

# In-Person Career Fair Guide

Career Fairs are a great way to network, gather information on jobs and internships, and make a great impression.

## Why Should I Attend?

- To make connections between you and employers.
- To sell yourself, and to build your network.
- To make a great impression. Making your best impression could be life changing – it could be the difference between you getting a job over someone else. Recruiters will put in a good word for the candidates who stand out to them.
- It can open your view beyond just your major.
- It allows you to get an impression of an employer and learn about the culture of an organization before you interview.

## How Should I Prepare?

- Attend a career fair workshop offered through our office, Career Services.
- Look at the list of employers coming to the career fair. Research the industry, company, and positions. Try and find out as much as you can about the company.
- Build a bridge between you and employers. Target the employers that are the best fit.
- Prepare a tailored resume specific to the company and the position.
- Schedule an appointment with our office, Career Services, to have your resume reviewed.
- Prepare your 20 to 30 second introduction (elevator pitch). Things to include in your introduction: academics, professional experience, relevant competencies and skills. It might be something like this: *“Hello. I’m Lucy Lobo. I’m a junior majoring in Marketing at Anderson School of Management. I’m looking for an internship related to marketing for next summer. I read on your website about the internship program in your corporate marketing department, and I’ve done some project work related to your internship. I’m very interested in your program. Could you tell me more about it?”* Always end in a question to get the employers talking about their organization.

## Sample Question to ask the Employer

- What are you looking for in the employees you hire?
- What are the characteristics of your most successful employees?
- Are there specific career tracks within your organization?

- Can you tell me more about your company's culture?
- Who is your ideal candidate?
- What made you choose this company and why do you stay?

### **What Should I Bring?**

- Plenty of copies of resume, depending on the number of employers in which you are interested. Be prepared that many employers do not take hard copies of resumes, but may refer you to their website to apply. This does not mean the employer is giving you the brush-off or not interested. Employers take notes on whom they are interested in, but have to follow certain company procedures.
- Professional portfolio or folder with a pen and notepad to take notes.

### **What Should I Do Once I'm There?**

- Observe others. See what works and what doesn't.
- Stand up straight, speak clearly, use your best interpersonal communication skills.
- Target the employers you want to meet.
- Take the initiative to introduce yourself.
- Be prepared to talk about the following questions from the recruiter:
  - Can you walk me through your resume?
  - What are your strengths?
  - What are your career objectives and goals?
  - What are your skills and abilities?
  - How would you be an asset to our company?
  - Why are you interested in our company?
- Answer the questions fully and talk about next steps.
- Collect business cards from each employer and leave them with a firm handshake.

### **How Should I Follow-Up?**

- Contact employers you are interested in after the career fair via email, handwritten thank you notes or by phone.
- Follow through regarding your discussions with each employer. For example, if they suggest to apply online, follow through and attach an additional copy of your resume with a fresh cover letter. For more guidelines on resumes, cover letters and thank you note etiquette, visit [career.unm.edu](http://career.unm.edu).

### **What Should I NOT Do?**

- Do not use your cell phone.
- Do not cruise booths with friends for SWAG (giveaways).
- Do not come casually dressed.
- Do not ask "What does your company do?" or "How much does this position pay?"
- Do not wear your sunglasses.

- Do not chew gum or smell like cigarette smoke.
- Do not wear jeans, hats, shorts or midriffs.
- Do not wear strong perfume or cologne.
- Do not expect to be hired on the spot.

### How Can I Increase My Chances of Getting the Job/Internship?

- Use Handshake. Update your profile, upload your resume, check for new opportunities with your favorite employers, and find out when recruiters are coming to campus for information sessions, interviewing and/or attending career fairs.
- Schedule an appointment with Career Services for mock interview assistance, resume and cover letter tips, and job and internship assistance.

### Professional Dress

- Investigate the organizations in attendance to see if you can get an idea of what the average employee wears. Tip: Always dress as or more formally than would be expected on the job.
- Remember it is easier to dress down conservative clothes than to dress up in formal attire; always dress to impress.
- Go with your instincts – if you feel you should not wear it, then don't. Appropriate clothing for a bar setting is not acceptable for a career fair or job interview.
- Make sure you are well groomed and your attire is laundered, pressed and wrinkle free.
- Make sure clothes fit correctly and are not too loose or too tight.
- No undergarments (camisole, bra straps, boxers, etc.) should be visible.
- Most employers prefer accessories such as, makeup and fragrances kept to a minimum. To avoid being screened out, consider removing facial piercings, and covering visible tattoos.

### What Should I Wear?

- Two-piece business suits with long sleeved dress shirt.
- Conservative neckline and necktie in terms of color and pattern.
- Business style shoes. Avoid wearing business suit with sandals or sneakers.
- High-fitting dark socks with slacks.
- Match shoe and belt color.
- Minimal cologne or perfume.
- Breath mints. Use one before greeting recruiters.
- Briefcase or portfolio instead of purse.

