

 Handshake

# Campus to Career Report

How 2020 Changed the Way  
Students Find their Next Job

# FOREWORD

## 2020 upends—and creates opportunity for—college-to-career transitions

New graduates have long found the transition from college to career challenging. Even in boom times, more than 40% of Americans with newly-minted bachelor's degrees have been underemployed.<sup>1</sup> And while employers have continued to increase education requirements, only about half say a degree is a good measure of what a candidate can actually do.

Previous jobs, internships, and other work-based experiences have always been critical proof points for employers, along with recommendations from people in trusted industry networks. But too few students were graduating with meaningful work experiences or even a rudimentary professional network.

Then 2020 hit. And what was already a challenge only got worse. One in five students at four-year institutions say that COVID-19 has made their opportunities for career exploration much worse. Half have had a job or internship canceled, or decided not to pursue one because of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup> And graduates this year, and likely in the next couple years, will face one of the most turbulent job markets in recent memory.<sup>3</sup>

For all the challenges the pandemic has exacerbated—it's also pushed much-needed change. Both higher education institutions and employers have gotten more creative about how they develop and attract early-career talent and how they support students as they transition from education to career.

Employers have restructured internship programs to provide stay-at-home opportunities, colleges have beefed up their virtual career services, and both have worked together to hold virtual career fairs. Many of these innovations will provide lasting improvements—untethering opportunities from geography, and allowing students to more easily access support, mentoring, and networking.

In our third annual Campus to Career report, we analyze student perceptions about these changes and what employers and institutions have learned about how they can better partner to prepare students for work. We also take a look at how the pandemic has impacted student career preferences. Like the shift to virtual support and networking, we can expect those changes to last well beyond the pandemic itself.



**"In past years, finding internships and jobs was a tedious process that left me floundering—finding appropriate positions felt near impossible. This process became exponentially less stressful after I discovered Handshake this year."**

**—Senior at Johns Hopkins University**

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market/college-labor-market\\_underemployment\\_rates.html](https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market/college-labor-market_underemployment_rates.html)  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stradaeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Public-Viewpoint-Charts-October-27-2020.pdf>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/23/new-grads-may-face-worst-job-market-since-2009-financial-crisis.html>

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# Key findings

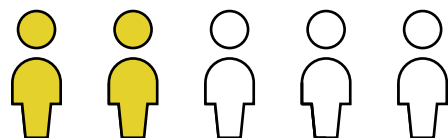
## Early talent's behavior, motivations, and preferences in 2020

85%



The job search is a higher priority for students. **Every 4 in 5 students reported its priority as the same or higher** as a result of COVID-19.

**2** While the job search continues to be top of mind, student confidence is falling. **Only 2 in 5 feel confident or extremely confident** they will find a job or internship by summer '21.



**Students' greatest concern in working remotely is feeling isolated, followed by a lack of work-life balance**—nearly half believe working from home will make it difficult to meet people and build relationships.

4

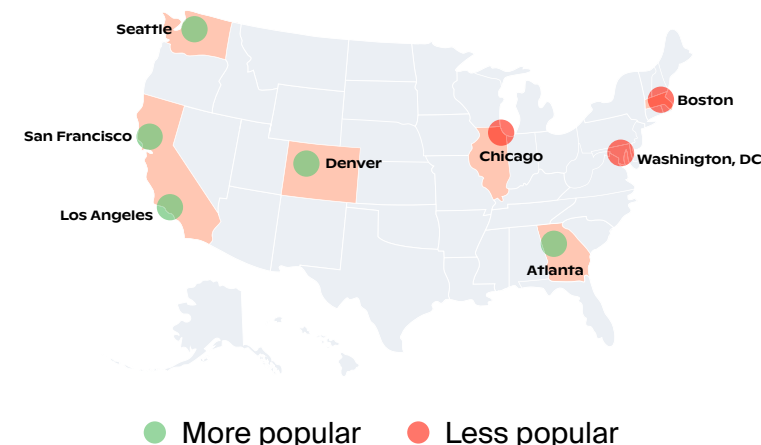
Mental health has become a top priority for students, with **63% saying it's important or very important to receive mental health benefits as part of their compensation plan.**

**5** 

Opportunities are expanding beyond tech for early talent—and there's a new interest in government. We're also seeing **a surge in job posts and applications for business, data, and IT analysts.**

6

**Remote jobs on Handshake have increased by 7x** since January. Meanwhile, **48% of students still prefer to work in an office**, and they're increasingly looking for work in the larger cities in the west.



**Early talent is bringing tele-empathy with them to work**—soft skills like flexibility, collaboration, and business communication—to demonstrate their likelihood of success in a post-COVID-19 world.

**8** 2020 sped up digital acceleration and innovation for all. This fall, **Handshake hosted 2,300+ virtual fairs at 700+ schools** to support the 9 in 10 employers that reported connecting with students at virtual fairs.

**2,300+**  
virtual fairs

**700+**  
schools

Students had a positive experience at virtual fairs, with **3 in 4 agreeing that the employers present were of interest**, and **98% of students who didn't show said they would definitely or possibly consider attending in the future.**



**10** Over half of students took a valuable action after a fair, such as applying for a job. And students who attended a virtual fair and received a message **applied at a 1.5x higher rate** than active students on Handshake who didn't.

# Methodology

Handshake's third annual Campus to Career report is based on insights from the largest early talent network of 7M+ active students from 1K+ partner schools nationwide. We leveraged our platform and supplemented survey data to pair what students are saying with how they're behaving, then assessed how those trends have changed over time.

Unless specifically noted, we conducted six surveys from June to November to compile the findings in this report, including:

- July 2020 mental health survey with 1,003 student respondents
- August 2020 student trends survey with 1,212 student respondents
- October 2020 qualitative survey with nine total student respondents
- October 2020 virtual fair feedback survey with 450 student respondents
- November 2020 virtual fair feedback survey with 922 student respondents
- November 2020 student trends survey with 980 student respondents

**"This past year was a catalyst for change and it has emphasized the impact this generation of students will have on the workforce through their willingness to adapt and be resilient during this time.**

**Our report highlights how both higher education institutions and employers can become more creative about supporting and attracting early talent. We're confident that many of these innovations, including virtual career fairs and remote internships, will provide lasting improvements."**

**—Christine Cruzvergara, VP Higher Education and Student Success**

SECTION 1

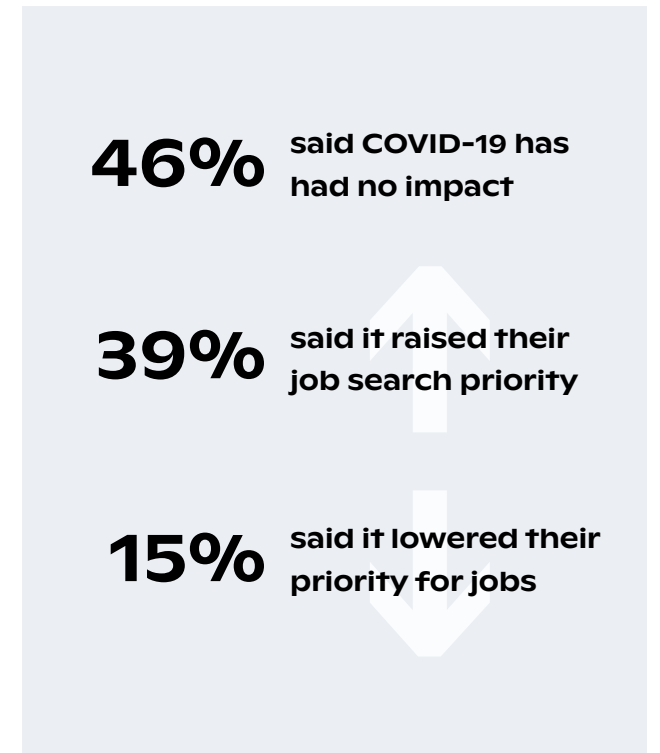
# COVID-19 transformed the student job search

## Pandemic uncertainty curbed job confidence

When shelter-in-place orders first took effect in spring 2020, college students had to quickly adjust to remote education—Zoom lectures and studying at the kitchen table rather than the library or quad.

