CAREER FAIR MANUAL

How to prepare, what to wear, and what to say at the Career Fair.
The Career Fair is a semi-annual fair that is your chance to interact with hundreds of companies looking for students like you for jobs, internships, and co-ops. This how-to guide includes everything about the Career Fair, from researching companies to what to put on your resume to introducing yourself to an employer.

Business Career Services
Raisbeck Career Services Center
1320 Gerdin Business Building
2167 Union Dr, Ames, IA 50011-2027
(515) 294-2542
buscs@iastate.edu
http://www.business.iastate.edu/careers
When you are trying to impress a company at the Career Fair, it is imperative that you do the prep work. Knowing details about the companies you are pursuing will help you stand out from the other applicants and allow the conversation between you and the recruiter to move along much smoother. Lucky for you, Iowa State has a centralized system in which companies post job/internship opportunities. All students have a CyHire account. Once you log in you can create a personalized list of companies specifically recruiting your major and the type of position in which you are seeking (internship or full-time). This will allow you to plan and research the companies you would like to talk with at the Career Fair.

**RESEARCHING COMPANIES**

- How to log into CyHire:
  - Go to Business Career Services homepage: www.business.iastate.edu/careers
  - Click on CyHire under “Favorites.”
  - Click on “Student Log-In.”
  - Enter your ISU email address and password.

- If you don’t know your password:
  - If you do not have a password, enter your complete ISU email address and click ‘Forgot my password.’ A link will be emailed to you for creating a new password.

- For a list of organizations attending the Career Fair:
  - Log into your CyHire account.
  - Click on the Event tab; then specific event name.
  - Use the advanced search to find companies of interest to you (Make sure you select your major and type of work).
  - Click on the company name to see the company overview and other pertinent information.
These are all topics that will likely come up in a conversation with a recruiter at the Career Fair. If you are able to prove that you have done your homework on the company, it shows that you are serious about your interest in them. If it is your first time to the Career Fair or you’re not looking for an internship or job right now, you can still benefit from researching the company backgrounds. Doing so will make you stand out in the recruiter’s mind and help them remember you at future career fairs. When you have some background knowledge about the company, you engage the recruiter. You will be able to ask meaningful and specific questions the recruiter can answer and show that you are interested in what the recruiter has to say.

**WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT A COMPANY?**

- **Basic background information:**
  - What does the company do?
  - What are their major accomplishments?
- **Current Projects:**
  - What are they trying to accomplish?
  - What specific projects interest you?
- **What you would like to do in the company:**
  - Where do you see yourself within the company?
  - What about the company makes you want to work for them?
  - Why are you interested in talking to the company?

**FINAL THOUGHT**

- The goal of doing company research is to make yourself appear professional, prepared, and interested.
A well-designed resume can give you a real advantage in the job or internship market. In order to create a great resume you need to first consider how it will be used. At the Career Fair, recruiters may use your resume to learn about you and remember who you are. Afterwards, your resume can help the company decide if you are someone they are interested in interviewing. Recruiters keep resumes on file for future reference.

**What do I do?**

*The recruiter won’t accept my resume.*

Many times recruiters do not accept resumes as part of their company policy. If this happens ask how you can submit your resume via their website. It will also be beneficial to ask how you can make your resume standout, now that you will be relying solely on your resume to catch the recruiter’s eye.

Make sure you get the recruiter’s business card so you can follow up with them or have them direct you to the person to follow up once you post your resume to the website.

**What can you do?**

Make sure your resume contains all of your skills and experiences that are relevant to the positions offered by the company. Each internship, co-op, and full-time job has a unique set of requirements, and the companies will be checking to see if you meet these requirements.

**Who are you?**

You need to make a strong impression on the recruiter, and part of that is ensuring that your name is not forgotten. Yes, you will be wearing a nametag with that same information, but the recruiters will be able to take copies of your resume so that your name will not be forgotten once you leave.

**What do you want?**

The main purpose of the resume at the Career Fair is to share your objective statement or professional summary with the recruiter. This statement is one or two sentences explaining what you are seeking. After reading your objective statement, the recruiter will have an idea of how you’d like to fit into their company.

---

**TIP:** Have your Career Coordinator review your resume before the Career Fair.
YOU NEED A RESUME.

HOW DO YOU MAKE ONE?

WHAT DO YOU PUT ON IT?

CONTACT INFO
- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Professional E-mail Address

EDUCATION
- Name of School
- Degree and Major
- Graduation Date
- GPA

EXPERIENCE
- Name of Company
- Job Title
- City, State
- Dates
- Accomplishments
- Leadership Involvement
- Skills/Training
- Awards/Honors
- Volunteer Work

OTHER
- Keep it to one page
- Do not use personal pronouns such as “me”, “my”, “I”
- Use bulleted lists starting with action verbs
- Fill the space
- Personalize it
- Be truthful

Resume Quick Tips

**See a sample resume on the next page**
PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY
Aspiring market research analyst dedicated to understanding consumers and interpreting market intelligence. Articulate, versatile, and organized individual, with proven ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously. Recognized for being a leader and managing data.

