MAKING A CAREER FAIR WORK FOR YOU

All career fairs are listed in the Events Calendar in Career Connection. Register at www.gcsu.edu/career

REASONS TO ATTEND
- Meet companies that are serious about hiring GC students for jobs and internships.
- Make a personal connection with a recruiter before and/or after applying for a job.
- Expand your network of contacts and potential interview opportunities.
- If you’re an underclassman, career fairs are a great place to learn about potential career opportunities.
- Practice networking in a safe environment.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK
- Research the companies that are attending and prioritize the ones you plan to target. Career Connection provides information on all companies attending on campus career fairs.
- For your target companies, know what you want to do for them and why.
- Practice how you will introduce yourself to employers. Be natural and mention your interest in the company.
- Develop one or two open ended questions to ask your target employers.
- Bring enough resumes (on resume paper) to leave one with all of your target companies plus a few extra.

WHAT TO EXPECT
Initially, entering a career fair can be a bit overwhelming. Knowing what to expect can help ease anxiety.
- First, locate the registration table, which is normally near the entrance. Sign-in and make a nametag.
- Upon entering the room filled with tables and/or booths, survey the layout of the room.
- If available, obtain a map of the room from registration so that you can locate your target employers.
- In most cases, human resource professionals staff the tables. Companies may also send alumni or department managers. Smaller companies may even send their company president.

ELEVATOR PITCH/INTRODUCTION
- Smile and introduce yourself. Offer your hand for a handshake – this helps establish rapport.
- Never begin with...“I’m a _____ major. What jobs do you have for me?” Instead, you need to tell them why you are the kind of candidate they are seeking, regardless of your major.
- Tell the employer what type of position you are looking for and how this fits with their company. If you saw related positions on their website, mention it or ask an open ended question about it.
- If you didn’t research ahead of time, check out their display and think about why they caught your eye. Instead of saying, “What jobs do you have?” it would be better to say, “I didn’t get a chance to research your company ahead of time but I noticed from your display ______. What advice would you have for me as someone looking for _____ position?”

MAKING THE BEST IMPRESSION
The recruiters attending the career fair have some basic expectations.
- Job candidates should have a professional resume that has been critiqued by a career advisor.
- Career fair participants should be neatly dressed and groomed. Business attire is a must for job and internship seekers. Underclassmen who are attending for the first time do not have to wear.
- A professional portfolio pad is good for carrying resumes and for taking notes.

BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT!
- Listen and watch as your fellow job seekers are talking to recruiters. You can learn a great deal about the “dos and don’ts” of job searching from being a casual observer.
- Do more than browse the job fair and passively pickup brochures and giveaways. To make the most of your time, you must introduce yourself to the employers, hand them your resume, and ask open-ended questions.
- Never leave the table without getting a business card!

AFTER THE CAREER FAIR
- Apply online to the companies that interested you the most.
- Send a thank you email letting the employer know you have applied. Attach your resume if you were unable to apply online but want to be considered for positions.
- Following-up will make you stand out among the hundreds of people they met at the job fair, showing how interested you are.
The elevator pitch is a key ingredient in your successful pursuit of a career. Think of it as an animated business card. This short, 30-second to 1-minute speech holds all of the information that you believe is crucial in order for others to gain an understanding of who you are and what you’re capable of. When you finally have the opportunity to express what makes you unique, it is imperative that you take advantage of the situation. In the world of immediate communication, your ability to convey key facets of your personality in a brief period is a requirement. This is not just an option. It is an absolute necessity. Keep the following tips in mind and you will be sure to succeed.

1. **Make eye contact and offer a firm handshake.** And always address the individual by his or her proper name. Old-fashioned manners can have a major impact from the beginning.

2. **Know your audience.** If you know which companies you want to work for, research their corporate culture and mission. If you know a specific type of job you want, then make sure you know what it takes to be successful in that job. Knowing that you have done your homework will make you confident when the time comes to speak. If you want to work in corporate communications, then you need to know why you would be successful in that role and be able to communicate as such.

3. **Emphasize key personality traits.** You have many strengths; however, it is important to focus on those that will appeal to this particular audience. What strengths would make you particularly useful to this employer and/or the role you are pursuing?

4. **Prepare an outline.** You may want to consider responding to the following questions when delivering your elevator pitch.
   
   a. What are your key strengths or positive qualities?
   b. What do you have to offer?
   c. Why are you interested in this company or, more generally, this industry?
   d. How do you work efficiently to solve problems?
   e. What unique contributions will you make?

5. **Perfect your pitch.** Finalize a cohesive elevator pitch, ensuring that it can be easily followed and that it flows smoothly.

6. **Be prepared to have a conversation.** If your pitch resonates with the employer, you want to be prepared to ease into a conversation. Relax and enjoy the opportunity to talk more about how you could be an asset to their organization.

