduate.
- If you are waiting in line to speak with a recruiter at a booth, do not be afraid to discreetly listen in on the conversations taking place before your turn in order to gain additional insight and avoid repeating the same question.
- Respect the recruiters time and don't overstay your welcome! There are likely to be other students waiting to speak to the company representatives, and monopolizing the recruiter will reflect poorly on you. Take full advantage of your time by being well prepared, showing your enthusiasm, and thanking the representative for his or her time.
- Don't attempt to network with employers as they are packing up or leaving the fair.

AFTER THE FAIR

Send thank-you notes

- Ask for a business card before you leave an employer. This will ensure that you have the proper name and addresses of the representative with whom you spoke.
- Send a thank-you via email or LinkedIn within a couple of days of the event. Be sure to remind each recruiter that you met him/her at Commerce Career Day and that you appreciate having the opportunity to discuss career opportunities with him/her. Refer to important points that were discussed, and refer to strengths and relevant experiences you highlighted during your conversation. You may wish to include a copy of your resume, but the message should not be too long. One or two paragraphs should suffice.
- If you need to find contact information for employers that you were not able to collect information for, you can utilize Handshake, LinkedIn and CareerShift to track down email addresses.