Over the course of the spring and into the summer and fall, Gen Z adjusted to this new educational reality, along with a worsening economy. They focused on their immediate health and families, but also looked to the future to give them mobility, financial security, and a sense of purpose.<sup>4</sup>

**More than 4 in 5 students (85%) reported accelerating or sustaining their job search priority as a result of COVID-19.**



\* [https://go.joinhandshake.com/Employee\\_Survey\\_Report.html?ga=2.154827133.417789204.1606137784-83293930.1598563285](https://go.joinhandshake.com/Employee_Survey_Report.html?ga=2.154827133.417789204.1606137784-83293930.1598563285)

**Without on-campus career fairs or in-person career events, students increasingly turned to digital networks to find their next employer.**

Over half of students cited Handshake or an employer’s careers page as the best place to find a full-time job (55%) or internship (74%), followed by other networks and job boards.

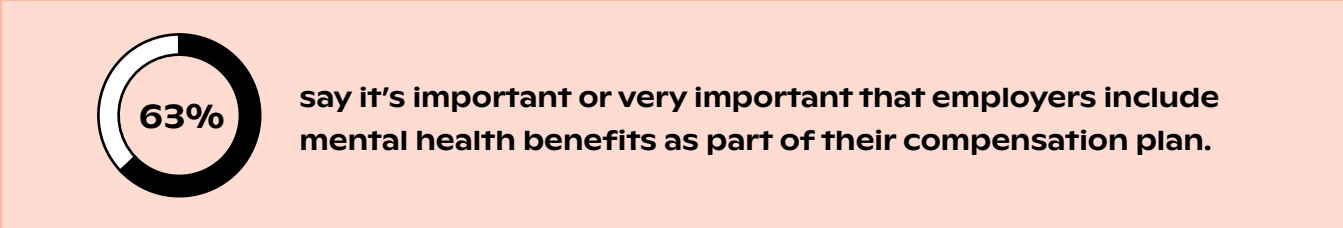
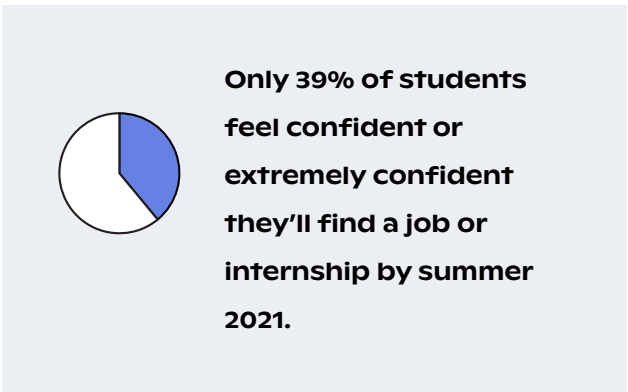
While the job search continues to be top of mind for many students, 39% of students feel confident or extremely confident in finding a job or internship by summer 2021. What students initially thought would be a limited disruption from normalcy evolved into a months-long impact on their daily lives and long-term goals.

Some students saw their parents lose their jobs or dropped out of school entirely because they couldn’t afford to stay enrolled. And anxieties continue to mount, especially as many other students worry about how they’re going to pay for school, whether they’ll be able to secure internships, or how the pandemic might affect their health or their loved ones.

Amidst a pandemic and all the anxieties surrounding it, we are also witnessing a growing awareness around mental health. When we surveyed students over the summer, we found that mental health had become a top priority, with 63% saying it’s important or very important they see mental health benefits as part of their compensation plan.

**“I need a job—I’m kind of scrambling and looking for anything... I was a bit nervous going into a virtual fair, but it felt good to speak with a company I know is hiring. I’m confident something will come from it.”**

—Laura, Georgetown University



Early talent expressed their desire to engage with their coworkers—and stated they are looking to employers for support in this area. With the bulk of companies working remotely for the foreseeable future, **students’ greatest concern is feeling isolated (53%), followed by a lack of work-life balance (50%).**

A full 44% of young workers believe that working remotely will make it difficult to meet new people and continue to build existing relationships. Employers that are intentional about designing digital programs with social connection in mind will be in a better position to win the right candidates and retain strong talent in the years ahead.

It’s clear that the pandemic has changed future outlooks, including the careers students have worked so hard to launch.





## Early talent increased their reliance on career centers

Many students are looking to career centers for increased support.<sup>5</sup> And career centers—already under growing pressure from university leadership to demonstrate quantifiable value—increasingly relied on metrics to measure their success. When asked to rank their top priorities in our latest survey of career services professionals, 59% reported job outcomes and 55% reported job applications as their key performance metrics.<sup>6</sup>

For many employers, the pandemic hindered traditional recruitment efforts. Since most companies long relied on in-person engagement as part of their recruitment strategies, switching to an online format posed unique challenges—a technology learning curve, remote team enablement, and meaningful student engagement. However, over 90% of employers polled overcame those challenges to connect with students at virtual career fairs this fall.<sup>7</sup>

## A shift in needs means industries are fluctuating in popularity

As early as summer 2020, over half of career centers noted that their students had shifted interest to new careers and industries since the onset of the pandemic. While some industries have seen significant decreases in job postings, Handshake’s data indicated that many are still pursuing hiring plans—including **healthcare, government, and technology**.

Investment banking—known for paying higher salaries than other sectors—saw a rise in popularity since last year, perhaps linked to newly energized outreach efforts by employers to stay competitive among graduating students. The three-year data showed a decrease, however, for investment banking—as well as a continued slide for management consulting. Meanwhile, there were big jumps in popularity for healthcare, government, and nonprofit organizations.

During a year when Dr. Anthony Fauci became a household name—and social unrest dominated the news headlines—students may have been spurred to enter careers where they could make a difference in people’s lives, rather than just earn a paycheck.

**Students are adapting their skills and their career trajectory to careers that promise greater social impact.**

### Popular Industries for Students

Industry	YoY +/-	3 Year +/-
Internet & Software	--	--
Healthcare	--	↑6
Nonprofit	↑6	↑10+
Investment Management	↓1	↓2
Electronic & Computer Hardware	↑3	↑2
Manufacturing	↓2	--
Management Consulting	↓2	↓3
Advertising, PR & Marketing	↓2	↑1
Investment Banking	↑3	↓6
Government	↑5	↑10+

<sup>5</sup> [https://go.joinhandshake.com/Employer\\_Survey\\_Report.html?ga=2.139852148.613095520.1606751104-83293930.1598563285](https://go.joinhandshake.com/Employer_Survey_Report.html?ga=2.139852148.613095520.1606751104-83293930.1598563285)  
<sup>6</sup> <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/career-centers/handshake-trends-in-higher-ed-report-fall-2020/>  
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/trends-and-predictions/fall-quick-poll-virtual-career-fairs/>



As COVID-19 sweeps through the US, public health programs are growing in popularity, leading to an increased demand in healthcare work.<sup>8</sup> And with the political discourse on inequality, the environment, and foreign relations, students may be inspired to take up jobs in state and local governments and in the nonprofit sector, where they can work on issues they care about.

