Career Fair Tips

Career fairs are a great way to learn about different companies and career fields, connect with potential employers, and apply for internships and jobs. Students at all levels are encouraged to attend career fairs.

Preparing for a Career Fair

1. Clarify your purpose for going to the career fair:
   - Learn about companies and organizations; explore what’s out there
   - Look for a job or an internship
   - Network with professionals in different companies and industries
   - Practice communication skills

2. Develop your resume
   - Depending on your interests and targeted industries create one or more targeted resumes.
   - Use Career Services Drop-in Hours or Appointments for assistance.

3. Research Companies
   - Visit the Career Fair website for a list of attending companies and organizations.
   - Review company websites to determine which ones interest you most.
   - Be prepared to talk to an employer about what their company or organization does.
   - Look at the career fair map in advance, if possible, to develop your strategy.

4. Develop a script, referred to as an elevator pitch, to introduce yourself to employers. An elevator pitch should include: your name, major, year of graduation, area of interest and how your background relates to the employer.

5. Dress appropriately for your industry of interest. Not all industries expect students to be in a suit and tie. Follow MIT Careers on Pinterest for ideas for professional attire and business casual attire.

First Impressions Count

- Don't wear strong perfume or cologne
- Wear minimal jewelry as to not serve as a distraction
- Have fresh breath, but do not chew gum. Use a breath mint prior to entering the fair.
- Take care with your appearance-comb hair, iron clothes, shower, etc.
- Consider the employer you are targeting and dress according to their standard dress code.

At the Fair

1. Get a map of the floor plan and decide how to proceed, either:
   - Visit your targeted companies and organizations right away or
• “Warm up” by talking to employers further down on your list, then move on to the ones that interest you most

2. Talk to employer representatives using your elevator pitch / introductory script
   • Don’t ask “What does your company do?” If you aren’t familiar with the organization, look at their materials, and then approach the representative at the booth.
   • Don’t just grab giveaways! Be sure to talk to the employer first and then ask if you can have a giveaway.

3. Make eye contact and give a firm handshake, if appropriate custom in your culture.

4. Show enthusiasm and interest by asking questions that demonstrate familiarity with the employer, and interest in assessing whether you are a good fit for each other

5. Collect a business card or contact information from representatives you spoke with.

6. Submit your resume to the organizations that interest you

After the Career Fair

Once the fair is over your follow-up will be key to your success in maintaining the connections you made with employers and possibly getting your dream internship or job!

• Send a thank you note to employers you spoke with as a follow-up. Be sure to include details of your conversation so that they can remember you.
• Apply to positions offered at the companies you interacted with at the fair. Don’t delay!
  Be sure to send a tailored resume and cover letter as soon as possible.

GECD Resources

• List of Upcoming Career Fairs
• Researching Companies
• GECD Career Services Drop-in Hours and Appointments

Career Fairs Outside of MIT

• BU Engineering Career Development Office
• Boston College Career Center
• Career Fairs in Boston Area
• Do a Google Search for Career Fairs in a particular location or industry