Preparing for the Career Fair: Approaches for Graduate Students and Postdocs

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Career Services: What Can We Help With?
Career Services: Research Master’s and PhD students

- **Agriculture and Life Sciences**: 140 Roberts
- **Engineering**: 201 Carpenter
- **Hotel**: 180 Statler
- **ILR**: 201 Ives
- **University-wide**: 103 Barnes

*Professional master’s students: Contact your program’s office*
Career Services: Postdocs
Graduate Students Interested in a Postdoc

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You can get a lot out of career fairs, but you need to do the following:

- Identify your goals for attending
- Conduct research in advance
- Develop a strategy
- Use the career fair in conjunction with other programs
- Wait in line and tolerate large crowds
- Be patient and polite
Presentation Goals

- Explain the purpose of career fairs: students and employers
- Discuss how someone with a graduate degree might benefit from attending a career fair
- Identify resources to help research employers and develop a career fair strategy
- Provide tips and suggestions to make the most of the University-Wide Career Fair
When is the University-Wide Career Fair?

Sept 9: Technical & Engineering Employers
10 am – 3:30 pm, Barton Hall

Sept 10: Employers from All Industries
10 am – 3:30 pm, Barton Hall
Who Is Coming to the University-Wide Career Fair?

Handshake
Identifying Graduate-Degree Friendly Employers

- Search database of employers attending Career Fair
- Look at job postings:
  - Handshake
  - Organization’s website
- Conduct research on LinkedIn
- Talk to individuals in your field to see what employers have hired Cornell graduate students
Why Do Employers Come to Career Fairs?

- Increase "Brand Recognition"
  - Table at Career Fair
  - Information Sessions
Why Do Employers Come to Career Fairs?

Advertise Positions

On Handshake
- Conduct on-campus interviews during or after the fair

On their own website
- Conduct interviews at a later date, on- or off-campus
- Conduct interviews off-campus
Why Might You Attend the Career Fair?

- Practice talking to people about your background and career interests
- Identify interesting employers or industries and examine why they appeal to you
Why Might You Attend the Career Fair?

- Learn what skills or experiences are necessary for a particular industry or position
- Identify informational interview contacts if you’re considering applying for a job
- Learn about hiring cycles
Why Might You Attend the Career Fair?

- Get background information about an employer
- Make a good first impression with an employer to whom you submitted a job application
- Submit your resume / business card for future openings
Once you know your interests and what is being offered at the Career Fair…

then you can develop a strategy.
Developing a Strategy: Priorities and Logistics

1. **Decide what your top priorities are for the fair**
   
   • Do you want to meet a recruiter in person?

   • Do you need more information about how to transition into a new field?

   • Do you need new pens?
2. **Develop a ranked list of employers you’d like to meet.**

   - Make a list of your top choices of employers and the questions you’d like to ask
   - List second, third, and fourth tiers of employers in case the lines are too long
Developing a Strategy: Priorities and Logistics

3. **Consider logistics**
   - Avoid crowds between classes
   - Decide how much time you can dedicate to the event
Developing a Strategy: Being Creative and Resourceful

- Go to an information session for larger employers
- Consider pairing up with friends and sharing information
- Think broadly about what companies do
Developing a Strategy: Being Creative and Resourceful

• Use your time in line wisely
  • Listen to questions that people ask who are ahead of you in line—and ask something new!
  • Network with individuals standing in line with you
  • Visit other employer booths if they are empty
Developing a Strategy: Research Employers and Fields

- Use Cornell Career Services databases and resources
  - Hoover’s
  - CCS Link Library
  - LinkedIn
Developing a Strategy: Research Employers and Fields

• Consider:

  • What connections do they have with Cornell?
  • What Cornell students have they typically hired and what backgrounds did they have?
  • How could you relate your background with what they do?
Developing a Strategy: International Students and Scholars

- Target companies:
  - That have international branches: Uniworld
  - That may sponsor H-1B visas: Myvisajobs.com
  - That have recruited international students in the past:
  - Understand what work authorization you have after you graduate (ISSO website and walk-in hours)
Do You Need a Resume? Business Cards?

Have copies of your resume available in case the employer is accepting them

• Note: Some employers are unable to accept resumes because of regulations from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

• In those cases, business cards can be accepted
Do You Need a Resume? Business Cards?

To develop your resume:

• See [Career Guide](#) and [Optimal Resume](#)
• [CV to Resume presentation](#)
Do You Need a Resume? Business Cards?

To order business cards:

- [http://forms.store.cornell.edu/printshop/bc_student.aspx](http://forms.store.cornell.edu/printshop/bc_student.aspx)

- Save the $7 delivery charge by having them delivered to 103 Barnes Hall and you can pick them up
Develop a strong personal “elevator pitch” that highlights your skills and how you could contribute to their organization

- Identify your skills and strengths
- Identify the organization’s needs and interests
- Attend Career Services programs, look in Media Library: http://www.career.cornell.edu/resources/media/
Developing a Strategy: Formulating Good Questions

What questions could you ask?
Developing a Strategy: Formulating Good Questions

- Give a brief overview of who you are and what you’re interested in—and ask in which area of the company values these skills or interests.

- Find out what skills you would need to be a strong applicant.
Developing a Strategy: Formulating Good Questions

What questions could you ask?
Developing a Strategy: Formulating Good Questions

• Ask questions about recent events relating to the company

• Get answers to questions that might help with interviews (e.g. company culture, advancement)

• Learn what they like most about working for the company
Being a Good Career Fair Citizen

• Know when you should stop asking an employer questions
• Wear appropriate attire (at least business casual)
• Be mindful that you will be standing close to many people: don’t apply or project strong odors
• Don’t make your conversations all about yourself: try to contextualize your experiences and interests from the employer’s perspective
If You Don’t Feel Ready to Attend the Career Fair

• Meet with a career advisor or Christine Holmes

• Attend on-campus programming:
  • Cornell Career Services event calendar
  • Grad School Newsletter, Postdoctoral listserv
  • Grad School Program Chart
If You Don’t Feel Ready to Attend the Career Fair

• Explore:
  • VersatilePhD
  • Link Library

• Attend other career fairs held in spring 2015
Career Fairs

University-Wide Career Fair

• September 9 and 10, Barton Hall

ILR Career Fair

• October 15, 10 am – 3 pm, Statler Hotel Ballroom

Engineering Career Fair

• February 3, 2016, 9 am – 2 pm, Barton Hall

Master’s and PhD Virtual Career Fair

• Mid-February 2016

Non-Profit and Government Career Fair

• February 25, 2016, 1 - 5 pm, Statler Hotel Ballroom
What Are Your Questions?