

A virtual career fair is an opportunity to connect with employers in an online environment. Instead of being held in-person, virtual career fairs are hosted on online platforms, allowing students and employers to connect through video conversations and online chats. Just like an in-person career fair, dress professionally, be ready to network, and learn more about internship or job opportunities.

What to Expect

Each virtual fair may be set up differently, depending on the platform used, so be careful to read instructions and/or watch tutorial videos when registering for virtual fairs. Most platforms will include a combination of one-on-one meetings with employers and group information sessions. Many virtual career fairs will require candidates to pre-register.

Creating a Conducive Environment for Meeting Employers Virtually

- Test your camera, microphone & internet connection *prior* to any virtual meeting.
- Think about your backdrop. Make it clean, clutter-free and appropriate. A kitchen table or desk might be a better choice than sitting on your bed.
- Think about lighting. The backdrop of a window will cast a glare that makes it hard to see your face. Instead face the window for direct lighting on your face.
- Find a quiet place.
- Raise your computer to eye level. This may require some stacking of books or finding a box for your computer to sit on, but it will be more appealing to look at you head on, rather than up at your face.
- Dress professionally. You still want to dress to impress, so make sure you are wearing business attire—head to toe! (You never know if you will need to stand up for a minute and you want to be prepared just in case.)
- When you are in a virtual meeting room with others, you often have the option of clicking “gallery view” and will be able to see all participants at the same time. Most likely the host has also done this, so, always consider yourself on camera!
- Keep your microphone muted while you are not talking.

Preparing for a Virtual Career Fair

- Prepare your resume. Visit the Career Center to have your resume reviewed and ensure that it represents your experiences well and is error-free.
- Practice your “elevator pitch,” which is a brief introduction about your education, relevant experience, skills, and interests.
- Research information about the companies and available positions.
- Register for the virtual fair and sign up for meetings with employers (if possible, depending on the virtual fair platform).

Virtual Career Fairs on Handshake

For the Fall 2020 semester, Calvin University will partner with Handshake for the Accounting & Finance Career Fair and the Engineering & Computing Career Fair.

Handshake's virtual fair platform offers two types of meetings:

- 30-minute group meetings
- 10-minute one-on-one meetings

Accessing these meetings requires registration for the fair, and then signing up for available time slots. Meetings all occur within the Handshake platform; no other links or video conferencing programs are necessary. *Note: Employers can request a meeting with you if they feel you would be a good fit based on your Handshake profile. It is important that your Handshake profile is up to date and visible to employers.*

Registering for a Virtual Career Fair on Handshake

Step 1: Log in to <https://calvin.joinhandshake.com>

Step 2: Click on "Events"

Step 3: Select the career fair you wish to attend

Step 4: Click "Register," in the upper right corner

Step 5: Once registered, you will be able to see employers attending, sign up for available group and one-on-one sessions, and view additional details

Succeeding on Handshake's Virtual Fair Platform

In order to make the best use of Handshake's platform and present yourself effectively to employers, make sure to do the following before the fair:

- Upload your resume to your Handshake profile.
- Update your Handshake profile as completely as possible by adding a professional headshot, education, work and volunteer experience, organizations and extracurriculars, courses, projects, skills, and interests. Employers often set requirements for the sessions they offer during the virtual fair and having a complete profile will help determine whether or not you meet the requirements and are eligible to sign up for a session.
- In order to participate in one-on-one or group sessions, ensure that your account is set to "Community." (You can check this in the "Settings & Privacy" section of your account by clicking on your initials in the top right-hand corner of Handshake's home page).
- Candidates must register for sessions BEFORE the session starts; this means you can't wait until the day of the fair and hope that there are still time slots available!

Additional Resources

- *LinkedIn Learning: "Pitching Yourself"* by Jodi Glickman
- *Locating and Registering for Virtual Fairs:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzxrLPW-Vw&feature=youtu.be>
- *Handshake's Guide to Attending a Virtual Fair:* <https://support.joinhandshake.com/hc/en-us/articles/360049934274-Handshake-s-Guide-to-Attending-a-Virtual-Fair>
- *For more career readiness topics check out:* <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/students/>

Remember, just as during an in-person career fair, employers are looking to engage with students through virtual fairs. Be ready to share your elevator pitch and discuss more about yourself and the company. Leave a lasting impression on the employer!