

resource library

three: career fair guide



**CAREER
DEVELOPMENT**

career fair guide

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Career Fair Tips

Research Companies

Visit Vault.com to gain knowledge on companies attending the fair, so you can be fully prepared and distinguish yourself as a candidate.

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Develop Questions

Prepare thoughtful questions that demonstrate your interest in a given company. These can serve as conversation starters.

Create an Elevator Pitch

Develop a short statement about who you are that shows why you're unique and desirable as a job applicant.

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Arrive Prepared

Dress professionally. Bring copies of your résumé to hand out. Have a pen handy to jot down notes.

Follow Up

Collect business cards from company representatives. Send thank-you notes to follow up, inquiring about open positions.

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Visit www.vault.com for more career advice to help with your job search.

prepare for the fair

showcase your experience and interests

Career fairs provide an opportunity for networking, a way to search for an internship/job, and a forum for professional development.

Regardless of major, academic year or future goals, here are benefits of attending a career fair:

- Increase your chances of receiving an interview with an employer.
- Expand your network of contacts.
- Investigate positions, occupations and career fields you could pursue with your major and background.
- Learn more about employers/available positions.
- Receive sound job search advice from seasoned company recruiters.

what to expect at a career fair

Having a realistic expectation of a career fair is important in succeeding in your career search. This is a list of common career fair expectations:

- Employers expect you to be prepared (dress professionally, ask thoughtful questions, have polished resume, etc.).
- Employers expect to interact with students simply researching career and employers, as well as those seeking employment.
- Your goal should be to land an interview—not a job offer. Most recruiters are not authorized to hire candidates on the day of the fair.
- You should expect to have a relatively short amount of time to sell yourself and make a positive impact on the employer. Employers' goals are to be exposed to as many job candidates as possible.

Attending a career fair for the first time can be a little overwhelming. However, if you prepare, you will get as much out of the event as you put into it.

before the fair

- Review the list of companies attending the fair. Take this list and plan your strategy for which companies you would like to visit.
- Research company websites and identify 5-7 employers most aligned with your career goals. Based on your research, develop potential questions to ask the recruiters.
- Practice your elevator pitch and prepare to answer questions. Visit a professional at Macaulay and/or at your home campus Career Services Office.
- You will also want to update your resume and prepare copies before the event.
- Register for the event so that you can sign-up for any interviews that may result from the career fair.
- Appropriate attire is often influenced by the industries recruiting at the fair. At Macaulay, most attendees wear business professional attire; this means suits regardless of your gender.

during the fair

- Arrive early (if you can) to avoid long lines and catch all employers as some will leave before the career fair has ended. As you arrive, be polite to people on the street, hallway, or restroom—anyone can be a recruiter.
- Bring your student ID to expedite the check-in process.
- Pick up a map of employer locations within the fair. Chart your course and survey the room to determine where employers are located and in what order you plan to visit them. If possible, avoid standing in long lines. If there is a long line to speak with a representative, keep moving and return later.
- Approach employers with a firm handshake, introduce yourself and begin your “elevator pitch.”
- Be confident, display enthusiasm, sincerity and the ability to communicate clearly. Smile, walk with good posture, and make consistent and direct eye contact; watch your tempo and tone.
- To further exhibit confidence and individuality, visit employers’ tables on your own.

Ask questions:

- Ask one or two inquisitive questions without monopolizing the employer’s time.
- Do not ask about salary at this time.
- If you are an undergraduate, ask about internship, co-op, research and scholarship opportunities.

Prepare to follow-up, at the end of your conversation, do the following:

- Thank the representative for his/her time.
- Ask if they are accepting resumes at this time. If so, leave a copy of your resume.
- Ask for his/her business card.
- As soon as you walk away from the representative, jot down a few notes about your conversation.

after the fair

Send a thank-you note or e-mail to employers who were of particular interest to you. Employers may leave a fair with hundreds of resumes, and they report that less than 5% of students follow up after a fair.

sample student business cards

download
here



how to use the macaulay business card template

step one:

Populate the text box with your personal information. Please note your class, home campus and major (if declared, if not leave major line blank).
Do not change fonts or font sizes.

step two:

Save the business card as a pdf. (File>Save As>Choose "PDF" from the "Format:" dropdown box. The default will be "Word Document". Change to "PDF" as the format. Save.)



step three:

Send the pdf to the printer.

networking tips

Whether you're still in school or embarking on your first post-graduate job, few things will contribute more to your long-term success than building a strong professional network. The following must-have tips will help you make the most of formal events and chance encounters.

what is networking

Successful networking is all about building genuine relationships. Effective networkers show a real interest in who others are and what they do.

why build a network

Networks prove helpful when it comes to problem solving, trend spotting, career building, and talent recruiting. Members of your network can help you address and overcome professional and personal obstacles. When job positions open up or when you seek to recruit new members to your team, strong networks can be instrumental in revealing prospective opportunities.

who should be in your network

Anyone you encounter is a potential addition to your network. However, you will really benefit by identifying people who can perform specific functions, especially mentoring and connecting. Mentors provide valuable advice from firsthand experience that will help you accomplish discrete tasks. Connectors help you to build relationships with valuable people inside and outside of your profession, including people who you otherwise would not know.

where and when to network

Every day is filled with opportunities to meet new people and build your network. Learn to extend yourself and reach out to others. Instead of eating lunch alone at your desk, share meals with coworkers. Arrive at personal and work-related functions early and use those extra minutes to connect with others. You may not transform every person you meet into an important contact, but investing time in meeting new people and developing ongoing relationships will help you build a strong professional network early on.

how to network

Preparations

Before attending networking events, be sure to:

- **Research, Research, Research**

If an invitation to a networking event requests an RSVP, respond in a timely manner. Then, research the host or hostess and other invited guests. A few quick Google searches may help you find commonalities (you and another invitee both attended the same undergraduate school) or shared interests (you and another invitee both volunteer for a nonprofit organization). Use this information to start conversations. This research can be especially critical at receptions that follow job fairs or interviews, because many employers reject job candidates who haven't invested time learning about hiring organizations.

- **Set Goals for the Event**

Attend every networking event knowing two to three other invitees who you wish to meet. Consciously seek out those people. You may make a connection that will open the door to a new job or new career.

- **Develop Your Introduction**

Know how you wish to introduce yourself. Start with your preferred name and follow with two to three sentences that tell others who you are and what you do. This short description—otherwise known as an “elevator pitch”—should be engaging and memorable.

- **Prepare General Networking Questions**

Newsflash: most people love talking about themselves. Develop a handful of questions that encourage others to talk. Here are a few questions that you can ask virtually anyone:

- o What do you like most about working for Company X?
- o Where did you work before?
- o Have you always lived in X?
- o Outside of work, what do you do in your spare time?

- **Gather Your Networking Essentials**

Be sure to carry:

- o Business cards (as a student, your cards should list your school name, anticipated year of graduation, and contact information)
- o Breath mints
- o Pen
- o Résumé, if attending a job fair

What to Wear

Some invitations will specify appropriate attire, and in those cases, you should comply. Where an invitation specifies “business casual,” men should wear tailored slacks, a tailored shirt (no tee-shirts), a jacket or blazer, and dress shoes. Women should wear tailored slacks or skirts, a tailored blouse, and a jacket, blazer or cardigan. Women may substitute an office-appropriate dress for the slacks or skirt.

If attire is not specified, dress to impress! It's always better to dress more conservatively than to dress too informally. Always avoid stained or torn clothing, apparel with offensive words and images, and overly revealing clothes.

how to network

Eating and Drinking

Never attend a networking event on an empty stomach. If you feel the need to nibble at the event, make thoughtful food choices. Avoid food offerings that are difficult or messy to eat. You may enjoy an alcoholic beverage but stop at one. There's no need to potentially embarrass yourself in front of a prospective employer or important contact. And if you abstain from alcohol, never feel obliged to consume wine, beer, or cocktails.

Getting Started

Introducing yourself at a networking event may seem daunting, but it's actually quite simple: make eye contact, smile, state the introduction you prepared, and extend your right hand for a firm handshake. Keep your hand perfectly perpendicular to the ground to avoid any awkward handshakes.

If you feel intimidated, pick up a beverage. This will give you something to do with your hands as you scan the room. Look for an "approachable" – individuals standing around the perimeter of the room—to strike up a conversation. Avoid topics that evoke strong reactions such as politics, religion, and money.

Follow-Up

Bring discussions to a close by expressing your appreciation for the conversation and stating your wish to reconnect in the future. You can then initiate a business card exchange. Simply say, "This was a fascinating conversation. Do you have a business card? I'd like to stay in touch." Then, feel free to move on to another conversation.

Before you leave the event, thank the host or hostess for their invitation. To the extent it's possible, say goodbye to anyone with whom you had a particularly interesting or noteworthy conversation.

After the event, pull out any business cards that you received and jot down quick notes. Record shared interests, possible employment opportunities, or any other significant conversation content. Use this information to personalize a follow-up email.

Building a network requires an investment of time. Don't expect an immediate pay-off. The most successful networkers focus on helping others achieve their goals and accomplish their dreams. In turn they are rewarded by loyal supporters and advocates.

a student's perspective



Zachary Diemer
Class of 2017

Zachary Diemer is a Macaulay at College of Staten Island graduate. He studied mathematics, computer science and finance. He's also a career fair pro who has used Macaulay's career and internship events to build his skills and nab great internships. We asked Zach to share what he feels are the most important things students can get out of attending career fairs.

- 1. You might not be looking for a job now--but you will be**
As a freshman attending career fairs, Zach heard comments about how he was wasting his time. Not so. "Some of the recruiters I had approached freshman year remembered me when I introduced myself again junior year. This time they admired me for my confidence, and as a result, I was given interview opportunities for competitive summer internship positions."
- 2. It's an opportunity to polish your professional appeal**
Think of it as practice for your emerging professional self: you choose your clothes, prepare your resume and then enter an environment where you have only a few moments to make a first impression. Career fairs help you become comfortable with the process. "These experiences were tremendously helpful," says Zach.
- 3. You'll learn more about companies or disciplines**
Meeting a recruiter can provide valuable info on the organization's structure, what types of work they do, and even provide you with an impression about their culture--all important considerations in deciding where to focus your job search efforts. The Macaulay career fair provided Zach "with the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals" in fields that interest him.
- 4. It's a great way to quickly build your network**
Zach cites the opportunity to build professional relationships as the biggest benefit to attending a career fair. "I am still in contact with three of the recruiters I met and have received multiple interviews for AllianceBernstein and PricewaterhouseCoopers. I was able to foster personal relationships with the recruiters and develop a deeper understanding of their organizations' needs. This information, along with the relationships I established, are invaluable assets to my future career."
- 5. You may be pleasantly surprised**
As Branch Rickey once said, "luck is the residue of design." Simply attending a career fair provides opportunities for chance meetings, new ideas and unexpected outcomes. Zach describes one positive thing that happened that he did not expect: "There was a panel discussion about the "do's and don'ts" associated with preparing your resume, giving your elevator speech, etc. Afterwards, I was able to talk to them about their career experiences and even connect with a few of them."