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Career Fair Readiness Resources

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Navigating Career Fairs & Networking Events Guide

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 FAIR

Determine Your Goals

- Ask yourself, what do I want to accomplish at the career fair?
- 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.
 - Schedule a Career Planning Appointment or drop by Express Drop-In for a resume review.
 - Use Quinncia to receive custom resume feedback and for help on navigating Application Tracking Software (ATS)

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 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 should know which ones would be your priority.

Organize Your Schedule

- Download the Symplicity Jobs and Careers 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 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.

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DURING THE FAIR

Present Your Best Self

- Dress in business professional clothing. Consider more comfortable shoes as you will be mobile most of the day.
- Visit the Molm Family 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!

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 FAIR

- 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.
- Check out Quinncia for mock AI interviews to help you prepare for the real thing!

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A RESUME?

A resume is a strategic document that highlights your accomplishments and experiences for use in an application process. 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. This document should focus on your accomplishments, strengths, and transferrable skills. Think about experiences you are most proud of and want to highlight to tell your story.

GENERAL TIPS

- Avoid using templates online - they can be difficult to revise and customize for your unique experiences
- Tailor your document to the job/program you are applying for
- When applying for industry positions, keep your resume to 1 page
- When applying for graduate programs or those with advanced degrees, your resume can be 1-2 pages
- Use 10-12 size font in a professional style
- Margins should be no smaller than 0.5 inches
- List your experiences in reverse chronological order or by importance/relevance
- Proofread! Check for appropriate punctuation, spelling, grammar, and sentence structure
- Use verbs and keywords similar to those found in the job posting
- All dates, abbreviations, and formatting should be consistent throughout your document

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 to this position?
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 experience?

RESUME REVIEWS

The Career Connections Center provides several options to review your resume and provide customized feedback.

- Visit Express Drop-In (in-person or via Zoom) to meet with a Career Ambassador- no appointment needed
- Utilize Quinncia- our on-demand resume review tool (see page 6 for instructions)
- Attend a C3 workshop or lab to learn more about creating effective job search documents
- Schedule a Career Planning Appointment with a Career Coach via your Gator CareerLink account

For more specific resume examples, visit career.ufl.edu/resource-library/

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Customizing your application materials means utilizing space, action verbs and keywords strategically to demonstrate that you have the knowledge, experience, transferable skills, and personal attributes necessary to perform well in the position.

Your application materials, including resume, cover letter, supplemental questions, and application, need to be organized and customized to each position.

STRATEGIES FOR CUSTOMIZING YOUR RESUME

Scan the Job Posting for Keywords

- Job Title
- Job Description
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Preferred Qualifications

Prioritize the Qualifications

Review how the job posting lists and describes the qualifications, responsibilities, and requirements. Next, structure and organize your materials in a manner that a 10-20 second scan reveals that you exceed the minimum requirements.

- Prioritize experiences that reflect your transferrable skills to match the duties and responsibilities of the role
- Mimic the posting's language for action verbs, competencies, and experience titles (if they are similar)

Sample Job Description

Full Job Description

The New York Times Editing Center, 40-person editing and production operation based in Florida but working remotely, seeks an experienced copy editor to join a team delivering content through the New York Times News Service and producing dozens of publications, including The New York Times International Weekly. Taking the tasks seriously without taking yourself too seriously would separate the top contenders for a position that comes with high expectations and responsibility.

Responsibilities:

- Edit and trim New York Times stories for a global audience, while adhering to Times procedures and standards.
- Slot other editors' work and prioritize being the first or second edit on a story.
- Update stories as news develops.
- Compile story budgets and edit others' budgets for accuracy and completeness.

Qualifications:

- At least 5 years' experience as an assigning/copy editor for a professional publication.
- Bachelor's degree in journalism or a related subject.
- Preferably a background leading process and/or personnel.
- Strong news judgment and a deep understanding of world events and how The Times covers them.
- Ability to work on multiple projects, on multiple deadlines, with clarity and consistency.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, both written and verbal.

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CUSTOMIZING YOUR JOB SEARCH MATERIALS

ASSESS FOR POTENTIAL FIT

When customizing your application, determine how you can infuse elements of the job description, your knowledge about the organization, and your unique experiences into the following:

- Supplemental Questions
- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Other Application Documents

Below you will find ideas for customizing and personalizing your application materials.