### Ranking what's most important to students when looking for a job

- 1 Pay**
- 2 Future opportunity**
- 3 Satisfying work**
- 4 Benefits and perks**
- 5 Location**
- 6 Culture**
- 7 Mentorship**
- 8 Prestige**



# Job titles are in flux as well

The relative popularity of various job titles is changing as well. The technological revolution over the past two decades has generated a wealth of data for companies, along with an increased need to synthesize that knowledge into insights and actionable recommendations for the business.

As a result, we are seeing a surge in applications for analysts of all kinds: data analysts, investment analysts, business analysts, and even IT analysts. We are also seeing the rise of the data scientist, a role that’s exploding as brands and companies gather more and more data on behavior and preferences, and need to make sense of that data.

Today’s students don’t need to go into traditional tech jobs as software engineers to experience innovation and be ‘on the cutting edge.’ Technology’s effect is felt across all industries now, and students who are passionate about working on human-centered problems no longer need to work in industries that seem antiquated or ‘old school.’

**Students don’t need to work in tech to be in tech. Technical analysts are exploding in popularity across industries and departments.**

## Popular Jobs for Students

Job Roles	YoY +/-	3 Year +/-
Business Analysts & Management Consultants	--	↑2
Data Analysts	↑2	↑6
Software Developers & Engineers	--	↓1
Marketing Managers & Specialists	↓2	↓3
Accounts (General)	--	--
Computer & Information Systems Managers*	↑3	↑10+
Computer & Information Research Scientists**	↑10+	↑10+
Data Scientists	↓2	↑1
Electrical Engineers	↑3	↑10+
Customer Success & Account Managers	↑10+	↑10+



\*Computer & Information Systems Managers plan, direct, or coordinate information systems and programming activities.  
 \*\*Computer and Information Research Scientists research and develop solutions to hardware and software problems.

# Students' most listed skills are relatively consistent

The top skills listed by students are a strong indicator of what they think employers are looking for. In order to package themselves to appeal to talent acquisition teams, students are emphasizing leadership, organization, and communication as their top three soft skills; with social media, research, and data analysis as the top three hard skills.

Early talent is increasingly bringing tele-empathy with them to work—as well as skills like flexibility, business communication, and collaboration—in order to demonstrate their likelihood of success in a COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 world. The hard skills students list on their profiles largely remained the same as last year, with a rise in research and social media accompanied by a decline for Photoshop skills.



## Popular Skills on Students' Profiles

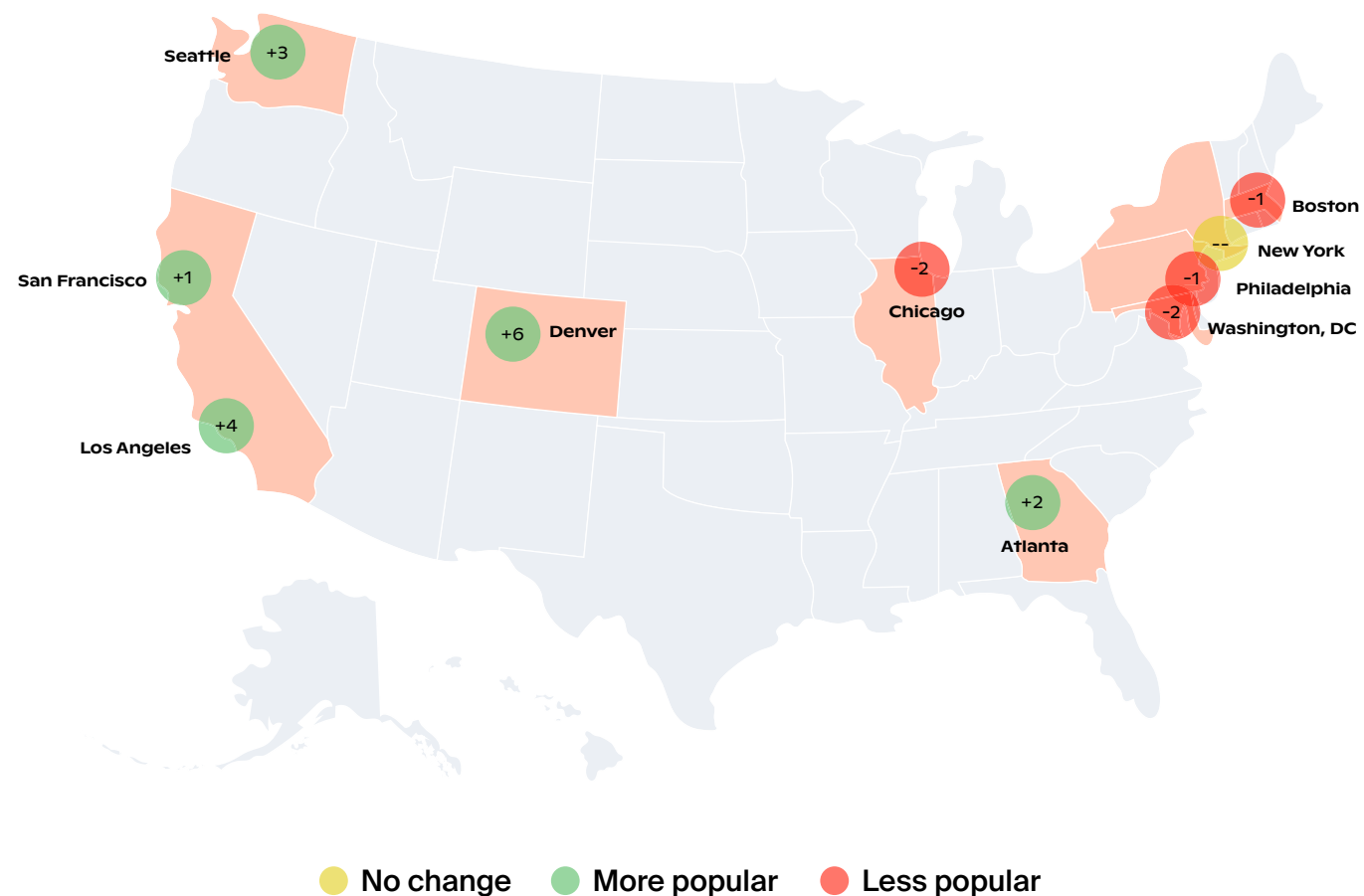
Soft Skills	YoY +/-	Hard Skills	YoY +/-
Leadership	↑1	Social media	↑1
Organization	↓1	Research	↑2
Communication	--	Data analysis	--
Problem solving	↑1	Writing	↓3
Time management	↑1	Typing	--
Customer service	↓1	Event planning	--
Teamwork	--	Java	--
Public speaking	--	Python	↑1
Business communication	↑4	Project management	↓3
Creativity	↑1	Marketing	--
Multitasking	↑2	Photoshop	↓4
Collaboration	↑4	HTML	↑1
Hard worker	--	Spanish	↓1
Critical thinking	↑2	Retail sales	↑1
Flexibility	↑10+	C++	↓1

# Students are split on remote work as employers loosen job location requirements

Despite the prevalence of virtual learning this year, **48% of college students still prefer to work in an office.** We dug into our network to find the major cities they listed in their profiles as places they want to work.

