



TECHFAIR TIPS

What is a Career Fair?

For organizations, it is an opportunity for companies to promote their organization and attract new candidates. For students / job-seekers, it is an opportunity to learn more about an organization's recruiting needs.

Why prepare for a career fair?

- ❖ To learn more about companies that may hire people with your type of background
- ❖ To make a good first impression
- ❖ To learn more about a particular company and what they look for in a potential new hire
- ❖ To network
- ❖ To demonstrate your interpersonal skills, communication skills, and business social skills

How do I prepare?

Before you go:

Research participating organizations. See our website (engineering.myfuture.mcgill.ca) to find out who is coming and view related job postings. Find out what they do and what kind of positions they usually have. This will help you to prepare thoughtful questions. Ask yourself: Is this something I'm interested in? Can I show that I am qualified? (ps. Go to any fair where the companies / jobs are of interest to you.) If you know you'll have limited time at the fair, make a priority list of the companies you want to visit, and visit them in the morning.

Bring plenty of copies of your CV with you. You do not need a cover letter. You might need to prepare more than one version (i.e. for different positions) – each tailored to support different objectives. Make sure they do not contain any spelling or grammatical errors. (Go to ECC to have your resumé / CV checked)

Prepare a 30-second introduction to use when you meet with employers. Mention: your name, field of studies / interests or skills, plus a good open-ended question. Here, you are demonstrating your interest, as well as your knowledge of the organization.

Example: "Hi, I'm Jon Bon Jovi and I'll be graduating this spring with a degree in Chemical Engineering. This past summer, I worked as a research assistant looking at oil extraction methods. I'm very interested in learning more about Petro-Canada's Production Engineer New Graduate opportunities. What kinds of projects do new graduates typically work on?"

Bring your McGill ID card.

At the fair:

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Stand straight, don't chew gum, eat, or drink. Speak up and speak clearly. Smile, make eye contact, introduce yourself and give a good handshake (i.e. perpendicular, full hand on, 2-3 pumps). Don't interrupt. Exude self-confidence and enthusiasm. Take only one giveaway when offered.

Dress appropriately. Business casual is fine. This means clean, pressed clothing, and clean shoes / boots (avoid sneakers). Don't go smelling like cigarette smoke / avoid perfume or cologne. Carry a portfolio / small briefcase (with CVs, pen and paper inside, researched notes and questions). Try to put jackets / bags in a locker ahead of time – it can get quite crowded.

TIP: Before directly approaching a recruiter, pick up any printed info, read it and listen around. What kinds of questions are being asked?

Ask for their business card. If they don't have one, ask for their or the name of a contact person within the organization. (Make sure to spell the name correctly.) Ask how you may obtain an interview- it won't cost you anything! If an interview cannot be arranged, follow-up. Send a thank you letter / e-mail to thank them for their visit, to discuss your qualifications, and reiterate your interest.

Take the time to jot down a few notes. After each meeting, write down some of the info you've learned, or questions you forgot to ask. Budget your time, and don't monopolize the representatives.

Note:

- Not all recruiters will be collecting résumés at the info session or career fair
- If you are asked to apply online, APPLY ONLINE a.s.a.p.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What skills and characteristics would the ideal candidate need to obtain a position within your company?
2. What types of career opportunities does your organization/department offer?
3. What kinds of positions do you offer to someone with my education?
4. What types of positions do you have trouble filling? Why?
5. What are the characteristics of your most successful employees?
6. Are graduate degrees important to advancing within your organization? Which ones?
7. Which courses or experiences do you suggest to be a successful candidate?
8. How long does the hiring process take? What does it consist of?
9. What is your organization's culture like?
10. Are there opportunities for ongoing training through your organization?
11. Would having a Master's or PhD degree be an advantage in obtaining a job with your organization?
12. What advice do you have for a new graduate entering this field?
13. Are there internship or coop opportunities in this field?
14. Are there individuals in your organization who might be willing to discuss their careers in more detail with me?
15. How important is "relevant" work experience when being considered for employment?

Links

<http://www.jobweb.com/students.aspx?folderid=90>

<http://mecc.mcgill.ca/students/workshops.php>

<http://career.berkeley.edu/Fairs/fairsTips.stm>