

Career Fair FAQs

What is a career fair and how can it benefit me?

A career fair is an opportunity for you to learn about and build relationships with organizations. You can market yourself, ask questions, and connect with specific contacts. This is beneficial whether you are wondering about career options available in a few years or seeking an internship or a career right now.

Who can attend the Iowa State University career fairs?

Everyone! These events are open to Iowa State students of all majors and class levels, as well as alumni and the public.

Which career fairs should I attend and how do I find out what organizations are attending?

Log into CyHire for a list of upcoming career fairs under the "Events" tab. Click on the name of a career fair for an alphabetical list of organizations participating. You may filter based on 'Industry' or 'Major' if you would like to find organizations based on your major, area of interest, and the type of employment desired. Please note that not all organizations select specific majors. Consider attending any fair that has organizations of interest to you. The career services office for your college can offer additional guidance on this.

How do I log into CyHire?

Every Iowa State University student is automatically issued a CyHire account. To access yours, go to <https://iastate.12twenty.com/Login> and sign in with your NetID and password. If you have not logged into CyHire before, you will need to complete the required fields before proceeding. Please visit this YouTube channel which consists of short videos on the different ways you can utilize CyHire as a student. Feel free to contact the career services office for your college if you have questions.

How should I prepare for the career fairs?

Schedule an appointment with your career services office to discuss your resume, how to communicate with organizations, and what to bring with you to the career fair. Keep an eye out for information on presentations or other events your career services office offers on these topics. Use CyHire to create a personalized list of attending organizations that are of interest to you. Use this list to research the organizations prior to the fair. Know the location of an organization, what they do, any relevant openings they have, and why you are interested.

As an international student, is there anything else I should do to prepare for the career fairs?

When speaking with a recruiter, focus on your skills, experiences, and interest in the company instead of your visa status. You may also add the "Open to Discussions Regarding Sponsorship of Employment Visa" filter to your search in CyHire when reviewing organizations participating in a specific event. Please note that the person completing the registration form fills out this information, and it may not always be accurate.

What should I wear to the career fairs?

Recruiters may expect students to wear business professional or business casual attire to these events. Examples of this include business suits, slacks, dress shirts, ties, blouses, polos, khakis, and knee length or longer skirts/dresses. Do not let concerns with attire prevent you from attending. The career services office for your college is happy to speak with you prior to the career fair about any questions you have regarding attire.

How can I get to the career fairs?

All of the career fairs are located on campus, making it possible to take CyRide, walk, or drive to these events. Some career fairs have a designated "Career Fair Route" available on CyRide. Watch for promotions for this route.

What should I bring to the career fairs?

Bring several copies of your resume. A good starting point is 10-15 copies, but this may vary depending on the number of organizations with which you plan to speak. Be sure to bring a few extra copies in case you find additional organizations of interest at the event. Use a professional folder or padfolio with a pen to carry your resume and any notes from your research on the attending organizations.

Can I bring my backpack or coat?

Yes, but you may not want to bring them with you when you talk to an organization. Ask at check-in about a place where you may leave personal items. Please note that these areas are unattended, so you will want to leave any valuable items at home.

How long should I plan to be there?

Plan to spend at least an hour at the fair to give yourself time to get acclimated, wait in line, and speak with organizations. Review the list of attending organizations in CyHire ahead of time to help yourself determine how much time you will need. Budget extra time to get to and from the career fair location.

What if I have a class or work conflict?

Communicate with your instructors and/or supervisor as soon as you know the dates of the career fairs. Request work off, if possible, and talk with your instructors about what you may be able to do before or after the conflicting class to make up for the absence. Be prepared to explain why it is important to you to attend the event. Many of the career fairs go for several hours, so it may also be possible to attend before or after class or work.

What do I do when I arrive at the career fair?

Check in upon arrival at each fair to get a nametag, map, and any instructions. Some career fairs may have a designated area where you can prepare prior to entering the fair.

What do I say when I approach the booth for an organization?

Introduce yourself with a firm handshake, smile, and basic information about who you are and what you are seeking. If your degree does not align with the opportunities the organization has, focus on your interests instead.

Example: "Hello, my name is _____ and I will be graduating from ISU in year with a degree in _____." (Smile, shake hands, pause) "I am looking for a position in the area of _____." OR "I want to talk with you because..."

Prepare additional questions to ask based on your research of the organization. Examples may include:

- "What skills does your company value the most?"
- "What experiences would help me stand out as a future applicant?"
- "Which areas have current (or future) openings?" (If not listed in CyHire)
- "What happens to my resume after I submit it?"
- "Is there any way I can stand out in your online system?"
- "How can I stay in communication with you?"

What if a recruiter tells me they don't have any openings?

Some organizations attend the fair even if they do not have current job or internship openings. They may want to build awareness of their organization with students or anticipate openings in the future. Take advantage of this opportunity to promote yourself to the organization. Ask questions about future openings and what the organization looks for in applicants.

What if the recruiter tells me they aren't the contact for my area of interest?

A recruiter may not know about every area within their organization, but they can still be a great resource for more general questions such as how the application process works and what traits or skills are valued by their organization. At the end of the conversation, you can ask whether they are able to share the name and contact information for the appropriate contact for your area of interest or whether they are willing to pass your information along.

What if a recruiter won't accept my resume?

Not all organizations are able to accept paper resumes. In this case, ask what the best way is to be considered for a position. Take a business card so you can follow up with the recruiter after the career fair to provide them with your contact information.

What if a recruiter tells me to apply online?

Some organizations require that all applicants go through a standard online application process. Use the "face time" with the recruiter to ask questions about how their application process works and what stands out to their organization so that you can make your application as effective as possible.

What if a recruiter invites me to interview and I'm not interested?

It's acceptable to politely decline an invitation to interview. Let the recruiter know that you appreciate their interest but do not feel that your interests align with the opportunity.

How do I close the conversation with a recruiter?

As you wrap up the conversation, thank the recruiter for speaking with you and ask for a business card so you can continue the conversation. If you have not already offered or been asked for your resume, you may do so at this time.

How should I follow up after the career fair?

Collect business cards from the recruiters you speak with throughout the day. Within 24-48 hours of the fair, send a brief thank you email to each recruiter reiterating your interest in their organization and thanking them for taking the time to speak with you. If you connected on anything in particular, include that information to help them remember you. Follow any additional steps you learned about from the recruiter during your conversation. For example, they may have suggested that you apply online or follow up with them in two weeks.