EDUCATION
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa
Bachelor of Science, May 2019
Majors: Marketing & Management
GPA 3.30/4.00

Consortium Institute of Management and Business Analysis (CIMBA), Paderno Del Grappa, Italy
Study Abroad, Spring 2016

RELATED EXPERIENCE
Ames Market Research Group
Marketing Intern
• Contacted over 200 prospective clients for sales and focus group meetings
• Assembled and sent customer survey to over 1000 clients
• Compiled survey results and produced final report
• Utilized survey results to help develop new sales promotions which were fully implemented

Iowa State University, Alpha Alpha Alpha Fraternity
Membership Chairperson
• Marketed fraternity to over 300 incoming students
• Achieved 20 percent growth in new member class
• Coordinated recruitment program event which hosted over 50 potential members
• Prepared recruitment fliers and brochures for distribution during recruitment week

PROJECT EXPERIENCE
Marketing Analytics Project – Competitive Strategy Strategic Marketing Plan
• Received first place for innovative marketing proposal and best delivery to executive team
• Executed semester long marketing project for Fortune 500 company with strategy to attract more millennial customers
• Engaged in weekly collaboration and communication with three other group members

HONORS/LEADERSHIP
• Exemplary Peer Mentor Award (Spring 2017)
• Dean’s List (Fall 2016)
• Residence Hall Council (Fall 2016)
• Marketing Club (Fall 2015-Present)
• Career Fair Ambassador (Fall 2016)
• Basketball Intramurals (Spring 2015-Present)

COMPUTER SKILLS
• Adobe Creative Suite: Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator
• Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access
DRESS PROFESSIONALLY

- Dressing for success is absolutely essential in professional interaction. Your relationship with employers starts the moment you meet.

- Dressing inappropriately can do more harm than you think. You can’t get back a first impression. If you really want to impress, you need to look the part.
FOR MEN

› Start with the suit:
  • Make sure your suit is a solid dark color such as black or grey. If you can’t find a solid color, a small pinstripe detail will work. The fit of the suit is just as important as the look of suit. If your suit is too small or too big people will notice.
  • Wear a nice, button down shirt in a neutral color such as white. No bright colors.
  • Complete your ensemble with a tie. This is where you can bring in a pop of color. Make sure it’s still professional.

› Let’s talk shoes:
  • Your shoes need to coordinate. Make sure that your shoes match the rest of your ensemble.
  • Stick with a safe color, such as black or brown. At the very least, make sure your shoes and belt match.
  • No white athletic socks.

› What if I don’t have a business suit?
  • Khaki pants are a suitable business casual option.
  • Wear a nice button down shirt with a tie to really look professional.
  • Business Career Services can help with some cost effective ideas.
**Breakdown of Professional Attire For Men**

- **SHOULDERS:** Seam rests naturally on shoulders.
- **ARMHOLES:** Cut high and not boxy.
- **JACKET LENGTH:** Covers bottom and trousers’ zipper.
- **PANT LEGS:** Cut straight to create sleek silhouette.
- **SLEEVE LENGTH:** Allows half inch of shirt cuff to show.
- **DARTS:** Level with the jacket’s main button.
- **FACIAL HAIR:** Neat and clean.
- **SHOES:** Coordinate with outfit. Wear shoes that tie.
FOR WOMEN

Think conservative:
- Make sure your suit is a solid dark color such as black or grey. The fit of the suit is just as important as the look of suit. If your suit is too small or too big people will notice.
- Wear a nice, button down shirt in a neutral color such as white. No bright colors.

Shoes:
- Closed toed shoes are a must. Choose a sturdy color like black or brown.
- Flats are your best option, or choose a pair of heels no higher than one inch.
- Only wear shoes in which you’re comfortable walking. Practice walking in them before the Career Fair.

Lay off the bling:
- Keep your jewelry simple and conservative.

The sit down skirt test:
- The sit down skirt test is the only way to guarantee you are wearing the appropriate length skirt. Sit down. The skirt should fall at or below your knees.

Time for a make-under:
- Make-up should be worn conservatively. This includes foundation, eye liner, mascara and blush. Choose something closer to what you’d wear every day.

Avoid red accents:
- Nails, lips, or whatever comes in fire engine red is not a great choice. Try to be conservative with your lip color by choosing something neutral and not over the top.
- Nail polish should be worn clear or with a similar neutral color.
Breakdown of Professional Attire

For Women

**HAIR:** Neat and away from face.

**SHOULDERS:** Seam rests naturally.

**BUTTONS:** Top button of 2 or middle button of 3 should not fall below navel.

**JACKET LENGTH:** Long enough to cover the top of pant/skirt.

**PANTS:** Should not wrinkle or pull in front. This indicates they are too tight.

**SHOES:** Coordinate with outfit.
You’ve done your research and preparation. Now it is time to go talk to recruiters!
The ability to engage an employer at the Career Fair leaves a lasting impression. During the Career Fair, elevator speeches occur between a recruiter and yourself. To be effective, you need to portray yourself seriously and ask sensible questions.

