



# **Student Guide to the Virtual Career Fair**

*From Screen to Success: Building Rapport with Employers Online*

**Fall 2025**



# Fall 2025 Virtual Communications, Journalism, and Media Career Fair

Welcome to your guide for making the most out of the virtual career fair! This step-by-step resource will walk you through the key actions to take and the essential information you need to stand out and leave a lasting impression on employers.

## Why Participate?

- **Direct Access to Top Employers:** Engage with leading companies in the communications industry, eager to connect with Newhouse students and other Syracuse University talent.
- **Career Opportunities:** Discover a range of job and internship opportunities tailored to your skills and interests in the communications field.
- **Networking:** Build valuable connections with industry professionals and expand your professional network for future career growth.

## What are the next steps?

Be sure to read carefully, take notes, and mark important dates on your calendar. At the end, use the printable checklist to ensure you've completed every recommended step and are fully prepared to shine!

We are here to support you!

**Melissa Figueroa**

Career Development Center  
Assistant Director



# Preparation

## August to Early October

### **Update and get your résumé reviewed by a career advisor.**

You can schedule an appointment, join us Wednesdays and Fridays during Drop-in Hours from 11:30 AM until 1:00 PM, or send an email to [nhcdc@syr.edu](mailto:nhcdc@syr.edu). The CDC offers seminars during the semester. You can register via **Handshake**.

### **Complete your Handshake profile.**

You can add information about professional experiences, internships, student organizations, skills, and courses.

### **Write and practice your elevator pitch.**

An elevator pitch is a concise, compelling summary of an idea, product, service, or personal background that can be delivered in the span of an elevator ride (30 to 60 seconds). Who are you? What have you done? How is this relevant to the internship and job you want to have? You can learn more about the elevator pitch, [here](#).

### **Choose an outfit appropriate for a virtual professional setting.**

You don't need to wear a suit. However, you should be professional to make a good impression.

### **Explore the Virtual Career Fair Prep page in our Resources site.**

The CDC has created a WordPress module focused on virtual career fairs with key takeaways, FAQs, handouts, and articles. You can access it, [here](#).

# Registration

## August to Early October

### **Register for the Virtual Career Fair on Handshake.**

Registration gives you access to updated information. You can register, [here](#).

### **Sign up for 1:1 or group sessions with employers.**

Employers can set individual or group sessions. Individual sessions last 15 minutes; group sessions last 30 minutes and includes up to 50 attendees. Formats vary. You can learn about the differences between group and individual sessions, [here](#).

### **Check Handshake for weekly updates.**

The CDC sends weekly updates, and reminders. However, you should check Handshake for the latest information. Employers register constantly!

### **Review the list of companies frequently.**

We update it weekly (on Mondays). You can see which companies are interested in Advertising majors, Public Relations majors, and so forth. You can read the **List of Companies** in our [Virtual Career Fair Prep](#) page.

### **Make sure to take breaks between sessions.**

You don't need to schedule them back-to-back just because they're available. It's important to pace yourself during the virtual career fair, so keep this in mind when creating your schedule. Please note that due to timing constraints, the career fair does not have a default break period.



# Research

## August to Early October



### **Explore participating companies on Handshake.**

You can see registered employers. If you don't see any available sessions from a registered employer, it may be because the employer is fully booked or has not yet created a schedule. Employers have until **October 9** to set up their schedules.

### **Research the company.**


Learn about their mission, culture, values, products and services, locations, and current projects. You can explore their websites, social media accounts, and recent news.

### **Write some thoughtful questions per company.**

Ideally, you shouldn't ask questions that can easily find online. The purpose of asking thoughtful questions is to show curiosity, foster engagement, and demonstrate that you have done your research. Don't hesitate to stand out!

### **Follow the companies you're interested in on LinkedIn**

Recruiters can see when you follow them! Learn about their offerings, new initiatives or projects. Build and nurture relationships. Stay connected!



# Technology Testing

October 16

## Select a place where you are going to connect.

Make sure you have good lighting, a strong internet connection, and a quiet environment. Avoid having a window behind you, as it can make it difficult for others to see you. You can reserve an individual study room at Bird Library during the career fair. Rooms are reserved up to 3 hours. You can learn more about individual room reservations, [here](#).

## Remember to look at the camera.

Put a sticky note close to the computer camera as a reminder to look at the camera occasionally. Looking at the camera shows that you are paying attention to the employer.

## Complete the Handshake Video Test.

Make sure to test your video and computer setup. Ensure that no firewall settings are blocking your connection. You can learn more about how testing the video, [here](#).

## Test your camera and microphone.

Make sure that you have the right settings.

## Contact Handshake support if you encounter any issues.

The CDC does not provide technical support during the career fair. If you have problems with the internet connection, contact your provider. If you have difficulties with Handshake, contact the company. You can learn more about how to contact the Handshake Support, [here](#).

