



UMassAmherst

College of Social
& Behavioral Sciences
Career and Professional
Development

How to Navigate a Virtual Career Fair

A career fair, whether in-person or virtual, is an excellent opportunity to begin having career conversations with recruiters. Start developing your professional network today! No matter where you are in your career pathway, it is never too early to plan to attend a career fair. Your SBS Career Team is here to assist you with practicing your elevator pitch, enhancing your application materials, and talking through how to research companies so you may present your best self the day of the career fair. Schedule a 1:1 appointment via Handshake or attend a workshop with your SBS Career Advisors to prepare for the upcoming virtual career fairs!

Where can I locate the virtual career fair?

UMass Amherst will be using Handshake's virtual career fair platform for the Fall 2021 semester. Handshake offers excellent functionality including video, audio, and text-based chats in both a 1-to-1 and group format.

How it works:

1. Sign into your Handshake account.
2. On your home page, click on the "Events" tab.
3. Then, select career fairs to see a list of upcoming UMass virtual fairs you are most interested in.
4. Use Handshake to schedule 1:1 or group sessions with employers – **you can only attend sessions you register for in advance.**
5. To sign up for 1:1 or group sessions, you may be prompted to update your profile privacy setting. Handshake recommends "Community" to make the most of your virtual fair experience.
6. You can follow employers who are registered to attend the fair, but do not have a meeting schedule posted yet. You will receive an alert through Handshake when they add their schedule.
7. **Recommended technology:** Please use a computer to attend your sessions on fair day. Use Chrome or Firefox for the best experience. Make sure your browser allows pop-ups. All the fair functions are also accessible using the iOS or Android Handshake Mobile App.
8. On fair day when you log into Handshake, you will see a banner at the top of the page with a link that will take you directly to the fair and your scheduled sessions.
9. To join a session, click the blue "**Launch Video**" button. You can join up to 5 minutes early to test your connection.

Preparing for a Virtual Career Fair

- **Research employers that will be attending on [Handshake](#).** Take note of which positions are of interest to you. What are the qualifications/skills required of these positions?
- **Draft your **game plan and prioritize.**** Which recruiters do you want to schedule a 10-minute meeting with on Handshake?

- **Think of what questions you want to ask** each recruiter. Perhaps there was something that stood out in their job/internship position description. **Write your questions down.**
- **Prepare your elevator pitch** including information that you want to get across to each recruiter. Examples could include:
 - 2-3 important things or qualities these recruiters should know about you.
 - Why would you like working for their company, and specifically in their advertised role?
- **Practice your elevator pitch**, including how you can contribute to their organization and why they interest you.
- Upload a **resume** to your profile, after having it reviewed by one of your SBS Career Advisors or SBS Pathways Peer Advisors.

Tip: After uploading your resume to your Handshake profile, click the blue button “**Feature on Profile**” to make the document public - when you sign up for sessions, this will allow the employer to view your resume!

- After you sign up for a session with a recruiter, you will have the ability to directly message the session recruiter through Handshake. This can be very useful on fair day so students can directly message employers if they are experiencing technical difficulties or are running late.
- Although the career fair is virtual, dress to impress! **Plan your professional business or business casual outfit.**

During the Virtual Career Fair

- **Arrive early to your virtual meetings with recruiters.** Click the blue “Launch Video” button. You can join up to 5 minutes early to test your connection.
- Make sure your **phone is turned off** and is not a distraction.
- If you run into any technical issues, **there will be a group meeting room via Zoom with SBS Career team members to help answer any of your questions.** You may also directly message recruiters through the chat feature on Handshake.
- Remember to make **eye contact**, smile, and try to be relaxed enough to show your personality.
- Don’t forget to jot down notes if there was something important that stood out to you during your conversation.
- If the conversation is going well, you can tell the recruiter: “I am mindful of other students who want to speak with you and I would like to continue this conversation at another time. May I follow-up with you by email?”
- Don’t leave a meeting with a recruiter until you have asked for their contact information.

After the Virtual Career Fair

- As soon as a meeting session is complete, you will receive a pop-up notification in Handshake which can be used to send a message directly to the recruiter to thank them for the meeting.
- After the fair is complete, you will receive an email from Handshake with a list of all of your meetings and links to directly message each of the recruiter contacts you met with that day.
- Remember to send **thank you messages or emails** within 24 hours of the career fair to each recruiter you spoke to. Make the emails personal and reference something specific that you talked about. Consider, what will make you stand out?

- If interested, submit any **online applications**, if organizations require them.
- **Explore the organizations** you are most interested in further, and make an action plan to pursue those opportunities.

Student Resources from Handshake

- [Students – Handshake’s Guide to Attending a Virtual Fair](#) (written)
- [Students – Handshake’s Guide to Attending a Virtual Fair](#) (video)