



MAKING THE MOST OF A CAREERS EXPO

A careers expo offers many different opportunities. Decide what your needs are and be intentional about what you would like to get from attending a careers expo.

There are opportunities for internships, undergraduate programmes and graduate jobs so make sure that you are prepared to get the most from attending.

You don't have to be a final year graduate to attend!

As a first-year student, you can discover different companies, sectors and industries to broaden your options with your future career. Also look out for bursaries and scholarship offers.

The atmosphere at a Careers Expo/Fair can be overwhelming if attendance numbers are large. Allow a suitable amount of time for the event, relax and be prepared.

How to prepare

- Through the careers expo advertising, find out which companies are attending, what is on offer and decide who you most wish to speak to
- Research these organisations using their website or their social media presence
- Based on your research and careers expo advert, formulate the questions you wish to ask – see some ideas below; capture your questions to refer to before you approach employers
- Update your CV in readiness to apply for any opportunities; ensure that the skills you reflect in your CV are those that employers seek in graduates
- Take a notebook along or be prepared to capture notes electronically after each meaningful engagement at the expo. These notes can be used when following up
- Be curious! Do not rule out an employer because of the industry they represent (A publishing company, for example, provides opportunities in finance, marketing, and HR, in addition to writing and editing)

At the expo, present your best self

There are certain professional guidelines that can help you improve the impression you make:

- Be polite and confident; face and eye contact, as well as body language are important
- Dress smartly; you don't have to wear a suit to impress, but avoid dressing too casually
- Keep your phone on silent and speak loudly and clearly
- Practice a 30 second speech (elevator pitch) to introduce yourself – include your name, where you are at with your education, summary of your skills and career goals
- Ask about the work, business, and culture and where there are potential opportunities
- Leave discussions about salary and benefits until the job offer stage





- Make notes about your conversations for future reference
- Take the opportunity to network with fellow attendees, not only potential employees, you never know where your paths may cross in the future
- Collect any available brochures or literature supplied
- If you've engaged with a company representative, ask for a business card and follow up

Speech bubble "Hi, I am xxx and I'm in my xxx year here at UCT studying xxx. I am really interested in finding out more about your company as my particular interest is in xxx"

Suggestions for what to discuss and ask (meaningful, relevant and tailored to the organisation)

As you would have done your research before attending, only if unclear, use the opportunity to clarify offerings and application processes

- How would you describe your company culture?
- What advice would you give me as a x-year student thinking of joining your company/this sector?
- What do you think makes a candidate stand out?
- What sort of experience would you like graduates to have?
- How will I be developed if I come in as a graduate?
- Why did you choose this company/role?
- What do you enjoy about working for this organisation?
- What do you wish you would have known when you were job hunting as a graduate?

After the expo

- If someone gives you their card/contact details, use the invitation to contact them and follow-up within 48 hours
- Connect on LinkedIn with people you meet and follow companies of interest
- TAKE ACTION! Apply to the company or submit any materials requested, such as a CV and cover letter