Values

An organization's values are principles that guide an organization's day to day operations, beliefs, and culture. Demonstrate how your behaviors contributed to the success of your previous organizations or teams by using strong action verbs that mirror the values listed in the job posting or on the organization's website.

Interest

Start with the why. What specifics can you provide that show you want to contribute to this organization and the work that they do? Where are you highlighting specific attributes, accomplishments, and skills that show how you can contribute?

Competencies and Skills

What evidence are you providing that you have the knowledge, skills and personal attributes detailed in the job posting and organizational research to perform well in the required capacity?

Resources

C3 Resume Template (see Resume Samples Guide)

<http://jobscan.co/>

<https://cultivatedculture.com/tools/>

<https://skills.emsidata.com/resume>

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Application Tracking Software (ATS) Compatibility

If you are submitting an online application to a job, chances are you will be submitting your documents into an Application Software System (ATS). ATS are tools used by recruiting teams to streamline the hiring process.

Many organizations use software to scan and parse your resume- essentially, to pre-screen your application materials before a recruiter ever sees them. The parameters of the software are set by the organization, but your application may be ranked or disqualified based on appropriate formatting, keywords that align with the desired education, skills, knowledge and experience for that specific role. Some programs are sophisticated enough to evaluate your resume's match percentage rate with the job posting. The organization sets the threshold for applicants to move through further screening.

Keep your formatting simple to ensure that your resume can be parsed accurately. It is likely that your resume will be parsed into a candidate profile that is easily filtered and searched. These common and seemingly harmless mistakes could cause errors with the software and disqualify you from consideration:

- Any kind of template including Canva, Word, Google etc.
- Tables and columns – as the content could be removed or distorted
- Using acronyms in place of keywords and skills
- Submitting in alternative document formats other than .docx or .pdf

ATS Checklist

- Applicable Keywords from the job posting appropriately demonstrated in job titles, hard skills, technical skills, soft skills (personal attributes)
- Usage of headings for education, relevant experience categories
- Reverse chronological formatting
- PDF to preserve the formatting
- Passes the .txt test – a quick test to see if your resume is scannable when all formatting is removed

Quinnia

Quinnia is a virtual tool that provides personalized feedback for resumes and mock interviews using artificial intelligence (AI) technology. Quinnia is a free resource open to all UF students and alumni with GatorLink credentials. To get started with Quinnia, follow the steps below:

- Navigate to www.quinnia.io
- Click "Sign In/Up" button
- Sign in using your UFL Email and GatorLink login information

Additional Reading

- [The Dos and Don'ts of ATS](#)
- [A Guide to Applicant Tracking Systems](#)
- [Resume Outline](#)



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Creating Strong Bullet Points

