

How to Stand Out at a Virtual Career Fair

What is a virtual/online career fair?

In a face-to-face career fair, candidates walk around in a large room or along a hallway to meet employer representatives stationed at tables with company information or visual displays. In a typical conversation between a representative and student that begins with introductions:

- Representatives tell prospective candidates more about their organization, employment opportunities, and the kind of candidates they are seeking.
- Students tell representatives about their background and interests and ask questions about the company, employment opportunities, and things that will help them determine if they want to pursue a role with the organization.



Virtual career fairs are different from traditional career fairs, in that they are more likely to feature short presentations, chat rooms, and virtual booths where you can speak directly to employer representatives.

Trine University uses Handshake for its career fair platform. Here's what you need to know to prepare for a successful virtual career fair at Trine University:

Research employers

For both face-to-face and virtual career fairs, employers register on Handshake in advance of the event. Registration information includes information about their organization and employment opportunities available at the time of registration. Make a list of employers you'd like to speak with and research their organizations.

- What products or services do they provide? Where are their major locations? Who are they customers and competitors? How are they involved in the community / philanthropies?

New employers are added daily to the list, so check the career fair Handshake page regularly to see who will be attending.

Register for the career fair

Students can log into [Handshake](#), go to Events, and then Find Career Fairs. A fair search can be filtered by keyword, location, and event date.



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Select timeslots in advance to meet employers

To speak directly to an employer representative, you will need to schedule a 15-minute time slot that fits into your schedule. Schedule a time to meet with each employer with whom you'd like to speak. Employers will have access to your resume before and after the fair.

All sessions will have the option for Handshake video, audio and text-based chat. It is up to the employer and student joining the session to determine how they would like to connect.

Sign up for additional sessions on the day of the fair

Some employers will host group sessions where you can learn more about their organizations. Students can join group sessions with availability up to 10 minutes into the session. If a group session is at capacity before the day of the virtual fair, then students will not be able to attend that session.

Prepare your resume

Make sure you have an updated resume that highlights your skills, abilities and experience. If there are specific employers that you are scheduled to meet with during the virtual career fair, consider customizing your resume for each employer.

Dress professionally

Whether you have a video chat or a phone call scheduled, dress professionally. Dressing up will help you think clearer, speak more professionally, and better develop your answers, and help you make a good first impression if you're on camera.

Be prepared to video chat

There is a good chance that an employer will want to video chat with you. You will want to be professionally dressed and manage your environment for this reason. Ensure your space is free of distractions and that you won't be interrupted during the fair, e.g., by loud roommates, a knock on the door, etc. The room you are in should be well-lit and your back should be to a neutral wall that is free of posters and other items. Your face should also be well-lit, and make sure your webcam is high enough so that you aren't looking down into the camera.

Test your equipment ahead of time, making sure you have a strong internet connection, and that your webcam and headset or earbuds work properly.

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Practice your elevator pitch

Practice introducing yourself to prospective employers. Start by sharing your name, year in school and major or area of interest. Talk about the positions you're interested in, and some relevant skills or experiences. Then ask them a question, e.g., "What kind of skills are you looking for in internship positions?"

Make a list of questions

Prepare two or three questions to ask each employer. They should be related to the company or position(s) you're interested in. Make sure your questions are not easily answered by online research you could have done prior to the event. Some example questions you might ask follow:

- What's the biggest challenge the new [open role] can help solve?
- I noticed you didn't have any [type of role or roles on a specific team] open just now. What kinds of opportunities in those areas do you foresee down the line?
- What does the hiring process for [open role] look like?
- What kind of person is most successful at [Company]?
- What would be a great next step to take after meeting you here?

Get organized

Instructions for how to connect with employers you have an appointment with will be emailed to you prior to your scheduled time to speak.

Have a notebook and pen nearby. After speaking with employers, write down a few things you discussed and what you liked and didn't like about the company.

Follow up

If you received contact information from a company representative, send them an email following your conversation. Reintroduce yourself and thank them for their time. Use your notes to recall something that you discussed or enjoyed about the conversation, and let them know you're interested in moving to the next step in the process.

Things to have handy

- ✓ Resume
- ✓ A "cheat sheet" with talking points
- ✓ Pen and paper to take notes
- ✓ Company research (with relevant information highlighted)
- ✓ Questions to ask about the company and position
- ✓ Water (in a spill-proof container)

Sources

Best Careers Blog (2020) [7 Virtual Career Fair Tips to Stand Out Online](#) bestcompaniesaz.com

Ziv, S. (2020) [7 Kinds of Questions You Should Ask at Career Fairs](#) themuse.com

[How to Rock a Virtual Job Fair](#) CareerCast.com