Your game plan for winning a Career Spark Award

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About the Career Spark Awards

The annual **Career Spark Awards** celebrate career centers powering the future of work. Award-winning institutions are recognized for their exemplary work in utilizing Handshake to excel in any of the three winning categories:

Student engagement	**Employer engagement and curation**	**Reporting, analytics, and FDS**

Winners are selected based on their performance against key success metrics within Handshake. To ensure different institution types are represented, awards are given to the top performers in four school segments: 4-year publics, 4-year privates, minority serving institutions, and community colleges.

Career Spark Award winners go above and beyond in supporting the next generation of future leaders in their college-to-career transition and accelerate the Handshake mission to give all students the chance to build the career they want, no matter where they're from or what school they attend.

Award methodology

The data and insights team at Handshake identified three key indicators of best-in-class career center performance—and success—on Handshake based on the vast amount of data available from our 1,400+ education partners:

Student engagement

Guiding students to actively participate in their college-to-career journey by completing their Handshake profiles, attending career fairs, and interacting with their career center.

Employer engagement and curation

Expanding students' access to a variety of employers with guidance from their career center to explore unique opportunities.

Reporting, analytics, and FDS

Measuring the impact of the career center on student outcomes.

We reviewed platform activity from education partners **from July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023** and identified average scores for each focus area to establish an eligibility threshold. See each category's section for more information.

Student engagement

Student engagement is a foundational pillar for institutional success on Handshake. Check out some of the best practices for driving student engagement and key product features to leverage in order to set yourself up for success and win a Career Spark Award in 2024.

How it's measured

Undergraduate student profile completion	Undergraduate student activation rate	Average career fair conversion rate (reserved to attended)	Percentage of students engaged in an appointment	Targeted email open rate

Best practices

Integrate Handshake into the student experience

Work with faculty, staff, and campus partners to share information about your office and Handshake as a resource to support career exploration and outcomes. This can be accomplished via orientation, classroom presentations, faculty sharing on your behalf, and more, as well as homework assignments that include activating and completing your profile or downloading the mobile app.

Leverage all aspects of Handshake

Drive students to one place for all their career-related needs by hosting events, booking appointments, creating targeted email campaigns, and hosting on-campus employers in Handshake.

Promote the Handshake mobile app

There's no other way to cut it—it's hard to get students off their phones. Why not get them to engage in career activities on their phones via Handshake to help them stay engaged in their college-to-career journey? The Handshake app is available on iOS and Android, and consistently shows higher and more frequent engagement compared to desktop engagement.

Key product features and resources
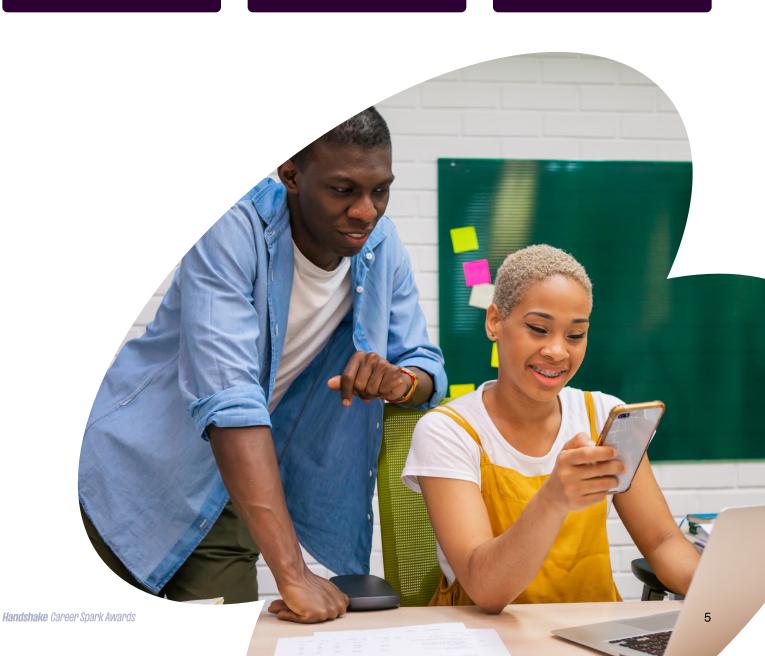
Handshake marketing toolkit

Utilize the marketing toolkit to promote Handshake to students and campus stakeholders. The toolkit includes ready-to-post social assets, student and faculty presentations, flyers and posters, Handshake logo files, and more.

