



Making the Most of Career Fairs

Career Development Center

California State University, Los Angeles

www.calstatela.edu/careercenter

(323) 343-3237

The purpose of career/job fairs is to provide a venue at which a large number of employers can “set up shop” and recruit candidates who are interested in full-time career positions, as well as part-time jobs and internships. If you are not yet ready to seek employment, a job fair can provide opportunities to gather information about employers for future use.

BEFORE THE FAIR (Prepare, prepare, prepare!)

- Perfect your resume (have it reviewed by a career counselor) and make 30 – 40 copies of it, using 40 – 60 lb. paper. Make sure that your printer is producing clear copies.
- Check ahead of time what companies/agencies will be attending. Select those you are most interested in and research them (the web is a good resource).
- Develop a strategy, listing the companies/agencies you will visit in order of priority.
- Rehearse a 45 – 60 second summary about yourself. (Include your name; expected graduation date; whether you are interested in full-time, part-time, or internship; your major; career interests; and why you came to the company’s table). Also, practice your handshake with a friend.
- Be ready to ask good questions that will show off your research.

AT THE FAIR

- Come earlier rather than later, as some recruiters pack up and leave before the fair is over.
- Make a favorable first impression. Dress professionally. If at all possible, dump the clumsy backpack and carry a briefcase, along with a pen and note pad. (Did you remember to pack those resumes?)
- Visit the companies/agencies in priority order.
- Be patient. If you have to wait in line, study the company brochure to pick up last minute information.
- Have a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact. Deliver your 45 – 60 second summary confidently and loudly enough to be heard above all the ambient noise.
- Be friendly, honest and enthusiastic. Don’t forget to smile.
- Take notes of your conversation, if appropriate, and ask recruiters for their business cards.
- Offer your resume and ask if you can call or email later with further questions.
- If you are asked to fill out a job application, clarify whether the recruiter requires it the same day or whether you can mail it. If same day, step aside and find a place at which you can complete it neatly and thoroughly.

AFTER THE FAIR

- Organize the brochures and business cards you have gathered and complete your notes for each company you remain interested in.
- Follow up with a personal thank you letter or email to the recruiters.
- Realize that it may be one to two weeks until the recruiters contact you. If that time period has gone by without word from them, call.
- Keep time open in the following weeks for interviews.

SOME CAREER FAIR “DON’T’S”

DON’T do the following: 1. dress too casually 2. forget good grooming 3. be shy 4. interrupt other students (wait your turn) 5. forget your resume 6. confuse a company with one of its competitors 7. bring your friends 8. bring food or drink 9. grab the free stuff (wait for it to be offered to you) 10. ask “what does your company do?” 11. lie about your grade point average 12. forget to say “THANK YOU.”