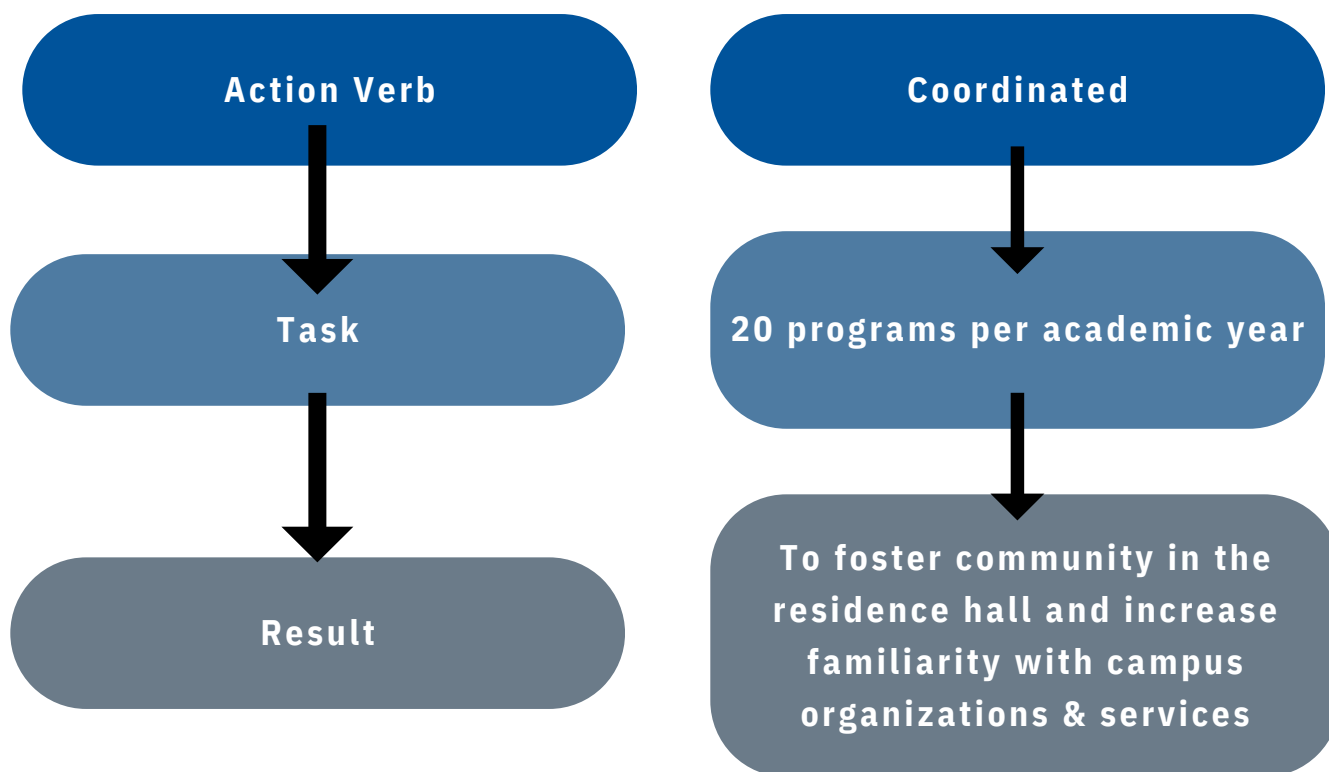
Resume bullet points should demonstrate effective use of skills. Each bullet point should directly correlate with a duty or responsibility that you see in a job posting. When crafting your bullet points, you want to evaluate what skills you are demonstrating and why that is important to the audience that will be screening your resume.

Begin each bullet point with a skills-based action verb. See pages 8-10 for examples of action 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
- 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

Communicating Your Transferrable Skills

The goal of your resume is to be a strategic (customized) overview of your knowledge, skills and abilities acquired in and outside of the classroom. The bullet points under each experience should link directly to the duties, responsibilities, and desired qualities detailed on the position or program description.



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COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS & RESUME ACTION VERBS

Communication: Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

Accommodated	Edited	Persuaded
Adjusted	Formulated	Presented
Advertised	Guided	Promoted
Advised	Influenced	Provided
Arranged	Informed	Publicized
Assisted	Instructed	Recommended
Authored	Interpreted	Reconciled
Collaborated	Mediated	Recruited
Communicated	Moderated	Redirected
Composed	Modified	Referred
Consulted	Motivated	Represented
Contributed	Negotiated	Requested
Cooperated	Oriented	Resolved
Corresponded	Personalized	Respected

Critical Thinking: Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

Adapted	Conceived	Solved
Analyzed	Conceptualized	Administered
Applied	Created	Allocated
Calculated	Customized	Analyzed
Computed	Designed	Appraised
Designed	Developed	Audited
Developed	Directed	Balanced
Devised	Formulated	Budgeted
Diagnosed	Founded	Calculated
Engineered	Illustrated	Computed
Evaluated	Instituted	Developed
Examined	Integrated	Forecast
Identified	Introduced	Managed
Interpreted	Invented	Marketed
Investigated	Investigated	Measured
Researched	Modified	Planned
Reviewed	Originated	Projected
Solved	Performed	Quantified
Studied	Planned	Researched
Surveyed	Proposed	Reviewed
Tested	Revised	Surveyed

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COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS & RESUME ACTION VERBS

Equity & Inclusion: Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

Reflected
Increased
Embraced
Promoted
Supported
Advocated
Enhanced
Ensured

Incorporated
Leveraged
Assessed
Bridge
Champion
Increase
Represent
Foster

United
Built
Galvanized
Demonstrated
Integrate
Foster
Facilitated
Prioritized

Leadership: Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

Administered
Advocated
Allocated
Analyzed
Approved
Assigned
Attained
Authorized
Awarded
Budgeted
Chaired
Conducted
Consolidated
Contracted
Coordinated
Designated
Developed
Diagnosed
Directed

