Ten Steps to Prepare for a Career Fair Like a Pro

Get ready: what to do before you go

_____ 1). Register on Handshake to attend CareerFest, Bio Ohio Career Fair, or the Blue Jackets Career Fair and sign up for transportation if needed.

_____ 2). Update your resume and have it reviewed by the Knowlton Center

  resume is an essential document that you will be providing to potential employers. You want it to be polished, in a professional format, and representative of your strengths. Typos or other mistakes make a lasting (and negative) impression.

_____ 3). Construct your 30-second elevator pitch

  This should include: your name, your major, Denison University, the top two relevant skills/experiences you have had, and why you are interested in the company you are speaking with. You want to introduce yourself and demonstrate the value you could add to the organization.

_____ 4). PRACTICE your elevator pitch with Knowlton Center staff

  A elevator speech should hit your main points and be genuine. This takes practice, especially in front of others. Make an appointment with a career coach via Handshake or stop by to work with a peer advisor M-F at 2:00 - 4:00pm in Burton Morgan 205.

_____ 5). Consider what you will wear to the event

  Dress like you are going to an interview. Try for business formal or business casual attire. Men: a well-fitted suit or conservative shirt and tie with dress pants, dress shoes. Women: dress pants and blouses, dresses, and blazers. Be well-groomed, in mostly neutral colors, and don’t overdo perfume/cologne.

_____ 6). Conduct research on what companies will be at the career fair

  There will likely be hundreds of companies at the career fair. If you do not look ahead, you will be overwhelmed with the size of the event and miss companies you have interest in. Knowing who will be there allows you to create a plan and make the most of your time.

_____ 7). Perform additional research on companies that are of high interest to you

  Create a word document with basic information on each company: size, organization, locations, their products, and standing in their industry. Print this out to take with you to the career fair.

_____ 8). Develop a plan of attack for the day of the event

  Decide which companies are your highest interests. Prioritize visiting those companies first when you arrive while your energy is high! Be sure to visit companies you are interested in working for even if they are not currently publicizing a position you have interest in. Career Fairs, at their core, are about networking and establishing contacts for later use!

_____ 9). Gather important materials for the big day

  Recommended: padfolio, 10-15 copies of resume, a pen, paper for notes, and printed out research on your companies of interest (for your review at the career fair). The Knowlton Center will provide a care package for each van that contains items such as breath mints and lint rollers.

_____ 10). Take a deep breath! If you have completed this checklist, you are ready!

Questions? Contact the Knowlton Center for Career Exploration!
Burton Morgan 205 | career@denison.edu | (740) 587-6656
Tips for the day of the event

1. As nerve-wracking as it may seem, navigate the career fair by yourself. Resist the urge to go to tables with a friend or peer. Remember, this is your process, and you want to be making individual connections.

2. Don’t carry large items with you such as large purses, backpacks, or laptops. Carry something minimal, like a padfolio. This leave your hands free for handshakes.

3. Follow your plan: prioritize companies of high interest and visit them first.

4. Greet each recruiter with a smile, eye contact and a firm handshake. Deliver your elevator speech as practiced. Feel free to grab materials on their table, but don’t grab so much that carrying everything becomes difficult.

5. Answer their questions and ask each company relevant questions. Inquire about their recruitment timeline and steps you can take in the process.

6. Collect business cards before leaving a table and follow their cues regarding resumes (some may be collecting them, others will simply ask you to apply online).

7. Don’t overstay your welcome. Thank each recruiter for their time and move on when appropriate.

8. Take breaks as you need them. It’s ok to step away between tables to collect yourself and look at your notes for the next employer.

Don’t forget to follow up!

1. After the event concludes, take notes immediately on the contacts and companies you interacted with in order not to forget important information.

2. Send a “thank you” card or email to those recruiters you interacted with and also include information on how you intend to proceed (apply to a position, follow up on a recommendation they made, etc).