

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](#)
- [Change an Existing Fair to a Virtual Fair](#)

Tips from Your Peers:

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

Hosting a multi-school fair? Check out:

- [Co-hosting a Multi School Virtual Fair in Handshake](#)
- [5 Tips for Hosting a Multi-School Virtual Fair on Handshake](#)

Hosting a hybrid in-person/virtual fair? Check out:

- [Best Practices: Hybrid Fairs](#)

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:

- [Employer "Registration Open Now" Email Template](#)

Blogs:

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

Resources to Share With Employers:

- [Employer Virtual Fair Quick Start Guide](#)
- [Getting Started on Handshake for employers new to Handshake](#)
- [3 Tips to Meet More Qualified Students at Virtual Fairs](#)

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.
- 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:**

- [Employer "Add Your Schedule" Email Template](#)

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:**

- [Student Registration Email Template](#)

Resources to Share With Students:

- [Tips for Success at Virtual Recruiting Events](#)
- [Handshake's Guide to Attending a Virtual Career Fair](#)
- [How to Create a Student Resume](#)

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. See “Resources to Share With Students” in the previous section.



Resources:

Resources to Share With Students:

- Student "[Session Sign Up](#)" and "[Day Before](#)" Email Templates

Tips from Your Peers:

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

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 virtual help rooms for students and/or employers. If hosting a multi-school fair, we recommend joining forces and hosting one room for students and one room for employers.
- Open your virtual help 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:

Keep these resources handy during the fair to easily copy and share with students and employers.

- Video Requirements and Troubleshooting for [Students](#) and for [Employers](#)
- [Profile Privacy Options in Handshake \(for Students\)](#)
- [Virtual Fair Video Test Guide \(for Employers\)](#)

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.



Tips: (continued)

- 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 Spring 2021 Virtual Fair Benchmark Report](#)



Want more virtual engagement resources?

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