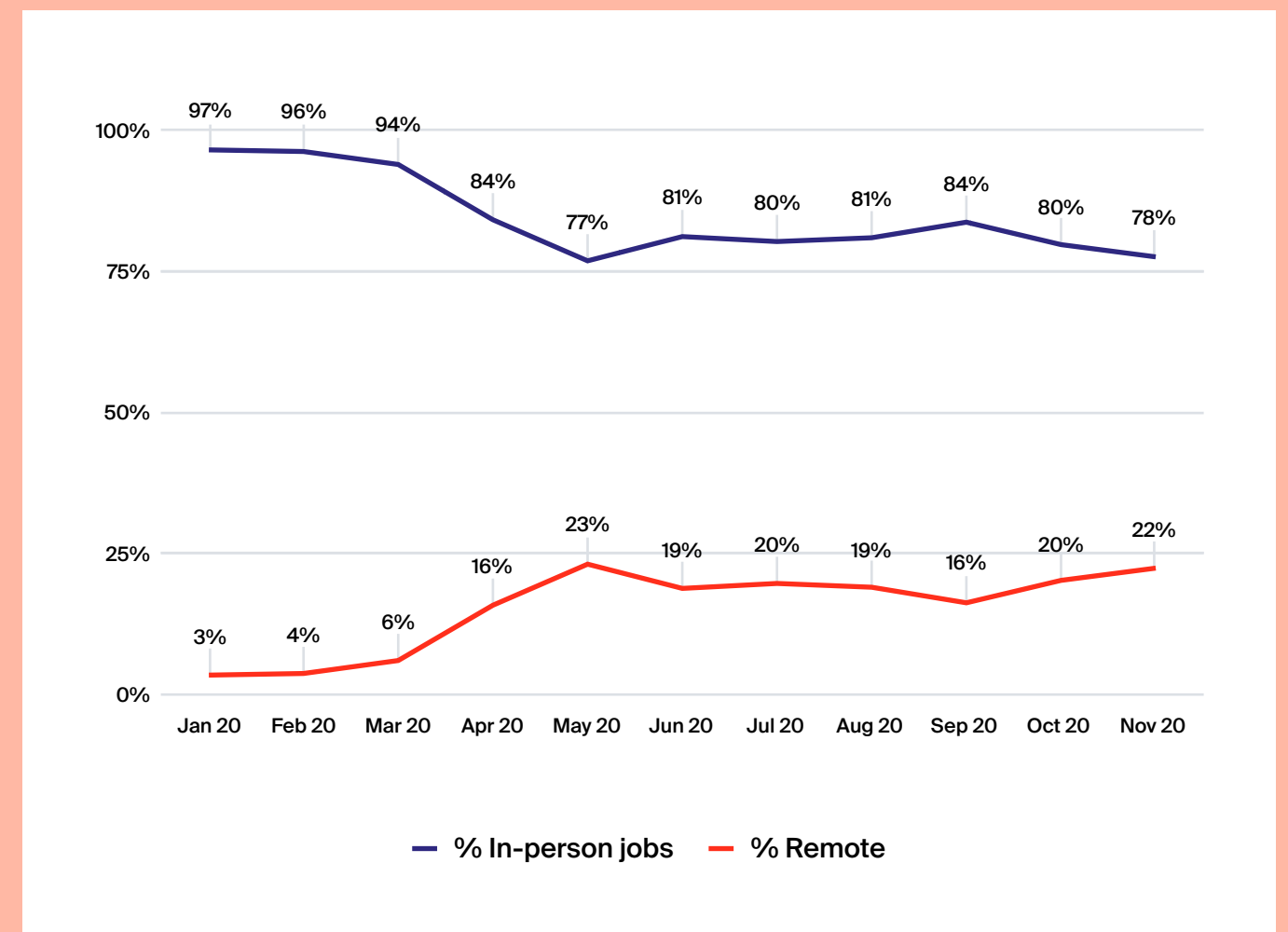
We found that students have increasingly expanded their interest to west-coast cities and a wider variety overall—including some that are seen as more affordable to help them gain a financial footing.

## Popular Work Locations for Early Talent



At the same time, **52% of students say that they would prefer to work remotely**—rendering their work location preferences irrelevant. The prevalence of remote work has decreased the requirement for talent to be located in the same city or region as their prospective employer. As a result, employers are modifying their job location criteria to enable early careers in a remote world—a symbolic step in unlocking access to job opportunities for students, regardless of where they live.

## Since January 2020, remote jobs on Handshake have increased by 7x.



SECTION 2

# Early talent engagement goes online for safety & wider reach

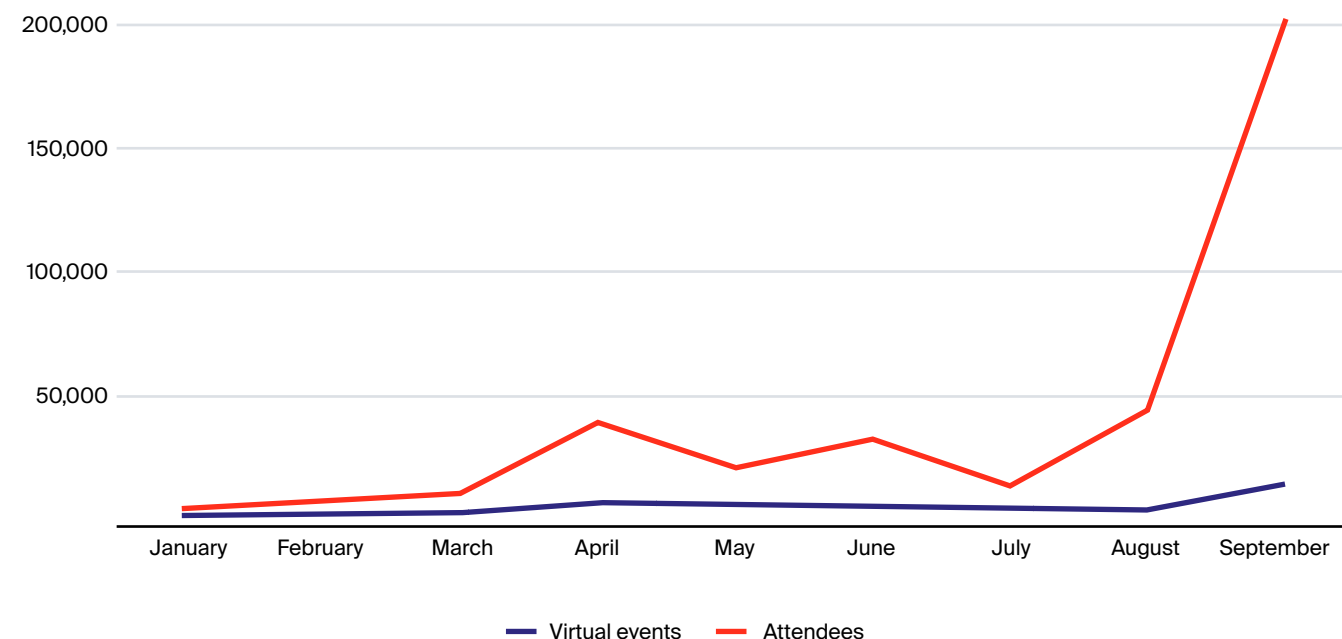
Remember what it was like to attend a career fair in person, navigating your way through a crowded gymnasium to talk to as many people as quickly as possible? On-campus events may have been the norm last year, but right now they feel like a thing of the past.

**8 in 10 students told us they had *only* met with employers virtually this year.**

Still, the rushed interactions, missed connections, and limited accessibility are vivid reminders that in-person events aren't always the most effective. Lacking an efficient way to target the right applicants, this age-old process for recruiting college students and alumni was primed for disruption, and 2020 only accelerated its transformation.

