Career & Grad School Expo
FAQs

1. **Why would I go to the Expo if I am not yet seeking employment or applying for grad school?**
   - This is an opportunity to begin exploring opportunities that may be of interest in the future. It’s also a great way to see how recruiting of this type works. You never know when you may learn about opportunities that you didn’t even know existed!
   - Practice your networking skills! The more you practice, the more comfortable you will become with the process. It will be less intimidating when you need to do this in the future.
   - Find out from recruiters what they look for in ideal candidates. What does it take to land an internship or job with their organization or a spot in their graduate program?

2. **What can I do to prepare?**
   - Research organizations of interest to you prior to the Expo. You can find a list of exhibitors on the Career Center website.
   - Prepare a list of organizations, in order of preference, which you want to target during the Expo. Start with the exhibitors lowest on your list in order to build your confidence and comfort level. At that point, approach your top choices.
   - Review the Expo Tip Sheet for specific strategies.

3. **What should I bring to the Expo?**
   - **Suggestions for Juniors and Seniors**
     - Several copies of your résumé on quality résumé paper. *Please note that some employers do not accept résumés at the Expo due to OFCCP regulations. If this is the case, follow the instructions they give, and be sure to follow up.
     - **Business/Networking Cards** – Business cards are not just for the already-employed. They’re a great tool for marketing yourself and making a lasting impression. For more on student business/networking cards, check out this site:
     - Professional portfolio or padfolio – tote your résumés in the pocket of a professional-looking portfolio. It will also give a place to write notes and store business cards. We have a sample in the Career Center that you can view if you aren’t sure what a professional portfolio might look like.
   - **Suggestions for First-Years and Sophomores**
     - Copies of your résumé and networking card if you are looking for summer employment or internship opportunities.
     - A list of informational interview questions. These are questions geared toward learning more about an area of potential interest. Use these questions to help you “break the ice” when you approach a recruiter.
     - An eagerness to learn and explore. Remember: you’re not committing to anything by attending. Be open to ideas of how you might apply transferable skill sets to various employers. Think outside the box!
4. **How should I dress for the Expo?**
   - If you are seeking employment or internship opportunities, you should dress professionally. During challenging economic times, competition for opportunities is strong. You need to dress appropriately when interacting with employers. Dressing professionally is a great way to make a strong first impression and to set yourself apart.
   - If you are seeking information from graduate schools or are just “checking out the scene,” it isn’t as necessary to dress professionally. Although it isn’t required to attend, we highly encourage dressing in business casual or nice clothing.

5. **What do I say to recruiters?**
   - Once again, check out the Career Spots videos on our website for tips.
   - Prepare your answer to the most common interview question, “Tell me a little about yourself.” This is the perfect time to use your “Elevator Pitch” or “One-Minute Commercial” that you have prepared. An example may start like this: “Hello, My name is Joe Smith. I am currently looking for an entry-level position in the field of Human Resources. I’ll be completing my HR degree in May of 2009.”
     “I recently finished a four-month internship with XYZ Corp., in their college Relations Department and really enjoyed the experience. During my internship, I had the opportunity to organize the sign-ups for the new benefits package. I also helped to coordinate the company picnic for 400 employees and their families. I understand Global Inc. currently has a position available in the HR department. Global is appealing because I’ve read about its high ranking in Fortune’s national employee satisfaction surveys. Can you tell me a little about what it is like to work there?”
   - Clearly and concisely articulate why you are interested in the organization and why you are qualified to work for them.

6. **Why aren’t there companies here recruiting for my specific major?**
   - It’s important to know that not all industries recruit in formal ways such as job fairs. Many rely on word of mouth, online job boards, or other avenues. It is a rare occasion for recruiters to come to your doorstep, so take advantage of these types of opportunities!
   - The economic landscape in our country has taken a dramatic turn couple of years. Many organizations have cut back their travel budgets in their recruitment offices. Additionally, there simply are not as many opportunities available. Realistically speaking, you will be competing with more people than ever to land that job or grad school slot.
   - It is also important that you understand how to best land a job in your field or industry of interest. Career coaches are available to help you with this process.

7. **If the job market is so bad, why are these organizations coming to the Expo?**
   - Despite the down turn in the economy, there are still opportunities available. Whereas in the past a company may have been recruiting for 10 positions, they now may only have 3 available.
   - Many of the exhibitors that are attending have recruited Messiah College students in the past. Because of their great success with our students as interns and our graduates as employees or grad students, they continue to have strong interest in Messiah students as potential recruits.
Some organizations want to keep their name in front of future potential employees. These organizations know that the economy will improve some time down the road and they want to be remembered by Messiah College students as opportunities arise. This is why it is so important for first-year and sophomore students to attend and leave a lasting favorable impression!

8. Why do some recruiters refer me to their website? How can I stand out if all I do is upload my résumé to their website?
   - The government has put certain laws into place that require organizations to track their job applicants. If they collect résumés at a job fair, the recruiter is forced to enter a lot of data manually. Candidates can be tracked more easily through online tracking systems. Therefore, it is more time efficient for some organizations, plus it allows organizations to be compliant with federal standards.
   - Find out exactly what specific recruiters are looking for in a candidate. Identify key skill sets, characteristics, and relevant experiences they seek. Then, when applying for a position with that organization, you can tailor your materials to match their needs. For example, if a tech company is hiring programmers, listen to the types of programming languages they desire in a candidate, and list the ones you have that match those on your application.
   - Ask the recruiter the best way to follow-up on the status your application.
   - ALWAYS send the recruiter a thank you note.

9. What if I have questions on the day of the Expo?
   - Career Center staff will be available at the registration table. Stop by and feel free to ask any questions you may have!

The Career Center is committed to the professional success of all of our students and graduates. Take advantage of the resources and services available to make the most of your career development.

www.messiah.edu/career