Targeted emails

Customize or use pre-built templates to send emails to targeted groups of students, alumni, and employers. Track the number of recipients who open your emails, click embedded links, and take key actions like registering for events and applying for jobs.

Student feed

The student feed is a new channel for your team's resources and programming. Promote employer collections, appointments, resources, events and fairs, video content, and more to students on the homepage of the Handshake mobile app. This feature is in beta—reach out to your relationship manager if you'd like to join.

Employer engagement and curation

With the vast amount of opportunities for students, Career Spark Award winners are harnessing their expertise and curating the job experience for students using the features available to them on Handshake. Check out some of the best practices for employer engagement and curation and key product features to leverage in order to set yourself up for success and win a Career Spark Award in 2024.

How it's measured

Average employer approval response time	Collections engagement*

*measures student click rates for collections overall, as well as "hidden gem" and "invests in diversity" collections

Best practices

Streamline your approvals process with automation

Did you know Handshake monitors the network for fraudulent employer activity? With this in mind, your team can adopt automation tools to narrow down the list of employers or jobs you need to review manually, saving time and allowing your team to focus on other functions.

Highlight unique employers and opportunities for your students

Your team's superpower is illuminating career pathways for your students. Embed your guidance and expertise into the student experience on a variety of channels—from targeted emails, to resources, to employer collections.

Key product features and resources

Employer collections

Employer collections help your team highlight employers to students for reasons that resonate with them—like being close to campus or having an alumni connection. Collections are embedded into the student experience, helping guide your students to employers with unique, compelling attributes.

Job automatic approvals

Open up your team's bandwidth by prioritizing the types of jobs you want to manually review while auto-approving the rest.

COMING SOON

Employer relations management

You give your students an insider's advantage via your relationships with employer partners. Tying together our vast pool of employer engagement data with your students' interests, Handshake can help you better track the employers you know, and identify new employers you should get to know.

Reporting, analytics, and FDS

It's pivotal career services are able to report on their impact on student outcomes. Check out some of the best practices for reporting and analytics and key product features to leverage to set yourself up for success and win a Career Spark Award in 2024.

How it's measured

Saved report usage	Scheduled report usage	FDS response rate

Best practices

Take advantage of pre-built insights

With powerful reporting tools to help your team perform bespoke data analysis, sometimes you need data quickly. Get the most out of Handshake by leveraging reporting options like dashboards, quick downloads, and saved report templates to help you access the data you need, faster.

Track outcomes in Handshake

Student outcomes represent your most influential data set. Handshake's First Destination Survey helps you collect this data, and ensures it lives alongside other sources of student engagement data. Illustrate your students' career journeys from their first appointment to their first job.

Key product features and resources

Saved reports

Jumpstart your data analysis using one of dozens of saved reports created by the Handshake team. Or create, save, and share your own saved report template with colleagues.

Scheduled reports

Scheduled reports help your team share data with campus stakeholders and external platforms on a regular basis. Share reports and dashboards as an image or PDF, or sync data to another system using SFTP or S3.

First Destination Survey

Handshake's First Destination Survey helps your team capture, understand, and share student outcome data. The survey is customizable, or ready right out of the box—and it's free to use!

Want to win a Career Spark Award in 2024?

Now that you have the ingredients to be a best-in-class career center on Handshake, reference this guide throughout the year for resources on student engagement, employer engagement and curation, and reporting and analytics to make the most out of Handshake and win a Career Spark Award for your institution.

Ignite the future of work for tomorrow's leaders

Reach out to your Handshake relationship manager to ensure you maximize your use of Handshake.

Not a Handshake school? Reach out to our team to learn more.

joinhandshake.com/career-centers