Career Fair Readiness Resources

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NAVIGATING CAREER FAIRS & NETWORKING EVENTS

Career fairs and networking events are a great way to meet employers in person or virtually, but give you limited time to sell your skills and experiences. They allow you to explore what experiences are available to you in real time. You can use career fairs and networking events to research companies and organizations that could be interesting to you. Talking to employers can help gather information and insight on your career options. The following information describes what to do during a career fair or networking event to leave a lasting, memorable impression.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Determine your goals

- Ask yourself, what do I want to accomplish?
- What goals do I have for attending?

Reflect on your experiences

- Consider the things that make you who you are:
  - Past experiences
  - Strengths
  - Successes
  - Values
  - Motivations
- Focus on how these things relate to the abilities and skills that employers are seeking.

Prepare and revise your resume

- Be sure your resume is updated and reflects any recent accomplishments.
- Review job descriptions to ensure your resume reflects the skills the organization is seeking.
- Prepare multiple versions of your resume if you are applying to positions in different disciplines or industries.
- Print out several copies of your resume.
- Visit the Career Connections Center for information on creating a resume or a resume review.

Research organizations

- Find out which organizations will be coming to career fairs, networking events, and employer hosted events by checking the “Events” section of Gator CareerLink and filtering using the “Type” function.
- Research organizations hiring for positions you are interested in to see if it might be a good match for your strengths and interests.
- Use multiple sources for your research including Career Fair Plus, Gator CareerLink, LinkedIn, and organization websites.
- Make a list of 3 – 5 organizations you want to visit. While you may not be able to see all of them, you will know which ones should be your priority.

Organize your schedule

- Download the Career Fair Plus App for easy access to employer and event information, available on the App Store and Google Play Store.
- Check the interaction type (in-person vs. virtual) listed under the schedule for each of your meetings.
- If attending a virtual event or career fair, be sure to sign up for appointments within Career Fair Plus as early as possible. Check with the Career Connections Center for the date registrations open for a specific semester.
- Check your email 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointments for times and links.
- Since virtual career fairs require scheduled appointments, no showing can leave a negative first impression on the organization, especially if you hope to work with them in the future. If something comes up or you are no longer interested in pursuing the appointment, cancel or reschedule.

DURING THE EVENT

Present your best self

- Dress in business professional clothing. Consider more comfortable shoes as you will be mobile most of the day.
- Visit the Gator Career Closet if you need to borrow professional clothing items.
- Assess your virtual presence, including ensuring you have a quiet space, appropriate background, and working technology.
- Take breaks and rest when you need to collect your thoughts. It's okay to feel nervous!
- Confidently communicate with employers- give a strong handshake/greeting, use eye contact, and warm body language. Be thankful, friendly, and polite!

Use your time strategically

- Plan your priority organizations. You will not have time to visit every organization!
- If in person, prepare to arrive early to maximize your interaction with employers and prepare to wait in lines.
- Ask employers about the next step in the hiring process. Be sure to get the contact information of the employer.

Share your elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is typically a one-minute response to the "Tell me about yourself" question during an interview, but it is also a helpful way to introduce yourself when networking and during career fairs. Your elevator pitch will allow you to demonstrate confidence, knowledge, interest, and enthusiasm while outlining:

- Your degree, why you chose this area of study, and when you are graduating.
- Highlights of your experiences and how the skills used or gained relate to the position.
- Your strengths and why you're qualified for the position/industry.
- Your career path and how this position fits with your career goals.
- Why you are interested in the company/organization (show that you've done your research).

Remember, your elevator pitch serves as a guide for your conversation and is not meant to be used as a word for word script. Practice your pitch frequently so you understand your key points and can navigate upcoming conversations with ease.

Demonstrate enthusiasm

- Demonstrate your genuine enthusiasm for the position and the current conversation
- Typical questions you can expect to receive at career fairs and networking events include:
    - What do you know about our company?
    - Tell me about your experience at [experience listed on resume]?
    - Why are you interested in working here or in this position?

AFTER THE EVENT

- Always send thank you notes or emails to the recruiters that you met.
- Attend employer hosted events or additional on-campus recruitment events to get a better idea of each organization's recruiting plan and have more time to network with employers.
- Be sure to check your email and voicemail regularly after the event for communication from employers.
- Apply for positions in Gator CareerLink.
- Remember, a career fair or networking event is not the only way to find a job or internship! There are many additional strategies to use.

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RESUME GUIDE

A resume is a strategic document that helps you proceed through the process of your next step. This could be to secure an on-site interview at an organization for an internship or job, be awarded a scholarship, or gain admission to a graduate program. It is a summary of your education, experience, and skills. Focus on your accomplishments, strengths, and transferrable skills. Think about experiences you are most proud of and want to highlight to tell your story and how you will add value.

