



# How to Make a Great First Impression at a Career Fair

Prepare in Advance and Stand Out

**UC** UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA **RIVERSIDE** | Career  
Center

# Agenda

- Ice Breaker
- Employer Evaluation
- Prepare to Impress
- Create a Game Plan
- Dress to Impress
- Communicate to Impress
- Impress with your Resume
- Create a lasting Impression



# Ice Breaker

Practice talking about yourself and really take the time to reflect on your concerns

## Activity

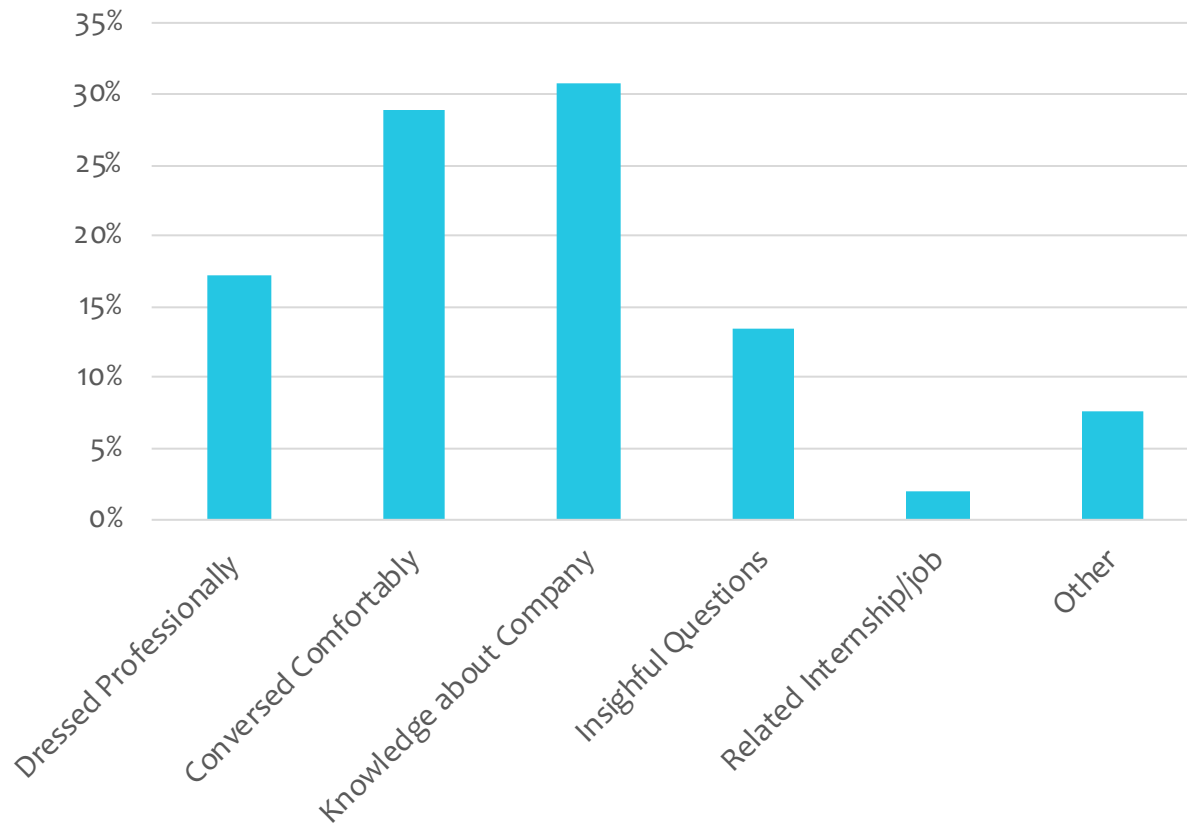
- Turn to your neighbour and introduce yourself.
- Then tell each other your biggest job fair concern.



# Employer Evaluation Feedback

Of the students that you considered “top candidates,” which of the following were most important in setting them apart from others?