# Participation

## October 17

### **Review your schedule before the virtual career fair.**

The virtual event starts at 2:00 PM (ET). Log in early and show up on time. Sessions will start at the designated time.

### **Show up on time.**

The default time zone of the virtual career fair is Eastern Time (ET). If you are in a state with a different time zone (e.g. California) or studying abroad, make sure to track the time. Quick tip: On Outlook (Web), you can go to the calendar: File > Options > Calendar > Time zones > Show a second time zone. Then, select the time zone. This will show the two time zones on your calendar.

### **Check the platform selected by the employer.**

The default platform for the virtual career fair is Handshake. Some employers use Zoom, Teams, or GoogleMeet. Make sure that you understand the platform they use. Employers won't send links or reminders.

### **Use the Virtual Help Room.**

Contact the CDC team if you have specific questions about the virtual career fair. The Virtual Help Room will be available from 2:00 PM (ET) until 6:00 PM (ET). The link will appear at 2:00 PM on Handshake.



If you need to cancel your attendance during the week of the virtual career fair (October 13-17), send a message to the employers notifying them that you won't be able to attend a session you previously scheduled.





# Follow Up

## October 20-24



### **Send a personalized thank-you note.**

Ideally, you want to send the note within 24–48 business hours. Mention something specific you discussed. This will show that you were paying attention.

### **Connect with employers on LinkedIn.**


Make sure to nurture the relationship every six (6) weeks.

### **Complete the survey the week after the event.**

You will receive an email with a survey on **October 20**. Please, complete it by **October 24**. Share your feedback. The CDC is always improving its offerings and holding employers accountable. We can't improve if we don't hear from you.

### **Contact employers willing to meet after the virtual career fair.**

After the career fair, the CDC will send a survey to employers to ask if they would like to be contacted by students and in what manner. A career advisor will then collect the responses and share them with career fair attendees on **October 27**.







# FAQs

## **Are employers able to see my résumé? Or should I send an email before our session?**

Yes, employers can see your résumé via Handshake. You don't need to contact the employer in advance to share the document. Make sure that you upload the latest version of your résumé. Make sure to update your Handshake account as well.

## **How do I introduce myself to an employer?**


You need to craft your elevator pitch. A good pitch should be a clear, succinct, and convincing testament to how your experience, accomplishments, and skills make you an invaluable asset. It should also be creative, reflective of your personality (you don't want to sound like you're reading cue cards or just listing qualities), and short enough that you could get your points across if you only have a few floors to deliver it on an elevator. Learn more about crafting your elevator pitch [here](#).

## **What questions should I ask an employer?**

Ask questions that show that you have done your research and have a genuine interest.

The best questions to ask are those that come from your own research and after you spend some time learning about the company. You can ask about recent initiatives, current programs, or future plans. You can ask for details about internships or entry-level training programs. You can also ask about the interview process.

Avoid asking questions that can be easily answered or whose answers can be found on their website.



# FAQs

## **I joined a session, but the employer didn't show up. What should I do?**

If an employer does not attend a session, please email the Career Development Center at [nhcdc@syr.edu](mailto:nhcdc@syr.edu) with the following details:

- Your full name.
- The employer or company name.
- The time and type of session (1:1 or group).

A career counselor will follow up with the employers and request that they contact you to schedule a meeting after the virtual career fair.

In the meantime, continue focusing on your upcoming sessions.

## **I signed up for a meeting with an employer and something came up. What should I do?**

If you cannot attend your session, ensure that you cancel your participation in the individual session. After canceling, send a message to the employer.

Avoid the temptation to simply not show up. Employers can see your name and may be willing to meet with you at another time. Always behave professionally!

## **I am interested in meeting with an employer, but I have another meeting at the same time. How can I reach out to the employer?**

You can use our resources to get the contact details of the employer, such as LinkedIn, CareerShift, and Handshake.

After the career fair, the CDC will send a survey to employers to ask if they would like to be contacted by students and in what manner. A career advisor will then collect the responses and share them with career fair attendees on **October 27**.

## **How can I follow up with an employer?**

Make an effort to follow up with an employer. Get in the habit of collecting the names of recruiters, their titles, and their contact information. If the career fair is hosted in person, take good notes so you can send an email.

# Virtual Career Fair Checklist

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## Preparation

August-Early  
October

- ☐ Update and get your résumé reviewed by a career advisor.
- ☐ Complete your Handshake profile.
- ☐ Write and practice your elevator pitch.
- ☐ Choose an outfit appropriate for a virtual professional setting.
- ☐ Read the *Student Guide to the Virtual Career Fair*.