In fact, as of November, **only 18% of students said they'd met with potential employers *in person* this year.**

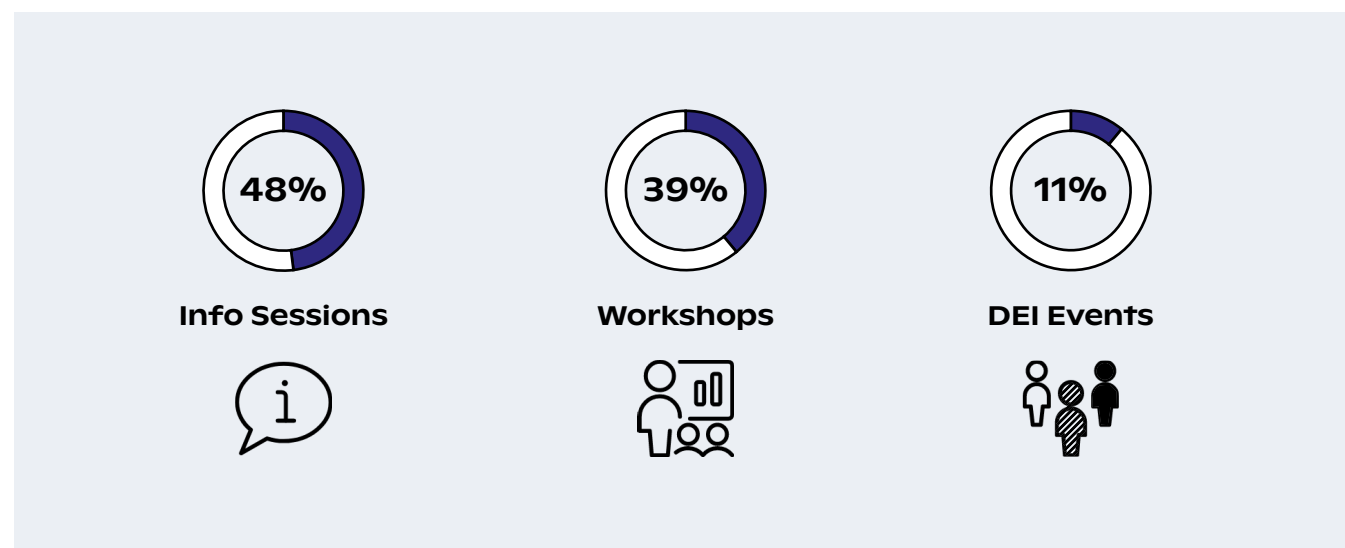
**Growth of Virtual Events on Handshake in 2020**



# For every in-person event on Handshake in 2019, 7.5 virtual events were hosted in 2020.

By example, we also learned that virtual events are easier to scale than in-person events. We're hopeful for a future where the web and campus experiences complement each other to offer accessible, engaging opportunities for students everywhere.

## Popular Types of Virtual Events



Of Handshake's top 100 employer-hosted virtual events (by number of attendees), 48% were information sessions, which introduced an employer's brand or role options; 39% were workshops, which focused on learning outcomes such as brand or skill-building; and 11% were diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-related events, which showcased relevant content to underrepresented groups.

We're already making progress towards opening up access. The rapid shift to virtual resulted in new ways to engage for all sides: the companies doing the recruiting, the schools preparing students, and the candidates themselves. Recruiters adapted by learning how to source candidates online. Likewise, candidates leaned on digital networks to evaluate potential employers.

## Top Ways Students Prefer to Engage with Employers

**1**  **Email**

**2**  **Virtual face-to-face**

**3**  **Via telephone**

When evaluating employers, early talent is diligent about doing research, and they rely on firsthand information to gauge what it's like to work at a company.

### How Students Prefer to Research and Evaluate Employers

- Reviews from company employees
- Information on the company's culture
- Seeing people with their major at the company
- Information about diversity and inclusion
- Seeing their fellow alumni represented
- Seeing videos of the office and team
- Seeing photos of the office and team

## SECTION 3

# Virtual fairs provide clues for successful digital engagement strategies

The fall of 2020 may have looked a lot different than in previous years, but that didn't stop more than **260,000** candidates from attending virtual career fairs on Handshake. On July 30, Villanova University hosted the very first virtual career fair on Handshake for the Big East conference of schools, pioneering a wave of virtual connections to come.

Ever since, Handshake facilitated **over 1,000,000 student-employer connections**.<sup>\*</sup> Total connections puts a quantifiable pulse behind the face-to-face interactions at large-scale recruiting events—interactions that were previously deemed too difficult to document in person—and emerged as the core metric to gauge the impact of the virtual fair season.

**"The best part of the virtual fair experience with Handshake was how easy it was for students to navigate. Our students are at a hectic time in their lives and being able to set their schedule to ensure they met with their desired employers was a huge win for them."**

**—Selena Hart, Recruiting Specialist  
at The University of Texas at Austin**

**Nearly 3x as many students attended virtual fairs on Handshake from August to November. And awareness is high—as of November, 84% of students said they'd heard of virtual fairs.**

<sup>\*</sup>Total connections represents the number of times a student and employer connected at a virtual fair, which includes multiple interactions per student (if they met with multiple employers).

# Virtual career fairs by the numbers:

**1,000,000+ student-employer connections**

**Who showed up?**

**700+ schools**

**17,600+ employers**

**2,300+ career fairs**

**81,000+ recruiters**

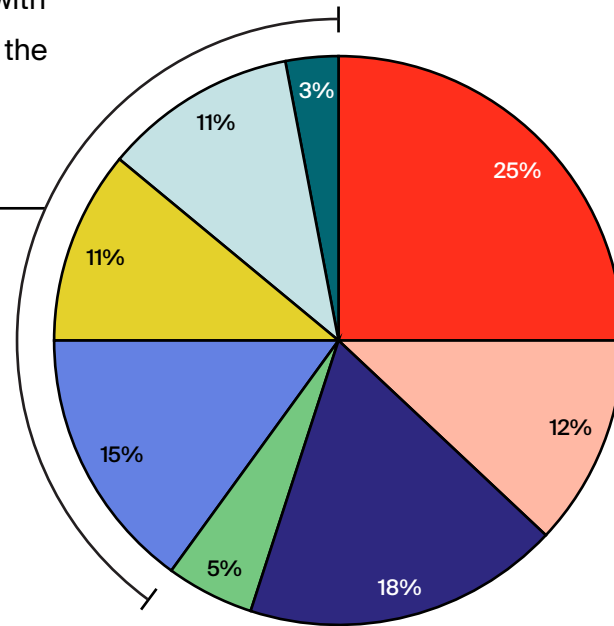
**260,000+ students**

**Business and STEM students were most likely to sign up.**

All student major groups were represented at virtual career fairs and virtual events on Handshake this fall, with STEM (40%) and business (25%) majors representing the largest segments of students who participated.

**40% STEM majors**

- Business
- Liberal Arts
- No Major
- Other
- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Life Sciences & Social Sciences
- Math & Physical Sciences





## Students attended over 620,000 virtual 1:1 sessions and over 420,000 group sessions on Handshake since July 2020.

Students preferred 1:1 sessions, describing the experience as personable, interactive, and intimate. In comparison, group sessions were seen as a broader, more informative experience where students could learn from their

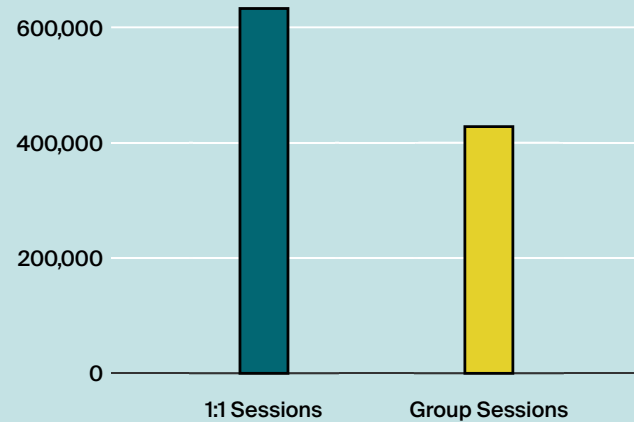
fellow peers and ask pointed questions. As such, employers saw group sessions as opportunities to build students' soft skills and elevate diverse voices.



