



## MAKING A CAREER FAIR WORK FOR YOU

Check out Handshake at [mga.joinhandshake.com](http://mga.joinhandshake.com) for our career fair schedule and participating employers each semester.

For professional attire tips, see information on the back of this handout.

### REASONS TO ATTEND

- Meet companies that are serious about recruiting MGA students for jobs, internships, and graduate school.
- Make a personal connection with a recruiter before and/or after applying for a job.
- Expand your network of contacts and potential interview opportunities.
- If you're an underclassman, career fairs are a great place to learn about potential career opportunities.
- Practice networking in a safe environment.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Research the companies that are attending and prioritize the ones you plan to target. Handshake provides information on all companies attending on campus career fairs including their profile and what positions they may be hiring.
- For your target companies, know what you want to do for them and why.
- Practice how you will introduce yourself to employers. Be natural and mention your interest in the company.
- Develop one or two open ended questions to ask your target employers.
- Bring enough resumes (on resume paper) to leave one with all of your target companies plus a few extra.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Initially, entering a career fair can be a bit overwhelming. Knowing what to expect can help ease anxiety.

- First, locate the registration table, which is normally near the entrance. Sign-in and make a nametag.
- Upon entering the room filled with tables and/or booths, survey the layout of the room.
- If available, obtain a list of the room from registration so that you can locate your target employers.
- In most cases, human resource professionals staff the tables. Companies may also send alumni or department managers. Smaller companies may even send their company president.

### ELEVATOR PITCH/INTRODUCTION

- Smile and introduce yourself. Offer your hand for a handshake – this helps establish rapport.
- Never begin with..."I'm a \_\_\_\_\_ major. What jobs do you have for me?" Instead, you need to tell them why you are the kind of candidate they are seeking, regardless of your major.
- Tell the employer what type of position you are looking for and how this fits with their company. If you saw related positions on their website, mention it or ask an open ended question about it.
- If you didn't research ahead of time, check out their display and think about why they caught your eye. Instead of saying, "What jobs do you have?" it would be better to say, "I didn't get a chance to research your company ahead of time but I noticed from your display \_\_\_\_\_. What advice would you have for me as someone looking for \_\_\_\_\_ position?"

### MAKING THE BEST IMPRESSION

The recruiters attending the career fair have some basic expectations.

- Job candidates should have a professional resume that has been critiqued by a career advisor.
- Career fair participants should be neatly dressed and groomed. Professional attire is a must for job and internship seekers.
- A professional portfolio pad is good for carrying resumes and for taking notes.

### BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT!

- Listen and watch as your fellow job seekers are talking to recruiters. You can learn a great deal about the "do's and don'ts" of job searching from being a casual observer.
- Do more than browse the job fair and passively pickup brochures and giveaways. To make the most of your time, you must introduce yourself to the employers, hand them your resume, and ask open-ended questions.
- **Never leave the table without getting a business card!**

### AFTER THE CAREER FAIR

- Apply online to the companies that interested you the most.
- Send a thank you email letting the employer know you have applied. Attach your resume if you were unable to apply online but want to be considered for positions.
- Following-up will make you stand out among the hundreds of people they met at the job fair, showing how interested you are.

# DRESS FOR SUCCESS: A Guide to Professional Attire

**So what do we mean by professional attire?** When you're going to an interview or meeting employers at a career fair, professional attire will make the best first impression. Typically, it will include a blazer, dress shoes, and professional pants or skirt. Consider it a step-up from khakis and a polo and several steps up from what we normally wear to class.

## Clothing Resources on the MGA Campus – The Professional Closet

If you're in a crunch to find a professional outfit, check out the Professional Closet in Sanford 112 in Cochran or Student Life Center, Suite 261 in Macon. Most pieces are \$5 or less. Visit The Professional Closet during regular university hours.

## Additional Clothing Resources

Goodwill and other thrift stores are great resources for supplementing your professional wardrobe. Check stores like Macy's, Belk, Kohl's, Ann Taylor, Burlington, Talbots, Men's Wearhouse, and other department stores.

## Men (Masculine Expression)

- Business suit in a conservative color such as black, navy, gray, or brown. Avoid busy patterns or bright colors. A light pin stripe is acceptable.
- Tie with a conservative pattern and color to match the suit.
- White shirt with sleeves that extend one-quarter inch beyond the suit jacket.
- Dress socks in a color that complements the suit (not white athletic socks!)
- Leather lace up shoes, recently shined, in a color that complements the suit.
- Shave or trim beard for a neat appearance.
- Limit jewelry to a watch and wedding or class ring.
- Alternative to the suit: A long sleeve, button down shirt with a conservative tie, dress pants, dress shoes, and matching belt.



## Women (Feminine Expression)

- Pants or skirt suits. Skirt-hem should be no shorter than the knee and no longer than just below the knee.
- Best suit colors are gray, medium to dark blue, or black. Patterns must be subtle and conservative.
- Choose a classic suit that fits well. Too short and too tight is not acceptable.
- Always wear skin colored hose. Knee-highs are great for pants suits.
- Classic closed toed pumps with a mid-height heel and little or no decoration.
- Limit jewelry to a watch, wedding or class ring, small earrings, and pearl necklace (5 pieces max).
- Hairstyles should be classic and not distracting. Wear make-up but style should be light or neutral.
- Carry a purse or a briefcase but not both.
- Alternative to the suit: Black or other dark color pants or skirt with a nice, structured sweater set or coordinating jacket.



## General Neutral Considerations

- Dress professionally in business professional attire that makes you feel comfortable and best reflects your gender identity and expression.
- Focus on being conservative and professional with color and attire choices.

## Everyone

- Shower and wash hair the morning of the interview. Hair and nails should be clean and neatly trimmed. Attire should be clean and pressed.
- If it jingles, flashes, or dangles, don't wear it!
- Piercings and tattoos could be a distraction, so cover them if you can.
- Avoid strong colognes and perfumes.
- Don't underestimate the importance of proper undergarments. Men/masculine expression should wear an undershirt. Women/feminine expression should wear a camisole or slip when wearing light colored or flimsier weight materials.



**The Deal on Business Casual.** Once we get the job, business casual may be our normal attire. Neat, clean and conservative are still a must, but our clothing options expand to dresses, skirts, nice pants (khakis are ok, jeans typically are not), sweater, blouse or button-down shirt (no t-shirts). Ties are optional but a blazer is always a nice touch.

**What about Casual Fridays?** This isn't a given at every organization. Clarify before you wear jeans and your favorite MGA t-shirt, which paired with a blazer could make a great casual Friday look for the office 😊