

How to Work a Career Fair

PREPARE IN ADVANCE:

- Have an updated resume. Highlight skills, experiences, accomplishments; use easy-to-read format with no typos
- Research companies before the career fair! Never ask, “What does your company do?”
- Practice interview skills. Use InterviewStream or ACPC mock interviews
- Know your schedule in case you are asked for an interview

DAY OF THE FAIR:

- Be knowledgeable about the company before introducing yourself. Review company info from company website in advance
- Show confidence with a firm handshake, smile, and eye contact
- Be honest about your experience (focus on positive points)
- Dress the part. Business attire is recommended for all (especially full-time seekers and business students)

PREPARE YOUR 30-SECOND ELEVATOR SPEECH

INCLUDE:

- Your name, graduation date (career status)
- Major/field of interest
- Type of position you are seeking (internship, co-op, full-time)
- Why you are interested in the company

EXAMPLE:

“Hi, I’m Rachel Reed, Management Information Systems major, graduating in May 2016. [Pause to allow recruiter to give her/his name] I have experience in systems analysis and networking, but am specifically interested in database design and web development. I recently learned that you create interactive 3D data visualization screens at (company name). Could you tell me more about full-time positions at (company name) within web development?”

INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS:

- Tailor your introduction to each employer you approach based on research and knowledge of each company.
- Practice your introduction. Assess your nonverbal communications—eye contact, facial expressions, body language, and posture. Practice with a mirror, a friend, online using InterviewStream and/or with a career Counselor.

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DO:

- Get employer location map and familiarize yourself with the layout
- Prioritize your employers of interest and approach your top companies before the end of fair – they get tired too
- Show confidence with a good, firm handshake
- Bring different versions of your resume only IF you have multiple interests; you do not need a tailored resume for every employer
- Visit employers that align with your career goals
- Ask for business cards

DON'T:

- Say “I don't know” or “I'll take anything” when employers ask about your interests
- Visit the company tables with friends or in a group
- Forget to take notes after your conversation – you won't remember everyone you talked with
- Be offended if a company asks you to apply online – many employers use this as their official application method
- Sell yourself short – this is the time to mention your accomplishments

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS:

What qualities do you look for in candidates at [company]?

Listen for those that you have, then give recruiter an example of how you have used it

In researching [company], I saw that you [insert trend here]; can you tell me more about that?

What type of training do you offer?

Only ask if not stated on company website

If hired, what type of projects might I work on initially?

Only ask if not stated on company website

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FROM EMPLOYERS:

Tell me about yourself.

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to work for us?

What are your most valuable experiences?

What questions do you have for me?

FOLLOW-UP:

Always end with: “What are the next steps in the hiring process?” or “Is there an estimated decisions date?” and “May I call or e-mail you?”

Decide which companies you are interested in and follow-up where your conversation left off. If asked to complete an online application, do so and send a thank you note to the employer letting them know you completed the application.

Interview Attire



INTERVIEW BUSINESS FORMAL



MATCHED SUITS

- Grey, blue, or black
- Solid colors are best, subtle stripes OK
- No cling or shine
- Suit pants and jackets must be identical fabric

PANTS VS. SKIRTS

- A skirt suit is considered more formal
- Skirts should fall to the knee or below
- Pants should be tailored to fit without being overly tight or dragging

HOSIERY/SOCKS

- Formal workplaces will expect pantyhose with skirts
- Socks should coordinate with suit—same shade or a shade darker
- Solid color socks or with subtle design
- NEVER wear white/athletic socks



GROOMING/ACCESSORIES

- Nails should be clean and groomed
- Keep makeup conservative
- Conceal tattoos and remove facial piercings
- Avoid using perfume or cologne; others may be allergic
- Watch/jewelry should be minimal and subtle
- Use briefcase/padfolio or small purse

DRESS SHIRTS/BLOUSES

- Pressed, clean, and well-tailored
- White, ivory, or light blue are best
- Solid colors or subtle patterns are best
- Avoid lace, ruffles, and shiny fabrics

SHOES

- Choose basic, conservative shoes that look clean and polished
- Neutral colors, like black, navy, or brown, recommended
- Must match conservative tone of suit
- Should have closed toe and heel
- If wearing heels, low heels recommended (2 1/2" or lower)

TIES/BELTS

- Coordinate tie with suit and shirt
- Belt should match shoe color; no large or flashy belts

WHEN TO WEAR IT

Q: When should I wear business formal?

A: Business formal is always the safest bet for an interview. Also wear business formal to the Career Fair if you are looking for full-time work or if you are a business student.

Q: What if I am overdressed?

A: It is much better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Q: When can I get away with NOT wearing business formal?

A: One instance is if the interviewer explicitly says to wear Business Casual, then you could do that. Another instance is if you don't own a suit and cannot borrow one. In that case, just wear the nicest thing that you own (ie. dress shirt, slacks, tie).



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



Business Formal Business Casual (Interview) Business Casual (Office) Business Formal Business Casual (Interview) Business Casual (Office)

The rule of thumb is that you dress one or two levels higher than the job that you're applying for.

Interview Attire

INTERVIEW BUSINESS CASUAL	
<p>PANTS/SLACKS/KHAKIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pants should be tailored, not too tight • Cotton, wool, or micro-fiber • Darker=dressier; lighter=more casual • NEVER wear jeans or cargo pants <p>SKIRTS/DRESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative pants, suits, skirts and dresses are all acceptable • Skirts and dresses should be knee length • A variety of colors and patterns are OK, but solid tones or subtle patterns are safer <p>JACKETS/BLAZER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid shade or subtle design • Create more professional look • Can be removed to create more casual look <p>TIES/BELTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a casual look more formal • Belt should match shoe color; no large or flashy belts 	<p>SHIRTS/BLOUSES/SWEATERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many choices are available, but use discretion when considering cut, fabric, or formality • Long-sleeve button-down is more business-oriented • Crisp, clean, and pressed • Soft pastel colors and subtle patterns are recommended • Should be well-tailored to fit without cling • Avoid flashy, shiny or revealing looks • NO t-shirts <p>SHOES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, polished, neutral tone • Style and color must match outfit • Should have closed toe and heel • Avoid high heels (less than 2 1/2") • Flats are okay; heels look more formal <p>GROOMING/ACCESSORIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as business formal
 	
WHEN TO WEAR IT	COMMON MISTAKES
<p>Q: When could business casual be appropriate for an interview?</p> <p>A: Business formal is always the safest bet for an interview. However, if the interviewer explicitly says to wear Business Casual, then you could do that. Also, business casual could be appropriate for internship interviews. If not sure, you could always ask the interviewer or call the employer's office and ask the secretary.</p> <p>Q: What if I am underdressed?</p> <p>A: If you are concerned about being underdressed, then wear business formal. It is much better to be overdressed than underdressed.</p> <p>Q: Business casual is anything I would wear in an office setting, right?</p> <p>A: Business casual for an INTERVIEW is going to be a step more formal than what might be appropriate business casual once you have the job/internship.</p>	<p> Too much makeup</p> <p></p> <p> Messy hair/appearance</p> <p> Hair in front of eyes</p> <p> White/athletic socks</p> <p> Heels too high Difficulty walking Brightly colored heels</p> <p> Skirt too short</p>