

UVA STUDENT CAREERS CENTRE

How to prepare for a company fair

- **Research the companies that are attending:** try to find out what the company is about, who their clients are, what kind of projects they do and what their core values are. Make a list of the top 10 companies that interest you the most.
- **Prepare questions:** make a list of questions you would like to ask per company. What are you curious about? What are their main challenges nowadays? Or more personal: what would your work day look like? You might also want to ask them about current vacancies, or other possibilities in the future. Consider telling them about your thesis. Are there perhaps topics that might interest them?
- **Create and practice your personal introduction:** take the time to prepare on how you would like to profile yourself. Think about how to tell them your name, study background, your current career goal or the job you are aiming for, the things you think are important and interesting, and the skills you gained so far. Practice out loud on how to formulate this a couple of times.
- **Prepare for potential interview questions:** it will calm your nerves to have some examples of former (work)experiences that underline your personal introduction. Think of some concrete situations in which you developed and practiced your skills, for example.

Visiting the company fair

- **Be confident:** dress appropriately, smile and give a firm handshake.
- **Visit the companies of your top 10 first:** be pro-active and decide which stand you want to go to first. You can always wander around and get surprised by other companies later.
- **Break the ice:** check and see whether the company has anyone free to talk to. It can be uncomfortable to approach people, but it helps to break the ice by asking a question about something that is happening at that moment (“it’s very busy, have you spoken to a lot of students already?”) or simply ask “do you have a moment to speak about your company?”
- **Ask questions:** ask the questions you’ve prepared. Also, think about asking them for advice when they don’t offer something you are interested in. Do they know somebody else to talk to? Also, ask them about their recruitment procedures, as that is relevant general information.
- **Ask the best way to follow the person or the organisation:** a website? LinkedIn? Other sources of information, for example a professional journal?
- **Take notes:** write down names, email addresses and phone numbers, and the topics you’ve discussed with them. This will make it easy to follow up on your conversation later. You can also ask for their business cards.

What to do after the event

- **Follow up with the people you talked to:** decide what your desirable outcome would be for every company that you've talked to and follow up on the conversation you had. For example, by sending a thank you note through email or by inviting people you've talked to for a LinkedIn connection. Make sure you always add a personal note on LinkedIn. Send additional relevant information, like your CV, if needed, and kindly suggest a next step. Also follow up on conversations with fellow attendees of the company fair, you might be able to point each other on relevant possibilities.