



# Your COVID-19-Proof Fall Recruiting Contingency Plan

In light of the novel coronavirus, the recruiting landscape is rapidly evolving. With higher education institutions proposing a myriad of solutions for how they'll open up campuses come fall, some school systems and students are adopting an entirely virtual approach.

During this time of increasing uncertainty, questions run deep. As early talent recruiting teams work through their questions around fall recruiting, we encourage you to adopt this five-step COVID-19-proof contingency plan as part of your recruiting toolbox.

## Strategize (10-12 weeks out)

Before you get started, identify your recruiting goals and objectives for the fall (e.g. candidate reach, job hires)—what are your three key value drivers? And are you currently hiring, or are you looking to source a pipeline of qualified talent for when hiring resumes? Use these responses to influence your fall recruiting strategy's north star.

- ☐ Review your core schools list and identify which schools plan to be fully operable in-person, are maintaining classes virtually, or adopting a flexible model somewhere in between; the Chronicle of Higher Ed is documenting these plans in real time
- ☐ Create a chart of your core schools with their back-to-school model to quantify their approaches and pinpoint consistencies in structure
- ☐ Assign talent personas to each of your open roles—are you recruiting for the same talent segments as last year or will you require talent with different profiles this fall? Map out your student profiles with this info as far in advance and as best you can



**Tech takeaway:** Beginning this fall, you can build live talent pools on Handshake that automatically and proactively update themselves, matching you with students who have the right skills and backgrounds. Request a demo to learn about **Handshake's Candidate Hub**.

- ☐ If you're partly or entirely not traveling on campus this fall, consider how you might complement your core school list with schools that house your ideal talent segments; use [Handshake's School Explorer](#) to find these schools



**Tip:** Handshake Premium partner, [Under Armour](#), for example, expanded their small team's recruiting presence from a few schools close to their Baltimore, MD headquarters to more than 850 schools nationwide—a 35x increase from their original partner list.

## Plan (4-10 weeks out)

- ☐ Learn [what students are looking for](#) from employers in this new landscape; remember that students are anxious about the future—how can you put them at ease through proactive outreach, your digital presence, or your virtual events?



It's likely you won't be traveling to some campuses, so while you can't invest as heavily in your on-campus presence, consider ramping up your digital employer brand on your careers page and job networks like Handshake during this time



**Tip:** According to a recent Handshake employer survey, 6 in 10 employers report that they plan on visiting fewer schools this fall, with some choosing not to go back at all. Where does your outlook fare along this scale?



Refresh your employer brand to include how you're responding to the coronavirus crisis; if you're still hiring or hired interns deferred by other companies, for example, include that in your profile description to demonstrate your goodwill and leadership





Keep your digital presence up-to-date by complementing your profile with fresh testimonials from recent early talent hires or interns; encourage peers and [company ambassadors](#) to [respond to Q&As](#) swiftly from prospective talent on Handshake





Connect with your core schools if you haven't already and add new schools that meet your talent criteria on Handshake; new schools are more likely to accept your connection if you have a strong and thorough employer profile


## Engage (1-4 weeks out)

- ☐ Complement any on-campus events you're planning with a repertoire of back-up virtual events; until there's a vaccine for COVID-19 and know for certain schools' final plans, we can't be 100% sure that travel will be a feasible option come fall
- ☐ Personalize your virtual events to appeal to your school network and talent personas; for example, if you're looking to recruit diverse, qualified engineers, you might consider hosting an engineering leadership diversity panel
- ☐ Instead of sending your people to career fairs, send your virtual event attendees to them; repurpose your on-campus recruitment team and ambassadors to support your virtual events and digital presence
-  **Tip:** Schedule a recurring weekly meeting with these stakeholders to help plan, delegate responsibilities, and keep your deliverables on track
- ☐ If the majority of your events are virtual this fall, think through how you might replicate the in-person experience; if you're expecting hundreds of virtual attendees, can you personalize the experience with breakout rooms or chat features that come standard with many video conferencing platforms?
-  **Tech takeaway:** Handshake is developing an end-to-end virtual recruitment product this fall, including **one-on-one video and interview functionality, small group networking, and virtual career fairs.** [Request a demo](#) to learn more about what's to come.
- ☐ Geography isn't an obstacle for virtual recruiting; leverage this time to personalize your virtual recruiting events to each of your talent segments, minimizing your time traveling from school to school by broadening your reach segment by segment

## Execute (aka your 'go live' date)

- ☐ In this landscape, virtual events are quickly replacing on-campus activities; if you haven't hosted a virtual event, test one out this summer so you have time to apply lessons learned to your fall approach ([check out our guide for helpful tips](#))
-  **Tip:** Employers are increasingly adopting virtual engagement tactics during this time. Virtual career fairs and virtual events promoted on Handshake have jumped from 2019 to 2020, growing by 9x and 3x respectively, according to [Handshake's COVID-19 report](#).
- ☐ Once you've decided on hosts and formats for your virtual events, promote the event on Handshake to proactively reach out to students that fit your ideal talent personas; keep your filters and lists manageable so you can focus on high impact candidates
- ☐ [Personalize your outreach](#) through inclusive language to drive attendees to your events by including relevant information like school name, major, and unique value drivers that set your employer brand apart from your peers; be sure to include only one call to action—to your event
- ☐ Brainstorm content for each of your events; if it's an AMA or panel, for example, you'll want to prepare a list of questions in advance you can ask panelists to kick off the conversation; consider some of the FAQs early talent frequently asks to get the dialogue started
-  **Tip:** Use this time to think outside the box. Handshake Premium partner, [IBM](#), for example, complements their virtual events strategy to help replicate canceled trademark recruiting industry conferences like NSBE to drive qualified, diverse candidates into their pipeline.

## Follow Up (1-2 weeks after)

- ☐ You might not be able to give away free swag at your on-campus event booth, but you can still engage qualified attendees by directly mailing them a box of swag and a handwritten thank you note; repurpose your on-campus team to support you with these initiatives
- ☐ Evaluate ROI by viewing a recap of all candidates you proactively messaged, candidates who attended your virtual or on-campus events, and talent who converted into your qualified pipeline
-  **Tech takeaway:** You can easily identify your most engaged talent pool by reviewing candidate activity on **Handshake's Event Management Suite**.
- ☐ Follow up with attendees through a brief survey to gauge how your activities impacted candidate perceptions of your employer brand; you can also capture students who RSVPed to your events by inviting them to learn more about your organization, stay in touch, or apply for an open role



Handshake can help you build your early career talent pipeline ahead of the unprecedented fall recruiting season.

Learn more about our upcoming end-to-end virtual events, interviews, and recruitment solution by getting in touch with one of our experts.

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