**"Employers should be intentional about the types of content they share. For us, it's about showcasing the best parts of American Express, our colleagues, and our value proposition, and ensuring that it meets the needs of our students and that we're providing them with the answers they're looking for as they're launching their careers."**

**—Chloe Ford, US Campus Diversity Manager at American Express**

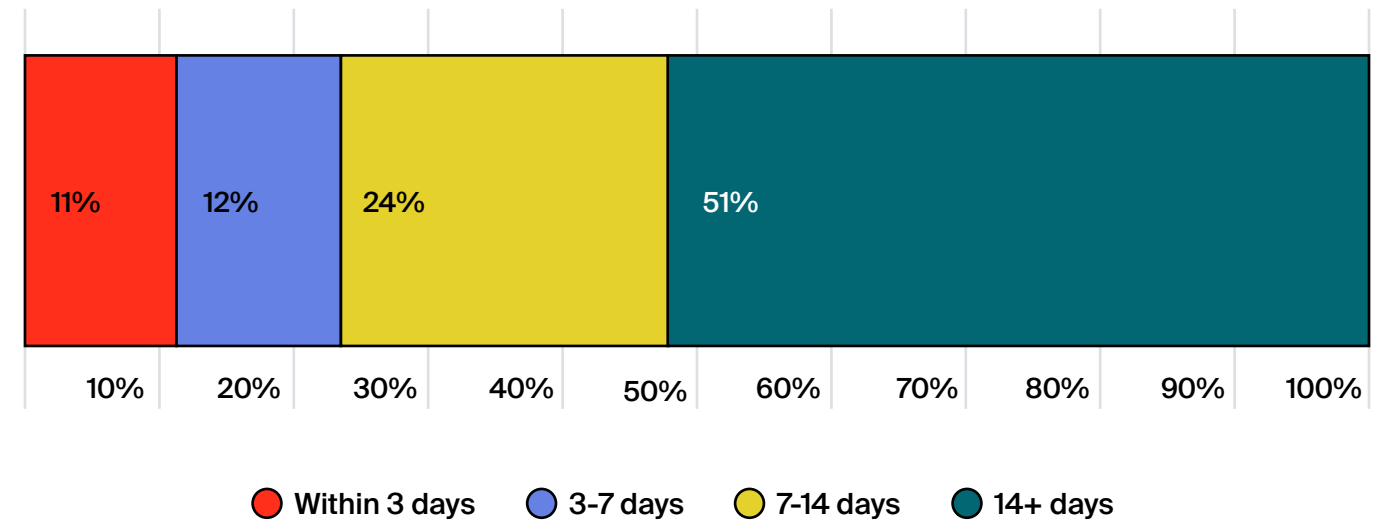
### How many students attended?



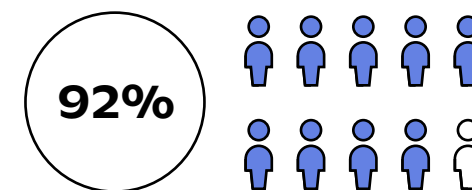
COVID-19 may have forever transformed campus recruiting. Without the need for on-campus travel or logistics, employers have more flexibility and opportunity to get ahead of their digital presence.

Virtual fairs on Handshake weren't planned overnight, though; companies strategized their approaches just as they would for in-person events. As one proof point, over half of employer schedules for virtual career fairs were created more than two weeks beforehand. Most companies didn't risk leaving the planning to the last minute.

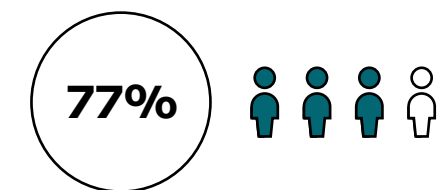
## Most employers created their schedules weeks before a fair.



With virtual career fairs, students could schedule a time to meet with employees in advance—no more waiting in line or navigating through crowded conference halls. Compared to in-person fairs, students highlighted the efficiency and ease of attendance of virtual fairs. As a result of being able to tune into a virtual fair remotely, attendance was unsurprisingly high.



More than 9 in 10 students who signed up for a **1:1 session** attended



More than 3 in 4 students who signed up for a **group session** attended

## For context, the average registration-to-attendance rate for virtual events across industries stands at 45%.<sup>9</sup>

In a post-fair survey given to fair attendees, students were positive about their ability to meet interesting employers: every 3 in 4 students were able to sign up for the session they wanted to attend and agreed that the employers present were of interest.

<sup>9</sup> <https://insight.intrado.com/2020-Benchmark-Report>

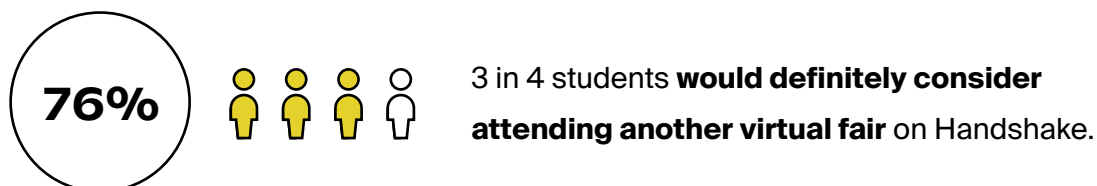
**"Despite all our anxiety, the experience hosting the 2020 All Majors Career Fair for Howard University was nothing short of great! The virtual career fair platform is extremely reliable, and the 2020 All Majors Career Fair was the most attended career fair in Howard history."**

**—Justice Brown-Duso, Recruitment Specialist at Howard University**

The digital environment requires different strategies and methods for employers to attract interest from potential candidates. **The median registration for students registering for a fair was 5 days before the fair.** Employers looking to boost registration and attendance rates this spring might be interested to know that **the majority of students register in the days leading up to a fair—with 29% registering the day of or the day before.**




## Best practices for virtual career fairs (and lessons learned)

Over the past few months, employers and career services centers have been preparing themselves and their students for the first truly virtual fall. It took a collective effort as well as a deep-rooted need from the community to normalize virtual fairs, and according to our November survey to student who didn't show up to their sessions, **76% would definitely consider attending in the future.**



To best engage students in a virtual career fair, however, will entail a bit of creativity.

### Top Reasons Students Attended Virtual Fairs




- 1**  **Learn about the company culture and jobs**
- 2**  **Make personal connections through 1:1 sessions**
- 3**  **Schedule meetings in advance to skip long lines**

Figuring out what success means for virtual career fairs will certainly pay off for employers. About half of students surveyed said that learning about company culture and job opportunities from employers were the most helpful parts of virtual career fairs. Therefore, it's in employers' best interest to make this basic information accessible to students.

Most importantly, employers should make use of tools that engage prospective candidates at every level of the funnel: capturing their attention by direct invitation, keeping their attention during their group presentations, and following up with them after the event.



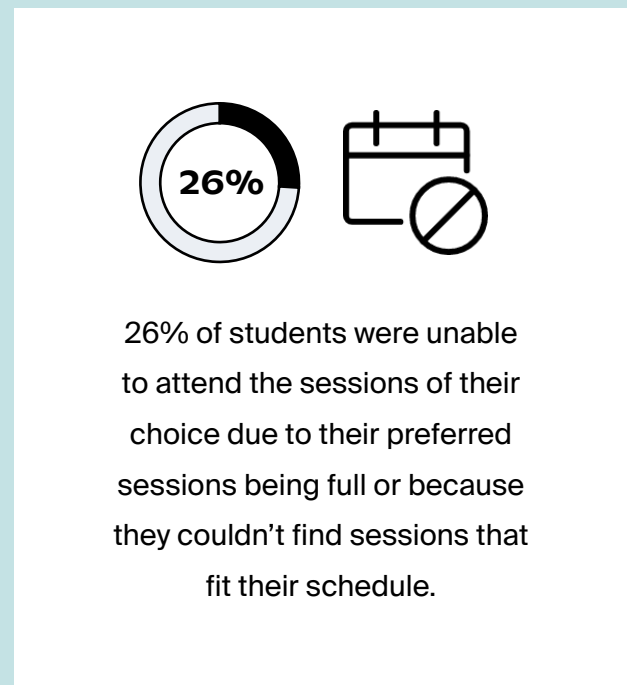
## Top Challenges Students Faced at Fairs

- 1  **Difficulty standing out to employers**
- 2  **Hard to get info they need from employers**
- 3  **Sessions they wanted to attend weren't available**

Of course not every fair went off without a hitch. New tools require new learnings, and right now everyone is stepping into this new landscape at the same time.

