

WHY ATTEND CAREER FAIRS?

- They are a great opportunity to speak one-on-one with employers
- To find out what skills, education, experience and qualities employers are looking for
- To learn about the range of career paths available to you upon graduation
- To give employers a chance to know about you, so they may remember you when they are recruiting
- To find out about potential job opportunities: full-time, part-time and summer
- To gather information about organizations you may be interested in working for
- Network with employers who are there to speak with UTM students.

At a career fair, you must do more than simply submit applications to organizations of interest. You must strive to build relationships with the representatives that may lead to valuable information or referrals for potential openings. The following tips have been developed from employer feedback regarding how to accomplish these goals while attending a career fair.

UTM CAREER FAIRS 2017 / 18

GET EXPERIENCE FAIR — find out how you can get involved on campus and in the community. Held annually in September (see Events Calendar on our website for details)
<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/events/events-calendar>

GET HIRED: SUMMER & FULL-TIME JOB FAIR – speak with representatives from various organizations and learn about job opportunities. Held annually in January (see Events Calendar on our website for details)

RESEARCH YOUR FIELD OF INTEREST

Find out in advance which companies will be attending the fair. Beforehand, research the organization and the industry that you want to focus on.

More importantly, find out more about the careers you are interested in pursuing. The more information you have, the more prepared you will be to speak to the representatives. Start with some of the following resources:

Career Research

Consult the *Occupational Binders* in our Career Resource Library or *Career Cruising*, an electronic career guide in the Career Learning Network. Drop by DV 3094 between 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday for assistance with your research.

Company Research

Doing your research ahead of time allows you to demonstrate to recruiters that you are interested in their organization and are well prepared. It also puts you in the best position to avoid answers such as "visit our website."

- Check to see which organizations are attending. This information is listed on the Career Centre's web site. Decide which ones you would like to target
- Visit the organization's web site
- Search *Canada Newswire* for recent press releases <http://www.newswire.ca>
 - Visit our web site for more Resources and Links you can use to research organizations online <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/jobs/jobs-resources-links>
 - Download a copy of our **Company Research tip sheet** <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/sites/files/careers/public/shared/pdf/tipsheets/2017tipsheets/Company%20Research%20%28May%202017-AJ%20%29.pdf>

PLAN YOUR APPROACH

- Practice a 30-second introduction outlining your skills to introduce yourself to representatives
- Demonstrate your interest and knowledge of the organization
- Pick 3-5 priority organizations to make sure you speak with them
- Communicate what skills you would bring to the company using your experience as evidence to support your claims
- In addition to academic qualities, many employers are seeking well-rounded students who show leadership and involvement in a university or community environment
- Be prepared to talk about what you want or expect in a career. Many students don't know what they want until after they graduate. However, thinking about this as you prepare for the fair can help clarify at least some things for you, and show employers that you have some direction. If you're not sure where to start, speaking with one of our Career Counsellors can help.

HAVE YOUR QUESTIONS READY

Come prepared with specific questions, clear goals, and an idea of what it is you want from the day. Ask career-oriented and company-specific questions. Need some examples? Below is a sampling of questions you could ask the recruiters. Do not limit yourself to these questions alone. Ask your own questions and don't forget to take notes.

1. What advice do you have for a University graduate entering this field?
2. How is the company responding to... (fill in a current relevant news item)?
3. What are the opportunities and alternatives for career advancement?
4. Are there internship opportunities in this field?
5. What kind of work experience, either part-time or summer, will be helpful to me to prepare for this career?
6. What are the priorities for the organization right now? That is, what are the top five things you would like to accomplish in the next six months? In the next five years?
7. What are the three things you find most challenging about your job?
8. What's the company culture like?
9. Does your company have training programs for its employees?
10. What extra-curricular activities do you recommend I pursue to help me prepare for this field?

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Professionalism is paramount. Present yourself as if attending a job interview. This is your opportunity to make a lasting positive impression. Give thought to what you will wear. Aim for a neat and tidy look, including well-groomed hair.

BRING YOUR UPDATED RESUME

Some employers who participate in career fairs will accept resumes at the event. Check our website in advance for details on who will be collecting resumes. Have copies of your updated resume available in case representatives ask for one. For companies that are accepting resumes, don't just drop one off and walk away - introduce yourself and express your interest in the organization. This will help the employer get to know you and not just what is stated on paper.

Need resume help? Sign up for the Resume and Cover Letter workshop to get a grasp of the basics then come in for an individual 30-minute resume or cover letter critique. Also, be sure to check out the Resume and Cover Letter Toolkit on our web site at <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/resume-cover-letter-resources>

INTERACTING WITH EMPLOYERS

Keep the following suggestions in mind to ensure that you make a professional impression on the recruiters you meet:

- Greet the representative with a firm handshake, smile and make eye contact.
- Focus on making a good first impression by listening carefully to the employer. A great result for you is the opportunity to speak with them again.
- Pace yourself. This will ensure that you have the opportunity to meet with all the representatives you intended to meet.
- Be courteous. Don't monopolize the recruiter's time. Remember that representatives will probably be seeing hundreds of students. Please be understanding of their situation and try to be patient.
- Take the time to find out what the company is looking for. Don't just hand in a resume and bolt.
- Avoid travelling in packs. Work your way through the fair on your own to avoid distractions.
- Ask for their business card, follow-up procedure and a suggested time frame to follow up.

AFTER THE FAIR

If employers are accepting applications after the fair (as some do), take the time to tailor your resume and cover letter. You can determine what's important for the position through your interactions with employers as well as from the job postings themselves (at the fair, on company's website, or from the CLN postings). If you already handed in your resume at the fair, don't assume that you'll be guaranteed an interview. Write a thank-you note. This is an effective way to reintroduce yourself to the employer.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

- Take a look at the various career fair binders in the Career Resource Library (*Get the Most out of Career Fairs; Get Hired Fair and Other Campus Career Fair* binders)
- Meet with a *Career Counsellor* to explore your career interests and narrow down your choices
- Consult with an *Employment Advisor* to plan your approach and practice your 30-second pitch.

Please note that this information is subject to change. It is best to refer to the original sources for the most up to date information. (Updated April 2017)