GENERAL TIPS

- Avoid using templates online – they can be difficult to revise in the future
- Tailor to the job/program applying for
- When applying for industry positions, keep resume to 1 page
- When applying for graduate programs or those with advanced degrees, resume can be 1-2 pages
- Use 10-12 size font in a professional style
- Margins should be no smaller than 0.5 inches
- Experiences are to be listed in reverse chronological order or by importance/relevance
- Proofread! Check punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure
- Use verbs similar to those found in the job posting or that kind of work
- Use nouns (keywords) that relate to things that are part of the job with which you may have previous experience
- All dates, abbreviations, and formatting should be consistent

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE BUILDING YOUR RESUME

1. Who is my audience? To whom am I writing and why will they care?
2. What are my professional career goals?
3. What are the unique strengths I bring?
4. What experiences am I most proud of?
5. Do my descriptions summarize what I've learned or accomplished?
6. Which competencies and skills do I want to highlight throughout my resume?
7. Can the reader visualize my experiences?

For more specific resume examples, visit career.ufl.edu/communities.

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FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Mailing Address | Phone Number | Email Address | LinkedIn Customized URL/Online Portfolio

OBJECTIVE

Optional– Seeking [position] at [company] where my [a, b, & c skill/background] will support [intended accomplishment for position]

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Degree Obtained — Month and Year of Expected Graduation
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL — Overall GPA or Major GPA ____/4.0
Minor/Outside Concentration/Certificate:

Study Abroad: Include institution and coursework if related — Month Year – Month Year

Relevant Coursework: List 4-6 classes relating to career goals/that help you stand out from other applicants

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Position — Month Year – Month Year
Name of Organization, City, State

- Begin each bullet point with a present tense action verb – if it happened in the past, use past tense verbs
- Use formula ACTION VERB + TASK + RESULT
- Answer the questions: "What did I accomplish?", "How did I do this?", and "Why is this important?"
- Focus on quantifiable accomplishments vs. tasks and job duties
- Avoid repeating same action verbs and fragments
- Use verbs similar to those found in the job posting or a description of that kind of work

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant — Month Year – Month Year
Name of Research Lab, Location

- Use similar formula as above
- Should have at least 2-3 bullet points
- If including publications, use appropriate format for field (MLA/APA/Chicago)

LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

Position — Month Year – Month Year
Name of Organization, Location

- Include involvement such as student organizations, sororities/fraternities, sports activities
- List office positions held and committee involvement

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Should be formatted similar to other experience sections
- Other headings can include military service, volunteer/community service, academic projects, personal projects, shadowing

SKILLS

Computer skills, technical skills beyond MS Office, certifications, databases
Language skills (fluent, bilingual, conversational)

AWARDS OR HONORS

Dean's List — List semesters or range of semesters
Recipient, Scholarship — Year Awarded

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COMMUNICATING YOUR COMPETENCIES AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS USING ACTION VERBS

Competencies are a combination of **knowledge**, **skills**, and **personal attributes** that are relevant to work and life. They are transferable across all industries and fields. Demonstrating your competencies throughout your application materials is essential to communicating your ability to meet or exceed the qualifications of your opportunity of interest.

Instructions: To begin to develop an idea of where you are in your professional development journey, tally one point for each action verb you check in each Competency Group. Once you have tallied the skills in each competency group, you can visualize your strengths and areas of growth in your professional development and be able to communicate them.

Critical Thinking: The ability to process and interpret information objectively in order to make decisions. And the capacity to reflect upon the outcomes of decisions made in order to inform future actions.

	Analytical
	Adapted
	Analyzed
	Applied
	Calculated
	Computed
	Designed
	Developed
	Devised
	Diagnosed
	Evaluated

	Analytical
	Identified
	Interpreted
	Investigated
	Researched
	Reviewed
	Solved
	Studied
	Surveyed
	Tested
	Engineered
	Examined

	Create/Innovate
	Authored
	Conceived
	Conceptualized
	Created
	Customized
	Designed
	Developed
	Directed
	Formulated
	Founded
	Illustrated
	Instituted

	Create/Innovate
	Integrated
	Introduced
	Invented
	Investigated
	Modified
	Originated
	Performed
	Planned
	Proposed
	Revised
	Shaped
	Solved

	Financial
	Administered
	Allocated
	Analyzed
	Appraised
	Audited
	Balanced
	Budgeted
	Calculated
	Computed
	Developed
	Forecast
	Managed

	Financial
	Marketed
	Measured
	Quantified
	Planned
	Projected
	Researched
	Reviewed
	Surveyed

Communication Skills: The ability to effectively exchange thoughts and ideas with others through listening, speaking, writing, and nonverbal interactions.

	Communication
	Advertised
	Authored
	Collaborated
	Communicated
	Composed
	Corresponded
	Directed
	Edited
	Formulated
	Influenced
	Informed
	Instructed

	Communication
	Interpreted
	Mediated
	Moderated
	Negotiated
	Oriented
	Persuaded
	Presented
	Promoted
	Publicized
	Recommended
	Reconciled
	Recruited

	Communication
	Redirected
	Referred
	Represented
	Resolved
	Translated

	Interpersonal Skills
	Accommodated
	Adjusted
	Advised
	Arranged
	Assisted
	Consulted
	Contributed
	Cooperated
	Guided
	Influenced
	Mediated
	Moderated

	Interpersonal Skills
	Modified
	Motivated
	Negotiated
	Personalized
	Persuaded
	Provided
	Requested
	Respected
	Served
	Sold
	Taught

Sense of Self: The ability to demonstrate ethics, self-management, identity and values awareness, motivation, and initiative, and emotional intelligence.