Some students weren't able to attend 1:1 sessions with the employers they were interested in because the employers only offered group sessions, for example. And **1 in 4 students were unable to attend the sessions of their choice** due to their preferred sessions being full or because they couldn't find sessions that fit their schedule.

When asked why they didn't attend their virtual career fair, the top reason cited by 49% of the students polled was 'a conflict came up.' While this is out of employers' control, they can still staff up their presence and expand the sessions they offer with a healthy balance of group and 1:1 sessions.



## Common Reasons Students Didn't Attend Virtual Fairs

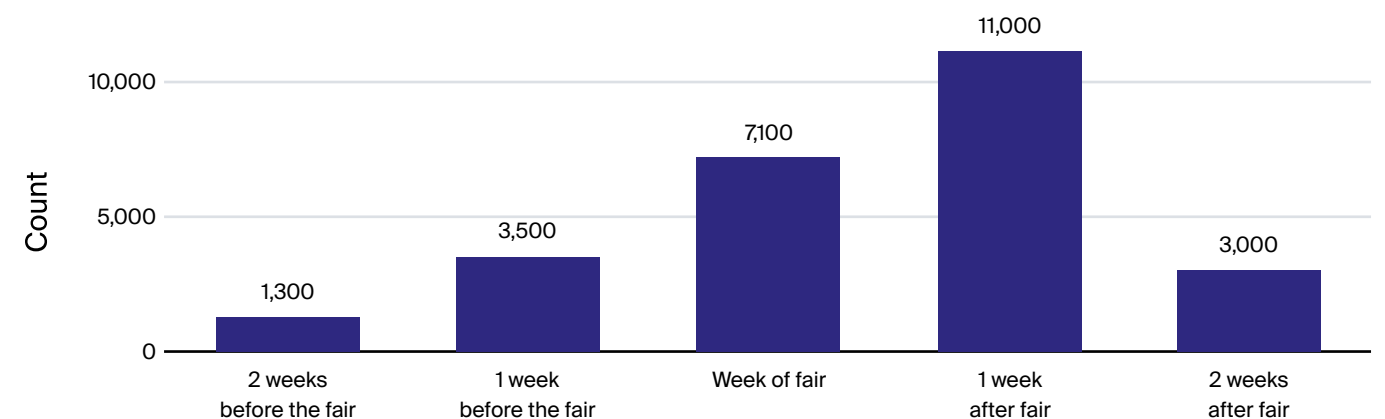
-  A conflict came up
-  Not being interested in employers or sessions
-  Too busy with class or homework
-  I forgot about it or changed my mind

While employers did a good job ramping up their presence at fairs, they can further entice students by curating educational experiences, like skills-building workshops, on-demand sessions, or office hours. A multi-pronged communication strategy can also help—reaching out in advance and sending reminders to students to boost attendance.

Career services can facilitate timely reminders to employers to ensure that they know about the best days and times to reach out to their students plus content their students are keen on seeing. They can also encourage employers to get in touch with the career center office for additional help marketing their brand, fair presence, and opportunities to students.

What we saw this year was that employers sent a majority of their messages to students in the weeks after the fair, showing true untapped potential for nurturing students in the weeks leading up to their sessions. Employers can attract talent to their sessions by proactively and personally messaging them about their session's benefits and content.

## Direct Messages between Employers and Students





Handshake Premium partners like Fiserv, a global FinTech company, drove qualified candidates to attend their virtual career fair sessions in advance by inviting students that meet their ideal criteria with a personalized message.

**Employers can streamline the student sign-up process by making it easy for students to find their description, company background, and positions they're open to hiring for.**

Students reported doing external company research when an employer's description was missing or only included a link to the company's website.

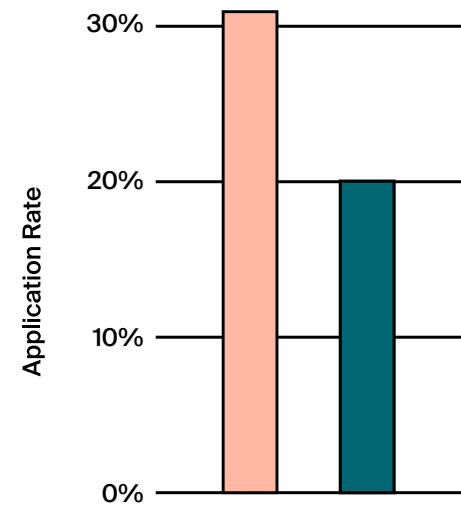
Overall, employers remain top of mind following a virtual fair, making it easy for students to take actionable next steps. The majority of students (58%) engaged with an employer after a fair—by viewing their roles, profile, or applying to a job.

**"With in-person career fairs, you can't always get to every employer you want to, and this allowed me to have more exposure to more employers."**

**—Senior at University of Delaware**

Students who attended a virtual fair and received a message **applied at a 1.5x higher rate** than active students on Handshake who didn't. Employers can pair their activities with a message to increase their applicant return.

**Student Application Rate**

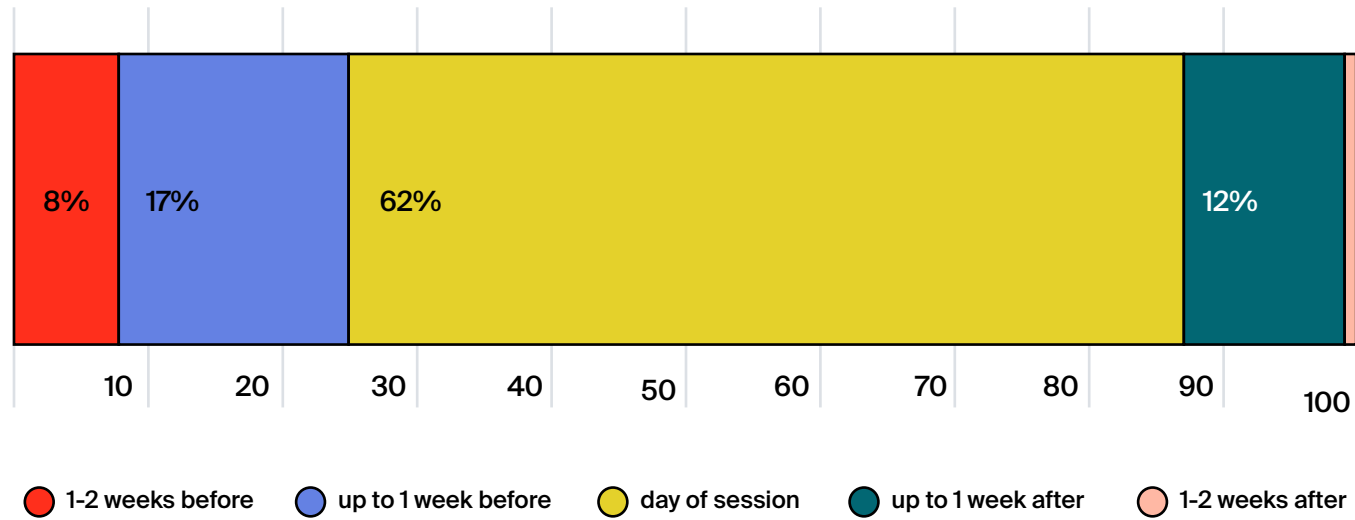


○ Students who attended a fair and received a message      ● Students who were only active on Handshake



