

# Virtual Career Fairs Checklist for Career Services

A guide to planning your virtual career fair on Handshake

## Create your virtual fair (8-10 weeks before)



**Tip:** Plan ahead around “peak season”, both to avoid employer schedule overload and to capture student mindshare.

- Fall peak days are typically Wednesdays and Thursdays from mid-September to early October.
- Spring peak days are typically Wednesdays and Thursdays from February to mid-March.



### **Resources:**

#### **Help Articles:**

- Section 1 "Create and Configure Your Career Fair" in [The Complete Guide to Handshake's Virtual Fair](#)
- [Sharing an Event or Fair with Another Institution](#)

#### **Tips from Your Peers:**

- [Advice From Career Services on Hosting Virtual Fairs in Handshake](#)

## Invite employers to register for your fair (4-8 weeks before)



**Goal:** Aim for **80%** of expected employer registrations and **80%** of employer schedules created before inviting students.



**Tip:** Be ready to approve employers as they register so they can start creating their schedules.



## **Resources:**

### **Help Articles:**

- [Inviting Employers to Virtual Fairs](#)
- [Approving Employer Registrations](#)
- “Registrations” in [Supporting Employers on Your Virtual Fair](#)

### **Email Templates:**

- [Invite and Remind Employers About Key Fair Tasks](#)

### **Blogs:**

- [Employer Sponsorships at Handshake Virtual Fairs](#)

### **Resources to Share With Employers:**

- [Employer Playbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Virtual Fairs in Handshake](#)
- “Employer Training and Best Practices” section in the the [Virtual Fair Launch Kit](#)



## **Remind employers to set up schedules (4-6 weeks before)**



**Note:** Historically, half of employers create their schedules more than 2 weeks in advance of the fair. Remind employers that completing their schedules late means they'll miss out on students.



### **Tips:**

- Encourage employers to lift qualifications on 1:1s if they're seeing low signups.
- Help employers that aren't as well-known with extra marketing via social media or email.

**Tips:** (continued)

- Employers looking to hire should focus on filling up 1:1 sessions – the no-show rate is lower, indicating more motivated students.

**Resources:****Email Templates:**

- Template 4 in [Invite and Remind Employers About Key Fair Tasks](#)

**Help Articles:**

- (For employers) [Creating a Schedule for Virtual Fairs](#)
- (For career services) “Set and Manage a Schedule” in [Supporting Employers on Your Virtual Fair](#)



## Invite students to register for the fair (3-4 weeks before)



**Note:** Historically, half of students register within five days of the fair, and a third of students register the day of or the day before the fair. Inform employers they'll likely see a surge in signups right before the fair.



**Tip:** Consider custom outreach by major or student organizations to boost turnout among students historically underrepresented at fairs.

**Resources:****Email Templates:**

- Templates 1 and 2 in [Invite and Remind Students About Key Fair Tasks](#)

**Resources to Share With Students:**

- “Student Training and Best Practices” section in the [Virtual Fair Launch Kit](#)

## **Send students weekly emails with reminders to sign up for employer sessions and best practices for attending virtual fairs (1-3 weeks before)**



**Goal:** Aim for over **50%** of registered students signed up for at least one employer session before the day of the fair.



### **Tips:**

- Host pre-fair workshops for students to build interest and alleviate their concerns about attending a virtual career fair, like crafting an elevator pitch or standing out in virtual meetings.
- Send targeted emails to subsets of students promoting relevant employers. Or, work with employers on social media campaigns and events pre-fair.
- A strong marketing push in the day or two before a fair will go a long way. Use pre-built collateral from our Launch Kit to save time on outreach. See “Resources to Share With Students” below.



### **Resources:**

#### **Tips from Your Peers:**

- [Virtual Fair Marketing Tips from Stony Brook University](#)

#### **Resources to Share With Students:**

- “Student Training and Best Practices” section in the [Virtual Fair Launch Kit](#)

## Test your fair (1 week before)



**Tip:** Create a private virtual fair and sign up for sessions using dummy student and employer accounts to test your fair.



### **Resources:**

#### **Help Articles:**

- Section 2 “Time to Test” in [The Complete Guide to Handshake’s Virtual Fair](#)
- [Handshake Video Test](#)

## It’s the big day! (Day of the fair)



### **Tips:**

- Keep an eye on the [Session Details page](#) to monitor the progress of your fair.
- Hold drop-in Zoom support rooms for students and/or employers. Be sure to market your room well in advance so fair attendees know they can come to you for guidance.
- Open your Zoom support rooms an hour before the fair starts. Most institutions reported drop ins slowed down once the fair started.
- Keep a browser window open with relevant resources that you can quickly copy and share with students or employers if needed. See “Resources for Students and Employers” below.



### **Resources:**

#### **Help Articles:**

- [Day of the Fair for Career Services](#)
- [Report a Technical Issue at Your Fair](#)
- “Day of the fair” in [Supporting Employers on Your Virtual Fair](#)
- [Supporting Students on Your Virtual Fair](#)

**Tips from Your Peers:**

- [Advice from a Career Services Pro on How to Staff Your Fair](#)

**Resources for Students and Employers:**

- “Day of the Fair” section in the [Virtual Fair Launch Kit](#)

 **Report on your fair (After the fair)****Tips:**

- Use Handshake’s pre-built reports to easily measure fair engagement. Total student sessions (or “connections”) is a useful metric to demonstrate the ROI of your fair.
- Compare your virtual fair performance with benchmark data from the Handshake network. See “Benchmark Report” below.

**Resources:****Help Articles:**

- [Post Fair Reports and Session Info](#)
- [Pre-built Report Templates for Virtual Fairs](#)

**Templates:**

- [Sample Post-Fair Questions for Students and Employers](#)

**Benchmark Report:**

- [Handshake Fall 2020 Virtual Fair Benchmark Report](#)

**Want more virtual fair resources?**

Check out the [Handshake Virtual Fair Launch Kit](#).