## Employer Feedback



## Comments

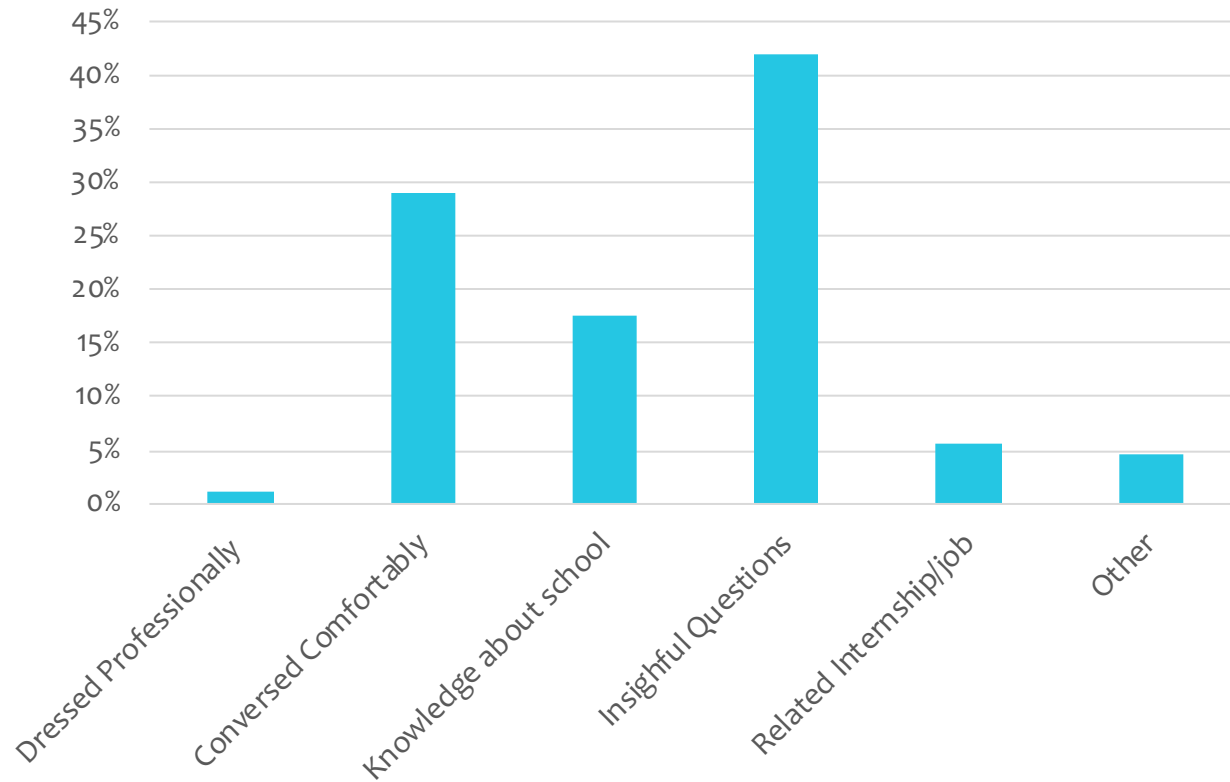
- Retail Experience
- Researching the Company
- Knowledge of the company and interest in the position
- Degree they are pursuing
- Research company
- Interpersonal Skills
- Company Knowledge
- Drive, descriptions of what they do differently



# Graduate Admissions Rep Feedback

Of the students that you considered “top candidates,” which of the following were most important in setting them apart from others?

## Graduate Rep Feedback



## Comments

- Clear Interest-Goals
- High GPA
- Level of interest
- Research experience, focus on a particular program/degree
- Has done research in the field of study
- Desire to be in the program
- Able to articulate their needs.

# Employer Evaluation Feedback

Considering the students that you have seen at today's event, what might help our students become better candidates for your organization?

## Finance, Accounting and Business Job Fair

- **Research** the career opportunities we have to offer, starting with Scotlinks
- Have a personal Statement, "I think" they want from a career
- **Research** of the Company, more defined career goals.
- **Know more** about the companies at the fair
- More **research** beforehand
- **Researching** company
- **Understanding** the opportunities we offer
- Experience
- **Be prepared**
- **Attire**- Some students were not professionally dressed. No skateboards, etc., no short skirts
- Specialize/Technical degrees More grad students
- **Knowing** a little about the company prior to the job fair

## STEM Job Fair

- More personal projects
- Students need to **research** company, they need to have a basic understanding of company products
- Working for better project descriptions on resume
- The best candidates **had seen** our website
- Be **professional** in **appearance**
- **Research** for company they are speaking to. Many blindly approached with no research.
- Asking more insightful questions
- More **research** on company before head
- **Know** about UCR Career applications portal
- **Researching** company ahead of time