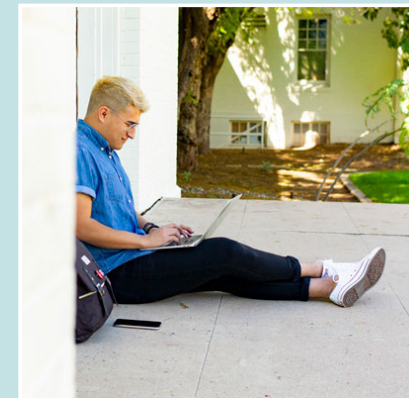
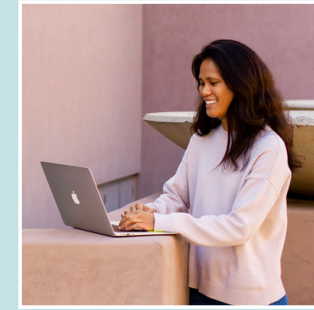
Whether they attended a group or 1:1 session, **students were 12-13x more likely to follow an employer they met with** at the fair. By doing so, students guaranteed that they'll receive company updates and notifications when jobs are posted that match their experience.

**Most students (62%) followed employers on the day of their virtual career fair session.**



**“Our genuine thanks to the Handshake team for providing us with a virtual fair platform. We’re driven by connecting our students and employer partners, and Handshake incorporates this philosophy into their product. Handshake truly delivered an exceptional product that meets the needs of students, employer partners, and career centers!”**

**—Lori Kennedy, Senior Director, The Center for Career & Professional Development at Lehigh University**



## NEXT STEPS

# 16 takeaways for employers, higher ed, and students

## Employer best practices

- ✓ Employers can be a calming influence on students—reach out and let them know which roles and benefits are still available at your organization. Students who lack confidence in their future work opportunities are seeking reassurance.
- ✓ Segment lists of qualified students based on your criteria, then personally invite them to apply to a role or register for a session. Explain why you're interested in their profile, and why they should be interested in this role and your organization!
- ✓ If you're looking to generate awareness, consider hosting more group sessions for up to 50 students at virtual fairs. For quick hires, 1:1 virtual information sessions may be a better fit. Create a healthy hybrid of sessions and slots throughout the day of the fair to give students multiple options that work with their schedules.
- ✓ Send timely reminders to anyone who signs up for your session in advance, perhaps sharing 'teaser' content that gives them reasons to attend. Then follow up afterwards, and create targeted calls to action—one for attendees and another for absentees.
- ✓ Develop engaging virtual fair sessions with unique content, such as games, skills-building workshops, or other interactive activities. Feature compelling speakers, especially recently graduated alums and those from relevant student organizations.



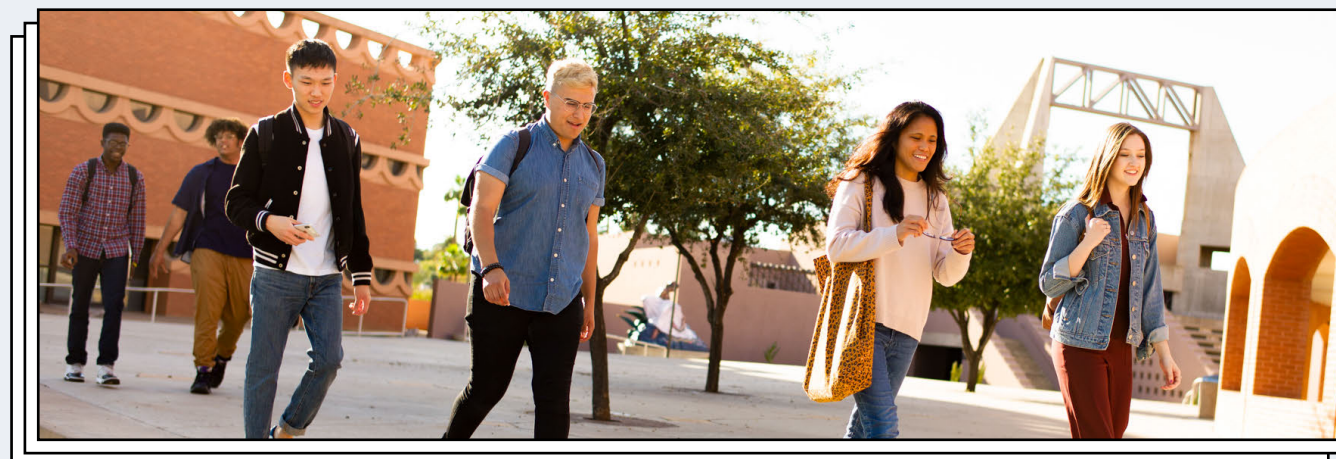
With the ability to host interactive office tours, fireside chats with large groups, and smaller, more intimate 1:1 conversations, Handshake's platform makes it easy for employers to capture students' attention and share valuable information about their internships and jobs, employee experience, and their company culture.

## Strategies for career services

- ✓ Report and share the number of student and employer connections. This is a good way to measure engagement that was once difficult to quantify at in-person fairs.
- ✓ Remind employers to create their schedules two weeks before the fair to capture highly motivated student talent—this is the time when most employers are thinking about their fair participation.
- ✓ Prompt recruiters, especially at lesser-known companies, to try to segment and proactively communicate with students in advance to generate interest.
- ✓ Since half of students register within five days of the fair—and almost a third the day before and day of the fair—a strong marketing push in the day or two before a fair will go a long way. Be sure to remind employers that they’ll likely see a surge in sign ups right before the fair, too.
- ✓ Capture student interest and enthusiasm before the fair with programming that boosts key value propositions—like making a personal connection with an employer that might lead to an opportunity—and alleviates concerns that they’re worried about, like standing out in virtual meetings.
- ✓ Consider the demographic breakdown of your fall fair experience and how it fell short—then consider custom outreach by major or student organizations to boost turnout in the spring.



## Action plan for students



- ✓ Complete and update your Handshake profile to receive the most relevant job and event recommendations. The information in your profile also helps employers find you when they’re searching for students to invite to virtual events.
- ✓ Sign up for virtual events and career fair sessions early to secure your spot with the employers you want to meet.
- ✓ Research employers before the event by checking out their Handshake page and their website. Prepare a short list of questions to ask to demonstrate your interest in their organization.
- ✓ Arrive on time and dress professionally to make a great first impression. Don’t skip an event or session you’ve signed up for, and be sure to stay the entire time.
- ✓ Follow up with employers by sending a quick thank you note if you have their contact information. View their open jobs and internships on Handshake and apply to the ones you want as soon as possible.

# About Handshake

## Handshake is the number one site for college students to find jobs.

Today, the Handshake community includes over 7 million active students and young alumni at over 1,000 colleges and universities – including 150+ minority-serving institutions. We connect up-and-coming talent across all 50 states with over 500,000 employers recruiting on Handshake—from every Fortune 500 company to thousands of small businesses, nonprofits, startups, and more.

Handshake is democratizing opportunity and ensuring college students have the support they need to find a great job and kick-off a meaningful career regardless of where they go to school, what they choose as a major, or who they know. Handshake is headquartered in San Francisco and has offices in Denver and London, England.



Learn more at [joinhandshake.com](https://joinhandshake.com)