HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FAIR

Are you in the Focus and Apply stages of your career planning? Make the most of the 2020 virtual careers fair by understanding what to expect and how to prepare for this opportunity.

This e-handout is intended for penultimate-year and final-year students who are eligible to apply for internships, graduate programs and employment opportunities. You are most likely to be in the Focus or Apply stages of career development, which means you are looking for practical steps on how to further your career development, or are ready to begin applying for opportunities.

WHAT WILL YOU FIND AT THE FAIR?

- Mostly large organisations, some medium-sized companies with internship and graduate opportunities
- Some organisations offer opportunities only for Australian citizens and PR residents
- Some organisations hire international students
- Different ways for you to meet and speak to all types of employer representatives and organisations

WHAT IS A CAREERS FAIR?

Careers fairs are opportunities for employers to advertise graduate programs and employment opportunities to final-year students. Employers want to meet and identify potential future. They also want to market their organisation as an attractive employer to first and second-year students.

WHAT IS A VIRTUAL CAREERS FAIR?

This year, the University of Melbourne is hosting a virtual careers fair in August in recognition of this challenging time for graduate jobs. Hosting an event virtually is a different approach, so attendees need to familiarise themselves with professional online behaviours and to be thoughtful with how you are interacting with people online.

BEFORE YOU ATTEND THE VIRTUAL FAIR

- Build a plan. Start with the question: What do I want to get out of the Virtual Fair? Shape your plan with this goal in mind. Consider making an appointment with an adviser to define your goals and plan.
- Identify and research employers. Find out eligible programs to apply for, target these organisations and tailor your approach.
- Attend employer webinars (or view the webinar recordings)
- Research yourself. What would be a good fit for you and your interests and skills?

HOW TO PREPARE: PRACTICE INTERVIEW SKILLS

In 1-1 appointments with employers, it may be treated like an interview and you may be asked motivational and behavioural questions. It is important to be prepared so you can be confident in answering a range of questions. Preparing for an interview.
• Prepare focused questions for employers and adjust according to who you are speaking to: What questions would you ask an HR person? What questions might you ask a company leader? What questions might you ask a graduate employee?

• Consider how to present yourself professionally: how you look, behave, especially not dominating time and space in small group discussions, watch timings, don’t interrupt

• Develop a professional introduction and practice so you can respond professionally

• [How to structure your elevator pitch](#)

• [The 60-second sales pitch](#)

• Use the [Smart Resume](#) tool to practice and test your elevator pitch

• Enhance your networking skills so you are comfortable talking to people in 1-1 conversations and small groups, and can adjust according to the format, topic and timing.

• [Effective networking tips](#)

• [Demonstrating commercial awareness in interviews](#)

• [Online meeting etiquette](#)

• Learn and practice how to courteously wind-up and leave a conversation.

• Check your toolkit, including your resume and LinkedIn profile. Use the [Smart Resume](#) tool for

• Learn and practice how to courteously leave a small group meeting.

• Attend a Prepare for the Fair virtual information session.

**HOW TO PREPARE: ON THE DAY**

• Meet and make a good impression on potential employers. Interacting professionally at these events takes time and preparation. [Making a truly memorable impression](#)

• Company representatives enjoy talking to students, but remember it is good practice to research organisations and their recruitment processes to demonstrate you are proactive and ready for conversations.

• Ask questions about organisations and opportunities: find out more about what they are looking for.

• **SAMPLE QUESTIONS** you might ask employers.

I am interested to know about the culture of your organisation. How do you think it differs from others in the industry?

What kinds of projects have you been involved in during your time with this organisation?

I am very interested in (put in your speciality or area of study). How does your company regard skills in this area?

Does your organization have global offices/global opportunities? Can you tell me more about these?

Form your own questions by revisiting your goal and thinking about: *What do I really want to know?*
• Find out about specific recruitment practices and tips on how to prepare
• Build your knowledge of the transferrable skills employers are looking for
• Participate in small group discussions to expand your career development thinking and inform career planning
• Adopt a positive mindset, even if the experience isn’t what you were expecting - What are you gaining from the day? What are you learning? What more can you find out?

**HOW TO PREPARE: AFTER THE VIRTUAL FAIR**

• Reflect on the day: What did you do well? What might you do differently in the future? What do you need to work on and improve?
• If the employer is happy for you to stay in touch, send a short, personal message (preferably via LinkedIn) thanking them for their time. Don’t be concerned if they don’t reply immediately or at all.
• Check back in with your toolkit – resume, elevator pitch and LinkedIn profile and update based on your experience at the virtual fair and to further tailor to specific opportunities
• Consider attending a future employability skill development session or booking an appointment to further reflect on and build from your Virtual Fair experiences.