7. **Keep in touch.** Provide the listener with contact information. At a career fair, you can leave your resume. However, for other types of networking opportunities where it would be awkward to hand out copies of your resume, it could be helpful to have your own business cards. You can create your own business card using online resources such as Vistaprint and Avery.
DRESS FOR SUCCESS
_Dress for the Job You Want...Not the Job You Have._

Visit our Pinterest page for ideas: [www.pinterest.com/gccareercenter](http://www.pinterest.com/gccareercenter)

Whether you’re doing a mock or real interview, looking for an internship at a career fair, interviewing for graduate school, or visiting a company’s information table, you want to make a strong first impression. You might be a student now, but you want to be a professional in your field. Your wardrobe reflects your new level of professionalism.

When searching for a full-time job or professional internship, invest in one or two comfortable, attractive suits you can wear to all your interviews. Once you secure a job, slowly add clothes to your wardrobe that reflect your office’s business environment. You can save money by shopping the off-season sales and buying shirts, slacks, skirts, and jackets that you can mix and match. Check stores like Macy’s, Kohl’s, Ann Taylor, TJ Maxx, Belk, JCP, Talbots, and Jos. H. Banks.

**Men**
- **First rule:** *If you’d wear it to a Derby party, do not wear it to an interview or a professional networking activity.*
- Business suit in conservative color, black, navy, gray, or brown. Avoid busy patterns, bright colors. A light pin stripe is acceptable.
- Tie with a conservative pattern and color to match the suit.
- White shirt with sleeves that extend one-quarter inch beyond the suit jacket.
- Dress socks in a color that complements the suit (not white athletic socks!)
- Leather lace up shoes, recently shined, in a color that complements the suit.
- Shave or trim beard for a neat appearance.
- Limit jewelry to a watch and wedding or class ring.
- Remove/hide noticeable piercings that may cause interviewer to judge you unfairly.
- If you absolutely cannot find a suit, wear a long sleeve, button down shirt with a conservative tie and blazer.

**Women**
- **First rule:** *If you would wear it downtown, do not wear it to an interview or professional networking activity.*
- Pants or skirt suits. Skirt-hem should be no shorter than the knee and no longer than just below the knee.
- Best suit colors are gray, medium to dark blue, or black. Patterns must be subtle and conservative.
- Choose a classic suit that fits well. Too short and too tight is not acceptable.
- Always wear skin colored hose. Knee-highs are great for pants suits.
- Classic closed toed pumps with a mid-height heel and little or no decoration.
- Limit jewelry to a watch, wedding or class ring, small earrings, and pearl necklace.
- Hairstyles should be classic and not distracting to the interviewer. Wear make-up but style should be light or neutral.
- Carry a purse or a brief case but not both.
- A professional wardrobe requires that you spend the extra money on supportive bras, camisoles, and slips.
- If you absolutely cannot find a suit, wear black or other dark color pants or skirt with a sweater set or coordinating jacket.
- **AVOID** shear material, cut-outs, skirts with front-slits, or other fashion not appropriate at a professional setting.

**All Genders**
- Shower and wash hair the morning of the interview. Hair should be neatly trimmed. Clean and trim nails.
- If it jingles, flashes, or dangles, don’t wear it!
- Remove piercings that may cause an interviewer to judge you unfairly.
- Avoid strong colognes and perfumes. Attire should be clean and pressed.
- For men, undershirts are a must. For women, wear camisoles and slips when wearing light colored or flimsy materials.

### Professional Attire vs. Business Casual

**Professional Attire/Business Dress:** Business suit for men and women, almost always appropriate for an interview or other career related events. It’s always better to be over dressed than underdressed.

**Business Casual:** A dress, skirt, or pants with blouse or sweater set for women; a jacket can complete outfit. Button down shirt and dress slacks for men - Sport coat and/or tie can complete the outfit.

**Casual Business/Snappy Casual:** For men, khakis or other similarly styled pants, collared shirt or sweater, loafers. For women, a dress or skirt and blouse and/or sweater, short heels or flats. Dark wash jeans that sit at the natural waist may be appropriate in some casual work environments.
Women have many choices, and it can be hard to find a matching suit that fits the way you would like. The conservative and classic outfit above could work for a job interview if you did not have a traditional business suit. The jacket pulls the outfit together and still provides a professional look.

Business casual options for men. If jeans are permitted in your work environment, choose a dark rinse denim. Once you have the job, these outfits could work at a job or internship. They are also great for networking events.

MY OUTFIT ON POLYVORE

Business suits are your best bet at a career fair or a job interview.

ON POLYVORE

Once you have the job, these outfits could work at a job or internship. They are also great for networking events.