

Preparing for *Internship & Job/Career Fair* conversations

(Remember that you can arrive any time during the hours listed for the fair)

BEFORE THE FAIR: REVIEW THE “EMPLOYER GUIDEBOOK” OR SIMILAR GUIDE

The guidebook should contain details regarding the participating employers’ internships and jobs. Using the Guidebook, figure out **ahead of time** which employers (and which positions) you are interested in. Know something about each of these employers. Be ready to talk about the internships or jobs in detail.

WHAT WILL YOU DO AT THE JOB FAIR?

Employers will stand behind (or in front of) tables in long rows. You will approach them, or stand in line and wait to talk with them. You should plan to shake their hand (firm handshake!), and you should plan to speak first. You should say something like, “Hi, I’m Donna Smith; I’m a junior at Capital University, majoring in marketing, and I’m interested in the [name of internship/job] that you included in the Guidebook.” At this point, the conversation can move in a number of directions...

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS:

They immediately ask for your resume and engage you in conversation.

If they start asking you questions, these are some likely topics for you to plan on:

- Why are you interested in the position?
- Tell me about your related experience or coursework.
- Tell me about yourself. (*Include past experience, organizations you are involved in, major, or other things that show your credibility as a candidate*)
- What do you want to do? Why? (*Talk about your interests in the context of positions they have posted*)
- Tell me about your experience/involvement on and off-campus. (*Again, relate to the position if possible.*)

They wait for you to say more (and may or may not ask for your resume)

You should tell them why you are interested, and summarize your qualifications for the position.

- Ask questions about the position and/or the organization that you would like answered before you apply.
- If it’s not already obvious, ask about the application process.

They say “We’re not collecting resumes. You should apply online.”

Say “Thank you, I will.” Make sure that you have the correct application website.

Then ask questions about the position and/or the organization (same as above).

If the representative doesn’t know enough to answer questions about the position, ask questions about their role:

- What is your role at [organization]?
- How did you get started at [organization]?
- What do you enjoy most about working at [organization]?
- What sets an entry-level candidate apart for your organization? What qualities do you look for?

CAN SOPHOMORES ATTEND?

Sometimes even sophomores can apply for internships, but regardless, you can **always** get a lot out of internship and job/career fairs. You can learn which qualities employers are looking for, and use that knowledge to prepare for next year. You can also use this as an opportunity to get used to the career fair environment so that it isn’t so intimidating next time.

When approaching employers, say something like, “Hi, I’m Don Smith; I’m a sophomore at Capital University, majoring in marketing, and I’m interested in preparing myself so that next year I can apply for internships like the [name of internship/job] that you included in the Guidebook.”

Then tell the representative about your current background as well as the experience and coursework you plan to pursue, and ask them, “What do you think of my plan? Do you have any advice for me regarding my next steps?”

If they encourage you to apply (because you’ve shown such amazing initiative for a sophomore), see info above.