



TIPS FOR LANGLEY COLLEGE CAREERS FAIR

A careers fair is a great opportunity for you to meet (and compare) employers, find out when they're recruiting and - crucially - what they're looking for. Yes, the freebies might be good but there's more than a novelty pen and branded chocolate at stake! Make a strong impression on the day and you could find yourself invited for an interview or, at least, strongly encouraged to apply. To do this, follow some basic career fair etiquette:

Do not waste time and know the employers!

Some attendees treat careers fairs as an opportunity to pick up as many free promotional items as possible, but stay focused! Remember you are there to research career possibilities. There will be plenty of materials relevant for you, so focus on those.

If there is a company you are interested in that is attending, then research the website in advance to understand what the company does etc. so you can ask relevant questions.

Remember to follow up any leads

If you meet someone from a company or sector that you are strongly interested in, make sure you follow up this lead after the fair is over. Perhaps simply get in touch and thank them for their time and say how much you enjoyed meeting them. Or ask to be kept informed of future opportunities. If appropriate you could ask to meet with them to learn about the jobs they offer in more detail. Remember that they may have spoken to hundreds of people at the fair, so you have to stand out. The best way of doing this is to follow up the contact quickly and politely.



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Dress smartly

There is no dress code at careers fairs, but you are hoping to impress a potential future employer, so dress as smartly as possible. There's no need to wear business dress, but you still need to look presentable. What image are you looking to project? Many of the representatives of the companies and institutions will be in business suits, so try to behave and appear as though you fit in with them.

Take your CV

Make sure you take several copies of your CV. While you may not get a job offer at a careers fair, you will probably meet some people who can be very helpful in getting one. Make sure you have enough paperwork to give out to relevant people, but do not just hand out your CV randomly in the hope that someone will want to give you a job!

Be prepared to network

Careers events are not about wandering around picking up leaflets and free goodies. Make sure that you talk to people, that's what they are there for! And if you talk to someone who can offer you something in the future, leave your CV or business card, and make sure you take their card. Try to appear confident and interested, but without being arrogant. Judge the situation, use it as an opportunity to sell yourself if appropriate, but more likely you will be learning about the sorts of things their company does.

Be open to new opportunities

The great thing about careers fairs is that you can find out about companies and jobs that you may never have even considered before, so don't close your mind to new opportunities. You may find yourself a new dream job!

How to stand out! Ask the 'right' questions

If you are well informed and well prepared, this will put you in a good position, when you talk to the employer. Skipping over the superficial stuff means you can delve deeper and potentially find out information they haven't included in their glossy literature. The information you learn now can really make the difference between a mediocre application and a stand out one.



Don't be shy!

As with all forms of networking, being willing to approach strangers to chat about your careers opportunities can be daunting, but you will almost always be met with a friendly response so get stuck in. You will find the fair far more rewarding if you take this approach.

Give feedback

You will probably be asked at some point to give your feedback on how you found the careers fair. Do take the time to do this honestly because these comments will help the organisers improve the fair for next time. Let them know what you found to be the most and least useful aspects of the fair, next time it could be even better

Questions you could consider:

- Is there one thing that marks out a good application, if so, what would you say it is?
- What was your first year like? Did it meet your expectations?
- What experience do you like applicants to have?
- Was there anything specific that encouraged you to apply?
- What words would you use to describe the company culture?
- What are the key changes or trends within the industry/profession?

On the other hand, questions to avoid:

- What does your company do?
- How much would I earn?
- Why should I apply?
- What can you offer me?