Initiative
Established
Founded
Generated
Implemented
Innovated
Instituted
Introduced
Launched
Led
Motivated
Originated
Pioneered

Management
Administered
Analyzed
Assigned
Attained
Chaired
Consolidated
Contracted
Coordinated
Delegated
Developed
Directed

Management
Established
Evaluated
Executed
Increased
Improved
Initiated
Instituted
Managed
Motivated
Organized
Oversaw

Management
Prioritized
Produced
Reviewed
Scheduled
Strengthened
Supervised
Enhanced
Planned
Improved
Initiated
Recognized

Teamwork: The ability to navigate interactions with a variety of individuals to contribute to a common goal while exhibiting the ability to manage conflict, an appreciation and engagement with/of diversity, understanding of group dynamics, and collaboration.

Train/Consult/Team
Advised
Aided
Assisted
Coached
Collaborated
Communicated
Coordinated
Counseled
Developed
Educated
Enabled
Encouraged

Train/Consult/Team
Established
Explained
Facilitated
Focused
Guided
Initiated
Instructed
Persuaded
Represented
Supported
Trained
Tutored
Volunteered

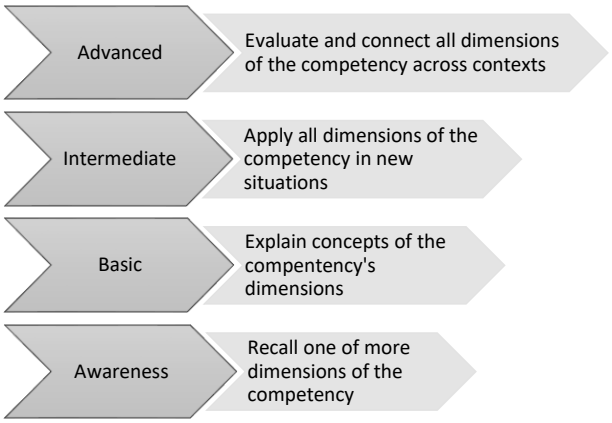
Counsel & Serve/Team
Administered
Advocated
Aided
Alleviated
Arranged
Assessed
Assisted
Clarified
Coached
Contributed
Encouraged
Ensured

Counsel & Serve/Team
Expedited
Facilitated
Familiarized
Intervened
Listened
Motivated
Provided
Represented
Resolved
Supported
Treated
Supervised

Leadership
Administered
Allocated
Approved
Assigned
Authorized
Awarded
Conducted
Delegated
Designated
Directed
Discharged
Enforced

Skills Assessment in each Competency Group	
__/65	Critical Thinking
__/52	Communication Skills
__/45	Sense of Self
__/60	Teamwork

Competency Proficiency Levels



Competencies can be tough to explain because they are **multidimensional**. Reflect on your knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in each competency group.

Can you articulate your competencies in your application documents or in an interview?

Constructing Effective Bullet Points for Your Resume/CV, Cover Letter, and Interviewing

- Begin each bullet point with a present tense action verb – if it happened in the past, use past tense verbs
- Use formula: ACTION VERB + TASK + RESULT
- Answer the questions, “What did I accomplish?”, “How did I do this?”, and “Why is this important?”
- Focus on quantifiable accomplishments vs. tasks and job duties
- Avoid repeating the same action verbs and fragments
- Use verbs similar to those found in the job posting or a description of that kind of work

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ELEVATOR PITCH AND NETWORKING INTRODUCTIONS

Crafting a concise and compelling introduction, commonly known as an elevator pitch, is an effective way to answer the "tell me about yourself" interview questions, introduce your professional goals, or how you can be of assistance to individuals or organizations at networking events. These introductions should be polished and customized based on your target audience and should be 30-60 seconds. Remember, these introductions serve as a guide for your conversation and are not meant to be used as a word for word script. Practice your pitch frequently so you understand your key points and can navigate upcoming networking conversations with ease.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. Where are you now in your career journey? Where have you been to get to this point? Where do you want to be in the future? Begin with the end in mind.
2. What do you want individuals to know about you from your introduction?
3. What is your goal for the introduction?

CRAFTING YOUR INTRODUCTION

1. Who you are , what you do, and what your goals are

I am a student at the University of Florida majoring in ___. I have experience in ___. My long-term career goals surround solving problems in ___ area.

2. What are your strengths, values, skills, personal attributes, and successes? What do you know?

My success in **[insert experience]** to solving problems utilizes my strengths in ___ and guiding values of ___.

3. How can you contribute based on your research of the organization?

As a leader in xyz, I see that your team does ___, and I believe I can bring a fresh perspective and help you achieve ___ goals

4. Wrap up with next steps

I think I am a great fit for this organization, and I am excited for an opportunity to learn more your opportunities.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Use the space below to draft your pitch: