CONSIDER YOUR GOALS

Knowing what you want out of a career fair ahead of time will set you up in a better position of achieving your goals. Consider the following reasons:

- To explore career options and clarify professional goals.
- To meet employers to obtain an internship.
- To meet employers as a first step in getting a job
- To begin the process to get interviews.

PREPARE BEFORE THE FAIR

DEVELOP A STRONG RESUME WITH SEVERAL DIFFERENT VERSIONS

Have different versions of your resume depending on the types of companies you want to talk to. Have it reviewed by a career counselor or Career Peer Educator, who can help you tweak the formatting and details.

REVIEW & RESEARCH THE EMPLOYERS YOU WANT TO TALK TO.

You can find this list in Handshake under “Fairs.” If made available online, know what positions they’re hiring for and tailor your resume to fit them.

TIP: Rank what companies are high-priority for you. Go talk to your low-priority companies first so you can warm up and practice before you approach the companies you most want to work for.

LOGISTICS

You may want to bring a sturdy folder or portfolio folder to carry your resumes in, a pen to write with, and a bag for company swag you might pick up. Plan and wear your outfit ahead of time to make sure it is comfortable to move in, and try not to break in new shoes. Wear business casual attire (ex: suit, nice shirt & tie, blouse & skirt).

PREPARE YOUR “30-SECOND PITCH”

Knowing more about your personal interests, motivations, and abilities will be helpful for you once you begin connecting with others to market your unique strengths. Having this information readily available can also help making your networking feel more productive. This can also be a good tool to develop your response to questions like “Tell me about yourself” or “Walk me through your resume.” Remember, this “pitch” is used to get the conversation started, so don’t stress about memorizing it verbatim or covering your entire career trajectory.

**SAMPLE PITCH**

Hi, I'm [insert name here], and I'm interested in creating plans to help big businesses be more sustainable.

I'm graduating in May with a major in Environmental Thought and Practice, but my study abroad trip in Costa Rica, where we assessed ways to maintain biological diversity in the face of economic development, truly deepened my commitment to sustainability.

I think my internship with the UVA Office of Sustainability and Athletics helped establish some key skills in this area as well.

Looking forward, I'm pursuing roles where I can contribute to sustainable initiatives in for-profit businesses.

Could you tell me more about the role you are recruiting for in corporate social responsibility?
NAVIGATION DURING THE FAIR

Head to the registration table to receive a career fair map and write a nametag (include name, year, major). When approaching a recruiter, you want to make a good first impression by using your non-verbal and verbal communication skills.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- **Eye contact**: Should be open and direct when listening, asking, and responding to questions. Eye contact is usually broken when concentrating or reflecting on what you want to say or what has been said.
- **Facial expression**: Conveys sincerity, can add to or detract from your words. Don't be afraid to smile!
- **Voice tone**: Should be firm, warm, and relaxed.
- **Timing**: It is alright to pause before and while you are answering a question.
- **Hands**: Should be used in a relaxed way for animation, communicating excitement, interest.
- **Handshake**: Make sure to give a strong, firm handshake when meeting your interviewers. But remember to not squeeze their hand... it is not a strength competition.
- **Posture**: Should be well-balanced, upright, relaxed, forward-facing, and open. Know your nervous habits and practice controlling them. Leaning forward slightly can help communicate interest.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- As you shake their hand, begin to introduce yourself with your 30-second pitch. Be articulate and confident.
- Engage in the conversation by responding to their questions concisely, then asking your prepared questions.
- Offer your resume when it feels appropriate. Be aware that some recruiters are not permitted by their company to accept them and may direct you to submitting online.
- As you wrap up the conversation, thank the employer for their time and ask what the next step is. Don't monopolize time as other students are waiting.

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

- What kinds of entry-level positions exist within your company?
- Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
- How long does the hiring process take?
- What qualities does your company look for in an employee?
- What courses do you suggest in order to be a successful candidate?
- What opportunities are there for advancement in the company?
- For how many years does the entry-level employee typically stay with the company?
- How many new employees (or interns) is your company looking to hire?
- What makes your company unique compared to other companies in this field?
- What would you expect your ideal hire to do during the first month with the company?
- Also check out the Sample Interview Questions for ideas on what they may ask you.

QUESTIONS TO ASK GRAD SCHOOL RECRUITERS

- How many students are in the department? How many professors are in the department?
- What courses/prerequisites should I take in order to be better prepared for graduate school?
- What is the GPA cut off for the department?
- What graduate admission's test is required for the program?
- What is unique about your school and program?
- What types of assistantships and financial aid are available?
- Is there department support for job searching after graduate school?

AFTER THE FAIR

Send a thank-you letter (typed, e-mail, or handwritten are all appropriate) within 1-3 days of the fair. You can send an initial or additional resume in your thank-you letter and again remind the employer of your strengths and interest. Remember to include in the email your name, school, date of meeting, and a personal touch (ex: remind them of something specific from your conversation). Check out career.virginia.edu/thank-you.