

Visiting Job Fairs

Graduate conferences, bonding fairs, campus opportunities, career ventures, recruiting events... Every semester many one or two-day informative events take place across the country for students and graduates. These fairs can be related to location, industry sectors or subjects. Some provide very good networking opportunities, while others provide a broad range of information.

Why do companies exhibit at job fairs?

First and foremost, companies use the opportunity to present their business and to exhibit potential career opportunities. Contact can also be made with graduates who could become potential employees

How can students and graduates benefit from job fairs?

Graduates and students who are close to their exams often set their expectations too high and hope that by attending a job fair it will provide them with a particular apprenticeship or job. Job fairs provide the opportunity to meet potential employers, practice a first job interview and ask targeted questions about the company including their application procedures. Graduates and students might also find out if they could be a good fit for the business. Sometimes it is possible to have their application documents checked at the job fair and submit a short application.

Questions you should ask (yourself)

Where do you want your degree to take you? Are there any additional qualifications required to achieve this? Would you like to complete your thesis with a company? If so, do you have to propose a topic or will the company provide a selection? Does the size of the company influence your decision? Are there any subsidiaries behind the corporate groups? What entry-level opportunities are offered and how does a direct job entry differ from trainee programmes? Is further training and education of employees offered and supported? Can you ask any queries online for preparation prior to attending the job fair? You can find further information about **Job Interviews**, including tips on dress codes and to research the employers, **in our download of the same name**.

How do you prepare yourself for a visit to a job fair?

After selecting some potential employers from the list of exhibitors, you can research their company in detail to see, in particular, if your field of specialisation and applicant profile would be suitable. If possible, request some relevant brochures to be sent to you. Check to see if you can submit applications at the stand. Compile a short application which includes an individual cover letter, your CV and a business card for a selection of companies that appeal to you. Avoid elaborate portfolios, as these can be difficult to handle. Wherever possible arrange for a meeting in the morning, as the

company employees tend to have more energy, and be sure you meet the right contact person. Prepare a list of specific questions for the meeting in advance.

Your Appearance

At the job fair approach the relevant exhibitors with confidence, go straight to them rather than loitering in the vicinity. Conduct the contact meeting alone i.e. unaccompanied. After greeting them, introduce yourself with your full name and offer your hand to shake. Explain your interest in/enthusiasm for the company, ask questions which demonstrate your knowledge of the company. Take note of how detailed the answers are. Maintain eye contact, listen attentively and answer questions efficiently without being excessive. You may be able to tell if the person you are talking to is interested in you as a potential employee by judging their reactions. If he/she does not ask any questions in return, then you have perhaps not presented yourself sufficiently. Learn from this for the next stand and avoid monologues.

If the conversation goes well, offer your short application with a business card. Make a note of the names of the relevant contacts at each exhibition stand including the name of the person responsible for your application; it is advisable to request their business card so you can refer to the correct spelling and have their contact details available should you later wish to submit an application. Express your interest in the company once again at the end of the conversation.

If you do not get a positive reaction, your profile may not be a good fit. It could also be that the exhibitors are low on energy from a day of similar conversations. Remain friendly and polite at all times. Do not be disappointed, but rather continue practising your presentation for the next stand.

Fairs and Recruiting Events

Some fairs and recruiting events are listed below, we haven't included full hyperlinks as they do not last long:

<http://www.akademiker-online.de/> (student services, fair calendar)

<http://www.alma-mater.de/> (careers calendar)

<http://www.berufsstart.de/> (contact job fairs)

<http://www.career-venture.de/> (subject/industry sector-related recruiting events)

<http://www.connecticum.de/> (international business contact fair)

<http://www.karriere.de/> (application, recruiting events)

<http://www.staufenbiel.de/> (recruiting events)

Do you still have questions?

We are happy to offer personal advice:

<http://www.uni-due.de/abz/career.php>

Checklist for Job Fair Visits

Before the visit:

- Print out the list of exhibitors and events as well as the fair plan or subscribe to the news
- Compile an agenda:
 - a) View company profiles
 - b) List when you intend to visit each company and presentation
 - c) Note important events in the programme
- Create your cover letters + CV / short profile / business cards
- Draft and rehearse short concise sentences for the company representatives in advance
Who am I? What do I want? Where do I want to be?
- Prepare appropriate, sensible and neat clothing, as well as comfortable well-fitting footwear.

At the fair:

- Arrive in plenty of time. Plan for traffic and train delays
- Take advantage of the cloakroom for jackets and bags and only take the necessary essentials with you
- Do an initial walk around the job fair halls
- Head for a specific stand, short personal introduction, ask open questions
- Make a note of how successful each conversation is, the person to be contacted and who you spoke with

Afterwards:

- Review your notes for each meeting
- If it is relevant, send an email thanking the person you spoke to for the informative meeting along with your application or inform them you intend to submit your application to the relevant person in relation to the conversation at the job fair