



Career and Internship Fairs

Before the Fair:

1. **Register With CSO** – Many of the organizations at the fair will not collect resumes. Instead, they prefer you to apply for their jobs, internships, or on-campus interviews through Career Services Online (CSO). Get ahead of the game by activating your CSO account before the event at <http://careerservices.colorado.edu/students/CSO.aspx> (You will get a printed nametag at the fair!).
2. **Create Your Resume** – Do you have a resume that highlights your skills, abilities, and qualifications? Work with a Career Counselor to write a resume that will stand out. Be sure to come to resume critiques offered before the fairs.
3. **Research the Organizations/Companies** – Who is going to make a better impression, a student who walks up to a recruiter and says, “So, what does your company do?” or one who says, “I am really interested in your management training program, can you tell me more about it?” Whether it is for a career fair or an interview, the more research you do, the more prepared you will be and the more impressed the recruiter will be. Do your homework online by reviewing who will be attending the fair (<http://careerservices.colorado.edu/students/careerFairs.aspx>) and researching organizations of interest using their website. Be sure to take a look at companies you are not familiar with as you may be pleasantly surprised about the opportunities available.
4. **Explore All Options** – Keep an open mind as you research organizations. If you have a strong interest in a particular organization that is not seeking your major, take some time to find other niches that may be a good fit for you within the organization. Talk with a Career Counselor about strategic approaches.
5. **Find Information About On-Campus Interviews and Info Sessions** – Many employers will conduct interviews and information sessions on campus. Look in CSO under On-Campus Interviews and Career Events to find out if companies of interest are participating in these events. If they are conducting on-campus interviews, submit your resume through CSO (and be sure to let the recruiter know you have applied for a position).
6. **Prepare Your Introduction and Questions** – Prepare a 30-second introduction that includes your name, major, type of position you are seeking, and why you are interested in the specific organization. Be ready to answer follow-up questions from the employer and to ask questions to learn more about the organization/position. Be prepared to share how your skills and experience make you a solid candidate for their organization. Additionally, employers want to hear your goals and how an experience with their company will help you meet those goals. If you have not already, meet with a Career Counselor to help you prepare your introduction and clarify your career goals.

At the Fair:

1. **Look Professional** – Boulder is a casual place and CU-Boulder is a casual campus. Put your best foot forward by dressing professionally. Remember that “professional attire” does not just mean “dressed up.” In other words, do not wear what you would wear to a nice club or to a religious service. Instead, we recommend you wear a business suit that is clean, fits well, and nicely pressed.
 - A dark gray, navy blue, or black suit is traditional for business attire.
 - White is most traditional for wearing under the suit, but other light colors work too.
 - Wear little or no perfume or cologne.
 - Wear simple jewelry and makeup if you choose to wear any.
 - Wear closed-toed shoes in a dark, coordinating color.
 - Men: Avoid overly bright ties with distracting designs. If you do not have a suit, dark slacks paired with a light shirt and tie are the next best thing.
 - Women: Avoid short skirts and tight fitting shirts. If you do not have a suit, a dark skirt or slacks paired with a dress shirt are the next best thing.

2. **Take a Few Moments to Mentally and Physically Prepare** – When you arrive, you may find it helpful to walk around the room one time to get a sense of where organizations are and how many employers are at their table. Take time to review your 30-second introduction and questions.
3. **Be Assertive** – Walk directly to a recruiter, smile, offer a FIRM HANDSHAKE, establish eye contact, and ask for what you want. Even if you have done your homework and know a particular employer is not recruiting for the position or internship of interest, take a chance and talk to him/her anyway—he/she may be impressed enough to interview you despite their advertising. Stay positive and maintain a friendly attitude as you talk with employers. Expect to take the lead in conversation and ask thoughtful questions.
4. **Ask for Follow-Up** – Before you leave, ask the recruiters about their organization’s hiring process and when they will be conducting interviews. If they are doing on-campus interviews and you have already submitted your resume, let them know you have applied. If you have not submitted your resume, ask if you can still apply for the position. Ask for a business card or for their contact information. Assert your interest in the position and ask specifically what you need to do to become a top candidate.
5. **Ask Questions to Learn More** – The fair is your opportunity to connect with employers and to learn more about their organization. Be sure to prepare two or three questions to ask. Potential questions include:
 - Can you tell me what you are looking for in a successful candidate?
 - What challenges do you anticipate for your company/organization?
 - Can you describe the usual college graduate entry-level position?
 - If there are not any immediate openings, when do you anticipate having future opportunities?
 - What experiences might I have as an intern in your company/organization?
 - What should a college graduate know about your industry and/or organization before applying?
 - What professional associations or periodicals should I become familiar with in order to acquaint myself with what is happening in the industry?
 - What skills are most important for a position in your organization?
 - What type of training do you offer interns and new employees?
 - What advice would you give to someone who wants to break into this field?
6. **Write Down Notes and Follow-Up Actions** – After you visit with an employer, take a minute to write down a few notes about your conversation, including their name and next steps in the hiring process.
7. **Items to Bring with You:**
 - Buff One Card or Driver’s License
 - Portfolio or Folder (for resumes and notes)
 - Resumes
 - List of target companies
 - Pen & Paper (for taking notes)
8. **Items to Leave at Home:**
 - Bulky backpack or book bag
 - Cell phone (at least turn it off and wait until you are outside the room to turn it back on)

After the Fair:

1. **Follow-Up** – Contact the employers you talked to and thank them for their time. Include details that may help them to remember you. Reiterate your interest in the position and ask to be considered for an interview.
2. **Set-Up a System to Track Information** – Whether you use Excel or handwritten notes, find a way to keep track of organizations, any follow-up activities, and outcomes.
3. **Expand Your World** – Remember that not every recruiter coming to campus attends the fair and not every company hiring sends recruiters to campus. Expand your possibilities by researching companies located in the field in which you desire to work. Visit a Career Counselor to review job search strategies.

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Additional guides available at: <http://careerservices.colorado.edu/students/MajorCareerInfo.aspx>