Career Fair Preparation

What is the Purpose of a Career Fair?

- Introduce you to future career paths or occupational opportunities within an organization
- Highlight employers who might be recruiting for various employment opportunities (contract, part-time, summer, full-time)
- To gather information and learn about different employers – Try and find a company that fits YOU!

Preparation - Before the Fair

- Obtain a list of the companies that will be present (exhibitor list available on Career Services site and on CareerLink – www.ucalgary.ca/careers)
- Research companies that interest you, review their websites and prepare a list of questions to ask
- Develop your 30 second introduction – often referred to as “your elevator speech” (Your Degree/Program/Interests/Type of work you are looking for – see page 2 for examples)
- Dress appropriately - business casual. Reference appropriate office attire on our Pinterest page
- Be prepared to take notes after you talk to each employer; you can take note of the company name, the name of the person you talked to and their job title (if you know it) and then the answers they provided to the questions that you asked them (this could help you write the first paragraph of your cover letter when you apply later)
- Business cards and copies of your resume are useful, but not all employers will accept documents from students. Before you hand your resume to the employer ask them if they are taking them.
- Set a goal for yourself, i.e. make three connections, learn three things about a company, arrange for three information interviews

Professional and Positive - At the Event

- Visit the booths by yourself, not with a group of friends
- Introduce yourself, offer a handshake, smile and make eye contact
- Provide your 30 second intro. After making your initial introduction continue with one or two good questions that allow you to learn and demonstrate your research
- Be patient, friendly and wait your turn
- Be conscious of your surroundings - if they’re busy don’t monopolize their time
- Make sure your conversation is positive and professional
- Request/take brochures, handouts concerning the company
- Offer to leave your business card, or if appropriate, your resume
- Request a business card and mention your interest in following up at a later date
- Make notes on each business card regarding key points of your conversation
- Thank the representative for their time
- Be prepared, most employers will ask you to apply online, try and build a conversation from there - don’t just ask what jobs there are
Employer Follow Up

• Write a brief thank you email and refer to the date, location of your meeting and something memorable about your conversation
• Follow-up as appropriate – connect with the employer in the manner they requested. For example LinkedIn, email or telephone
• Express your appreciation for their time and information
• Reiterate your interest in their company and your qualifications for specific positions
• Ask any additional questions

Sample Intros

1. “Hello, my name is ________, and I’m a second-year graduate student studying ________ in the Faculty of ________ (pause for a handshake as your contact introduces himself or herself). Good to meet you. I have looked at your website and have read about your company. You’ve just begun a big project related to ________, I am really interested in this and I am wondering what types of employment opportunities in the field of ________ you might have as a result?”

2. “Hi my name is ________; I am taking ___________ (Major and/or Degree). I really like it and am in my ________ year of study. I enjoy ____________ (top skills) and am exploring what I can do in my career. I am open to options and interested in learning more about ____________ (their company name).”

Possible Questions to Ask Employers

About the industry or employer

• What major issues, concerns or changes do you anticipate in the next five years?
• How will these changes impact your organization?
• What things did you do before you started working at ________ company?
• What can you tell me about your company culture?
• Do you have a formal training program and if so, how do you train your staff?
• “I am graduating with my Bachelor of ________ in April; can you foresee any openings for new grad positions?”

About your possible fit with the company

• What characteristics do you need to do well in this line of work?
• What competencies, knowledge, skills or experience are necessary? What skills does your company look for when you hire?
• Would someone with my qualifications, skills and abilities fit into an organization like ____?

About work prospects

• What is the outlook in this industry for economic growth and employment opportunities in your company?
• Would it be possible to talk to you again at a future date to find out more about your company and about what I have to offer?
• Is there anyone else you think I should talk to regarding opportunities for my background?
• Do you have any suggestions or advice on who else I might benefit from speaking with?
• Are there any organizations or associations you would suggest I join to help my career?

Resources and Last Notes

• The Serious Job Seeker
• Networking (from ATM)
• Exhibitor list and career fair magazine are on www.ucalgary.ca/careers - use as a reference
• Consider volunteering for the next fair – it’s a great opportunity to meet and impress employers