## Registration

August-Early  
October

- ☐ Register for the Virtual Career Fair on Handshake.
- ☐ Sign up for 1:1 or group sessions with employers.
- ☐ Check Handshake for weekly updates.
- ☐ Review the list of companies frequently.
- ☐ Make sure to take breaks between sessions.

## Research

August-Early  
October

- ☐ Explore participating companies on Handshake.
- ☐ Research the company.
- ☐ Write some thoughtful questions per company.
- ☐ Follow the companies you're interested in on LinkedIn.

## Technology

### Testing

October 16

- ☐ Select a place where you are going to connect.
- ☐ Remember to look at the camera.
- ☐ Complete the Handshake Video Test.
- ☐ Test your camera and microphone.
- ☐ Contact Handshake support if you encounter any issues.

## Participation

October 17

- ☐ Send an email to employers if you decide to cancel.
- ☐ Review your schedule before the virtual career fair.
- ☐ Show up on time.
- ☐ Check the platform selected by the employer.
- ☐ Use the Virtual Help Room.
- ☐ Ask how to keep in touch with the employer.

## Follow UP

October 20-24

- ☐ Send a personalized thank-you note.
- ☐ Connect with employers on LinkedIn.
- ☐ Complete the survey the week after the event.
- ☐ Contact employers willing to meet with you after the virtual career fair.

# Resources

Registration



# Resources

[Virtual Career Fair Resources Page \(CDC\)](#)

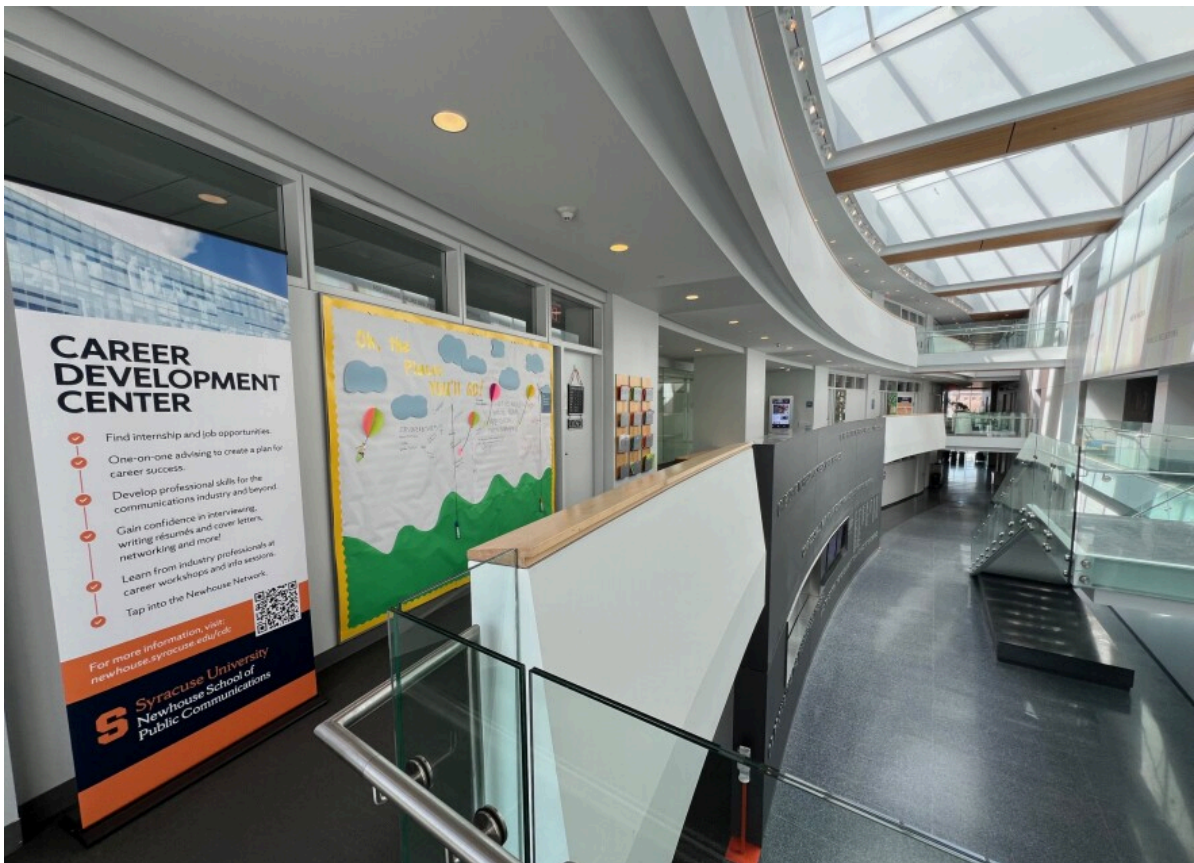


# Resources

**Handshake's Guide to Attending a Virtual Fair**



# Career Development Center



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