

CAREER FAIR PREPARATION ASSIGNMENT

The Career Center hosts and co-hosts several career fairs each semester. These fairs provide students with the opportunity to connect with employers, practice networking skills, learn about opportunities, and explore career options. We encourage students to approach fairs and employers with an open mind, recognizing that companies hire for a wide variety of positions.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review the list of employers attending the career fair in Handshake. Select three employers and review their profile in Handshake, their company website, and (if available) their social media accounts to learn about the organization. If possible, find their mission or vision statement as well as a list of staff.
2. Research one participating employer that you are interested in and one that you are unfamiliar with. Use the company website, LinkedIn, annual reports, or other resources to identify specific members of their staff and what they do in their roles. Write a one-page reflection on why you originally felt the employer did not connect to your major, how you found your information, in what way(s) did your opinion change after you researched the employer, and how you think you could apply your skillset to one of the roles you researched.
3. Select two organizations that you are interested in from the list of registered employers. Research the types of positions available with this organization in Handshake and/or on their website. Identify key skills and experiences necessary for these positions. Compare your skills to those required for the position. List the key qualifications you possess and where you gained or demonstrated those skills. Keep all types of experiences in mind: coursework, research, internships, jobs, volunteering, student organizations, athletics, theater, etc. (Be sure to keep this list handy to reference before or during the fair!)
4. Complete a resume review with a Career Advisor. Schedule an appointment by calling 413-572-5206 or stopping by the office in Lammers Hall Annex. Submit a copy of your pre-and post-resume. Share your main takeaways from the review session in PLATO.
5. Develop a plan for your employer interactions. Craft an opening sentence for your conversations with employers. Create a 60-second introduction to clarify how you will talk about your skills and experiences. Partner with another student in the class

to role play employer conversations. Take turns being the employer and student. As the employer, provide feedback on the pitch, both content and delivery. As the student, note any adjustments you might make to the pitch and its delivery (think body language, eye contact, pace of speech in addition to what is being said).

6. Develop a list of 5 questions for employers. These questions can be the same across employers, though you are encouraged to develop custom questions for employers of interest. Post questions on the discussion board. Interact with 5 employers during the fair. Practice initiating and leading conversations by utilizing your opening sentence, elevator pitch, and at least two of your prepared questions, as well as asking questions based on your conversation. Make sure to get the name or business card of everyone you speak with during the fair. Submit names of employers you spoke with and three sentence summary of each interaction. How you tailored your elevator pitch, and why? Would you change your pitch now having used it a few times? If so, what would you edit?
 7. Select at least one employer to follow up with after the fair. Send a follow-up email, Handshake message or LinkedIn message to further your connection. In this email, be sure to include a short reminder of yourself and where you met them, a call to action (request more information on a specific opportunity, connection to another individual in their organization or in their network, a brief phone/video call to learn more about their organization or industry), and a thank you for their time at the fair and continued assistance. Submit a copy of this email after it has been sent.
 8. Utilize social networking to maintain and expand your professional network. Add the employers you met on LinkedIn and follow their companies. Before reaching out, develop a template message to paste into each request that mentions where you met the employer and thanking them for their time. LinkedIn provides a pre-written message, and you can easily personalize this when accessing LinkedIn via a browser. To edit these messages in a mobile app, you need to click "more" and then "personalize invite." You will need to use LinkedIn on a browser rather than in the app to edit the connection invitation. Screenshot three of your connection requests.
- Note: This approach is not universal. Some industries do not emphasize the use of LinkedIn and social media networking and other organizations, such as the CIA, instruct candidates not to follow them on social media.