Enforced
Engineered
Enhanced
Established
Evaluated
Executed
Executed
Founded
Galvanized
Generated
Grew
Implemented
Improved
Increased
Initiated
Innovated
Instituted
Introduced
Launched

Managed
Mentored
Motivated
Negotiated
Organized
Originated
Oversaw
Persuaded
Pioneered
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recognized
Reviewed
Scheduled
Spearheaded
Strengthened
Supervised
Transformed

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COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS & RESUME ACTION VERBS

Teamwork: Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Advised
Aided
Assisted
Coached
Collaborated
Communicated
Coordinated
Counseled
Developed
Educated
Enabled
Encouraged
Established
Explained
Facilitated
Focused

Guided
Initiated
Instructed
Persuaded
Represented
Supported
Trained
Tutored
Volunteered
Administered
Advocated
Aided
Alleviated
Arranged
Assessed
Assisted

Clarified
Coached
Contributed
Encouraged
Ensured
Expedited
Facilitated
Familiarized
Intervened
Listened
Motivated
Provided
Represented
Resolved
Supported
Treated

Technology/Technical: Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Accelerated
Analyzed
Applied
Assembled
Authenticated
Automated
Balanced
Bridged
Built
Calculated
Calibrated
Coded
Configured
Consolidated
Constructed
Debugged
Decoded
Deployed
Digitized
Discovered
Enabled
Enhanced
Equipped

Finalized
Formatted
Identified
Implemented
Initialized
Installed
Integrated
Launched
Maintained
Manufactured
Migrated
Mined
Modeled
Modified
Networked
Optimized
Overhauled
Packaged
Patched
Pinpointed
Prevented
Prioritized
Processed

Rebuilt
Reconstructed
Recovered
Reinforced
Replicated
Restored
Retooled
Retrieved
Retrofitted
Revamped
Revised
Routed
Scrubbed
Secured
Sequenced
Stabilized
Standardized
Systematized
Tested
Transitioned
Updated
Upgraded
Validated

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Pitch Perfect: Getting Elevator Ready

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN ELEVATOR PITCH?

An elevator pitch is a common way to answer the "tell me about yourself" interview question, introduce your professional goals, or as a way to share your professional and personal story succinctly at a networking event or career fair. These introductions should be customized based on your target audience and should be 30-60 seconds.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE BUILDING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

- 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.
- What do you want individuals to know about you from your introduction?
- Who are you hoping to speak with?
- What is your goal for the introduction?

CRAFTING YOUR INTRODUCTION

NAME AND ROLE

Who are you, what you do, and what your goals are:

COMPETENCIES & EXPERTISE

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

TARGET AUDIENCE

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

CALL TO ACTION

Wrap up with next steps:

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ELEVATOR PITCH EXAMPLE:

CRAFTING YOUR INTRODUCTION

NAME AND ROLE

Who are you, what you do, and what your goals are:

Hi there! I'm Sara, a driven marketing student at the University of Florida. With a passion for music and a flair for creativity, I'm excited to grow in the professional field to learn more on how to market for the best and brightest new artists at large companies.

TARGET AUDIENCE

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

To all forward-thinking companies seeking a dynamic professional, I bring a unique blend of industry experience and academic knowledge. Whether you're in need of a strategic mind to craft compelling campaigns or a team player who can connect with diverse audiences, my background makes me a valuable asset to your organization.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

USE THE SPACE BELOW TO DRAFT YOUR PITCH:

COMPETENCIES & EXPERTISE

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

Through my incredible opportunity to intern at Spotify, I gained valuable experience in leveraging data-driven insights and innovative strategies to engage audiences and achieve impactful results. At the same time, I've been juggling my academic pursuits with a part-time job as a marketing assistant, refining my abilities to collaborate effectively and make a positive impact within the campus community.

CALL TO ACTION

Wrap up with next steps:

I'm excited to contribute my expertise and enthusiasm to the full time workforce and help drive success in a fast-paced environment. Let's collaborate and make an impact together!