### KEY

**Green:** Research the company  
**Blue:** Dress attire



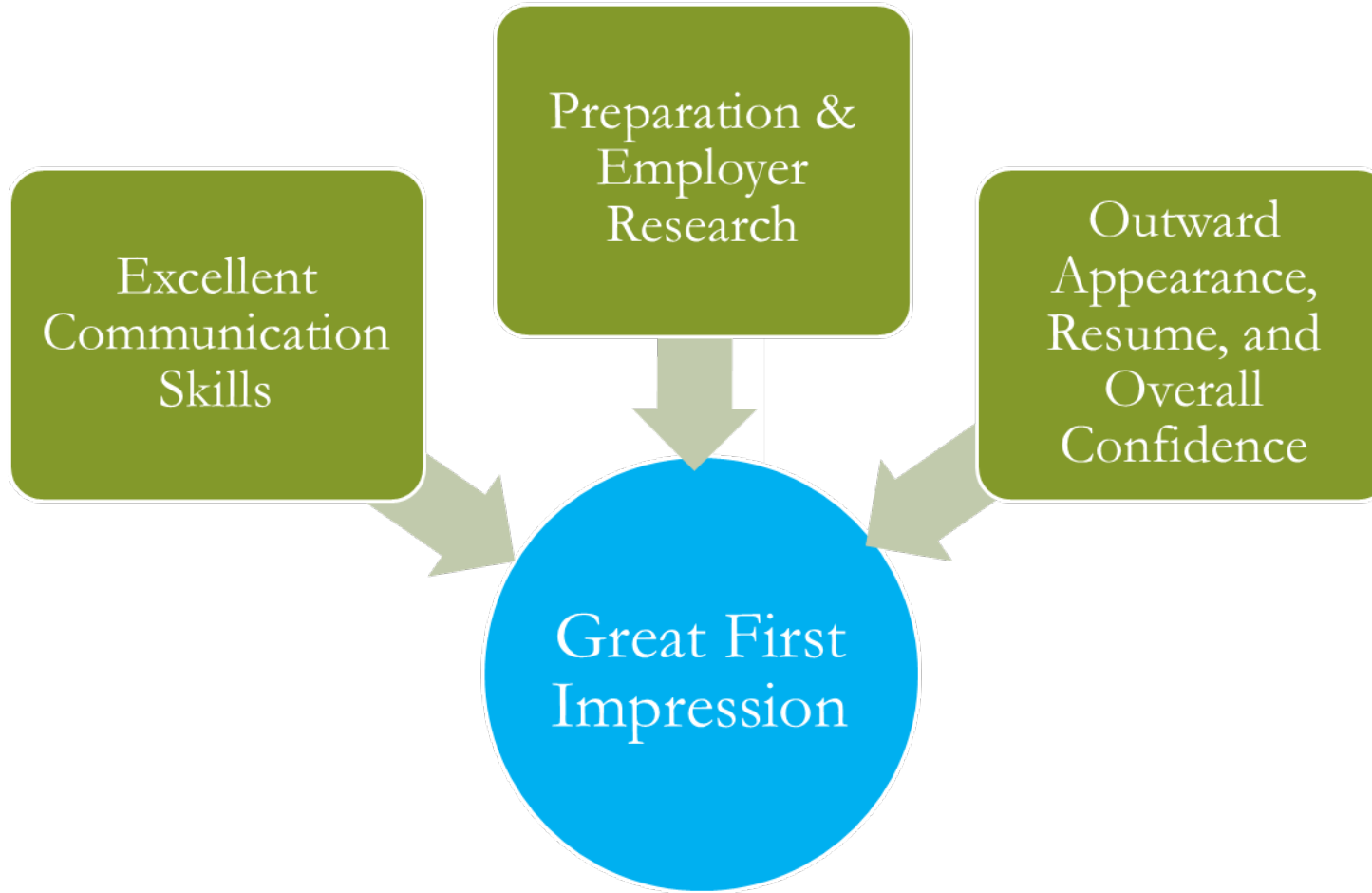


# Prepare to Impress

Success is where preparation and opportunity meet

# Career Fairs: First Impressions

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# Preparation: Employer Research

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**Learn who is attending ahead of time and research companies of interest.**

- The Career Center – UCR Handshake (careers.ucr.edu)
- Research allows you to determine appropriate employers to approach at a job fair.
- You will be better prepared to have a meaningful conversation with the employer and maximize your chances of creating a positive impression!

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**Focus your company research on the following areas: company background/history, products/services, size, location, and latest news/events.**

- Minimally, explore the organization's web page. Your research should allow you to ask engaging questions.

**Example:**

“...I know that Target is very community service focused and has many causes that you support. I am also active in my community and on campus. Can you tell me about how Target supports employees in this area?”

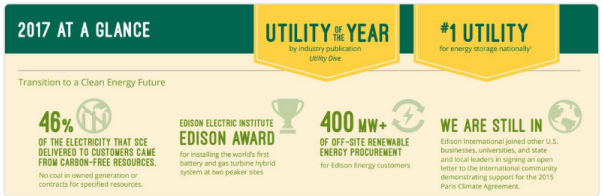
# Leveraging Social Media to Research Employer

