I have a career fair coming up.

A career fair is a conversation, not an interview. Both sides are figuring out if there is interest. The students who do well prepare before, focus during, and follow up after.

Timing

Fall is the main hiring season for internships and new-grad jobs. Some firms fill most of next year's spots before winter break. Start in September.

Before the fair

- **Know what you are asking for:** internship or full time. Say it in your first sentence.
- **Build a target list** from the employer list, where classmates interned, and where you could live.
- **Do real research:** open jobs, their early-career program, one recent project.
- **Get your resume and LinkedIn ready.** Bring printed copies.
- **Prepare a 30-second introduction** and write your questions.

During the fair

- **Warm up first** at one or two companies lower on your list.
- **Lead with your introduction.** Say internship or full time right away.
- **Be specific about why them.** Mention a real project.
- **If they ask for your information** and you are interested, give it to them.
- **Always ask:** "What is the next step, and how should I follow up?"
- **After each table,** write down the name, what you discussed, the next step, and your interest level.

After the fair

- **Follow up within 24 to 48 hours** with a short note and a personal LinkedIn request.
- **Do not read silence as rejection.** Follow up again after a week or so.
- **Apply formally** and check your email daily.
- **Know the process:** application, screening, one or two interviews, offer.
- **When an offer comes,** take your time. Two weeks to decide is normal. Pressure is a red flag.

Keep tracking

Company, contact, date, what you learned, next step. Your list becomes the map for your whole search, and for next year's fair too.

Go deeper

Before the fair: sqroots.me/career-fair/before
During the fair: sqroots.me/career-fair/during
After the fair: sqroots.me/career-fair/after