What to Say
To start an effective conversation with the recruiter, it’s best to walk up and give them a firm handshake. Smile and say “Hello, my name is_________ and I am a student at Iowa State University, majoring in__________.”

Continue to tell them why you want to talk to them. This approach will initiate the handshake right away, instead of waiting for the recruiter to make the move. This will also inform the recruiter of your class standing rather than making it a surprise later in the conversation (or relying on your nametag). If you follow this approach, recruiters will see you as straight forward and experienced (even if you’re not).

When you’re speaking with the recruiter, it’s important to keep a time limit on the conversation. Keep in mind there are other students at the Career Fair waiting to talk to the same recruiter, so you shouldn’t loiter around just one. Keeping the conversation to 3-5 minutes at max is a good rule of thumb. In this time span, you can get the information you want and need, as well as leave room for some casual off-topic conversation to take place.

The Farewell
When it comes time to leave the recruiter, don’t just jump to goodbye. If you are carrying a resume ask the recruiter if they are accepting resumes. This will be the perfect time to offer them your resume and politely ask for their contact information. This will help you follow up with the recruiter after the Career Fair.

End your conversation with the recruiter by thanking them. Compliment this with a firm handshake. Don’t forget to make eye contact and smile.
Internships can be part-time or full-time and generally last for one semester or summer. Internships provide you with a taste of a company’s atmosphere, which can help with securing a full-time position in the future.

Co-ops generally last for longer periods of time in which the student would work full-time for a semester.

“ Asking about internships and co-ops shows the recruiter that you’ve got goals, which helps them connect with you as a person.”

**WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING?**

**ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS**

**Strong Questions**
- What skills does your company value the most?
- Which areas have current (or future) openings?
- How can I submit a resume to you?
- What is the best way to apply with your company?

**Weak Questions**
- What does your company do?
- What is the starting salary?
- Is lunch provided?
- Can I work from home?
Neat hairstyle.
Potential employers want to see your face. Hair should be neat and well groomed.

Smell like...nothing.
Known for your trademark scent? Leave it at home during this professional event.

Shine your shoes.
Make sure your shoes are well polished and are attractive.

Tuck in your shirt and wear a belt.
Have you noticed that pretty much every professional dress code includes a belt? That’s because it looks professional and gives a crisp appearance.

Don’t forget the nails.
Remember, you are going to be shaking a lot of hands and recruiters are very perceptive. Make sure your nails are well groomed and attractive.

Wear a conservative watch.
Stay away from sport watches that you might wear in the water or while running.

Skip the hat.
No baseball hats, dressy hats, sun hats, beanies, or ski caps.

Cover up the tattoos.
Tattoos can be a turn off for most employers and you will almost always be asked to cover it up during work anyway.

Piercings?
Try to replace big, showy piercings with something less distracting. If you can, take it out for a little while. If it can’t come out, cover it with a flesh colored band-aid.

Breath check.
Take a moment to check your breath. Bad breath? Try a mint instead of gum.

Double-check your outfit.
Look in a mirror. Make sure there are no frays, stray strings, or missing buttons. Yes, people actually notice those things.

Take a deep breath and smile!
The best thing to do after the Career Fair is visit your Career Coordinator to discuss your experience and determine how you will follow up with the recruiters. It is important to follow up so that you make an impression on the recruiter and they will remember you at future Career Fairs. Many recruiters return each year, so once you begin to establish a professional relationship, talking with the recruiters will become easier.

Why is it important to follow up with a recruiter? For starters, following up will leave the recruiter with a good impression of you. They will see that you are committed to maintaining your professional relationship with the company and will show your dedication. Most importantly it will set you apart from your fellow classmates, as many students forget to follow up.

**How to Follow Up**

- Ask for their business card and inquire as to how you should best follow up with him or her about future opportunities or to set up a time to talk more.
- Send a thank you email following the Career Fair expressing your appreciation for the opportunity to meet and discuss their company.
- Take any steps recommended by the recruiter—send them your resume, references, etc. via email or apply online.

**Whatever You Do, Don’t...**

- Forget to follow up with someone. Always send a thank you note or email.

**TIP:** Need help writing your follow-up email? Check out the Letter Writing Guide on the Business Career Services website for a template.
“Opportunities will come and go; my advice is to be proactive through networking, career fairs, and mock interviews to show companies who you are. Be open to new things and your career will truly be a journey.”
-Darrin, Marketing

“Utilize the career services’ staff; they have a wealth of knowledge and will give you an advantage in landing the career you want.”
-Ben, Management

WHAT I WISH I KNEW
Career advice from ISU College of Business alumni
“Focus on starting to build relationships with companies, but also practice presenting yourself and being able to have a productive, memorable conversation with someone you don’t know.”
- Sadie, Finance & Accounting

“If you need help searching for a career that interests you, get it! There are so many people that are here to help, but you need to make the effort to reach out to them.”
- Jamison, Marketing & Supply Chain Management

“I wish I would have known how valuable your network can be when searching for internships and jobs. Start networking now by joining a career-related student organization, requesting informational interviews, and attending the Career Week events and the Career Fairs.”
- Christine, Marketing