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.
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**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

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**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)

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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)


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.