## Twitter

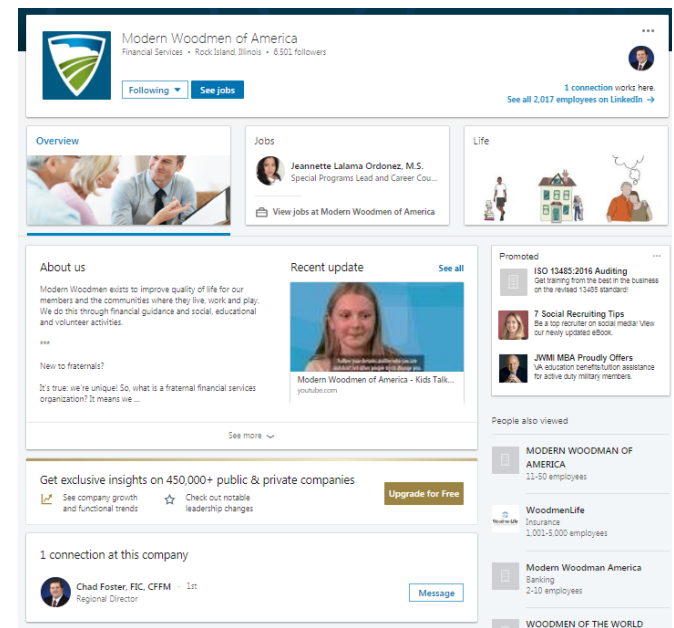


SCE Retweeted  
**SCE Public Affairs** @SCE\_PublicAff · 3h  
Q: How much electricity does @SCE deliver from carbon-free sources?  
A: 46%, in fact, no coal is used to generate power.

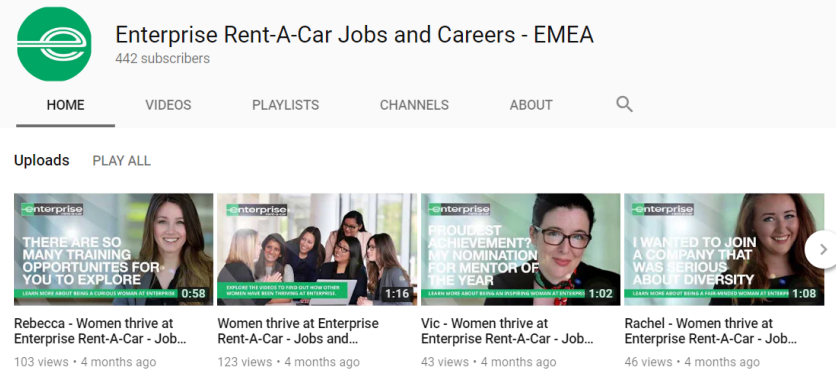
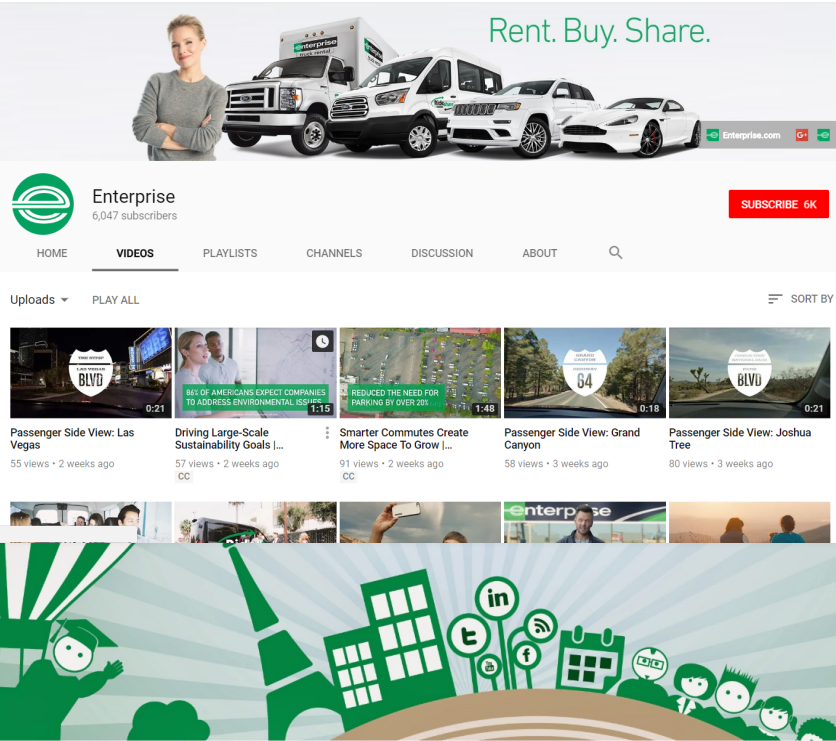
You can find more fun facts about our biz in our 2017 Sustainability Report.  
[on.sce.com/2Nm4j5E](http://on.sce.com/2Nm4j5E)



## LinkedIn



## Youtube





# Create a Game Plan

If the plan doesn't work change the plan, but never the goal





# Prepare: Create a Game Plan

- Create a “**game plan**” to target your top companies.
- Avoid starting with your top companies.
- Use other organizations to practice and get comfortable with the process.
- In determining companies of interest, be open-minded.
  - Do not solely concentrate on “big names” or large organizations.
  - There are often great opportunities with companies with which you are not familiar.







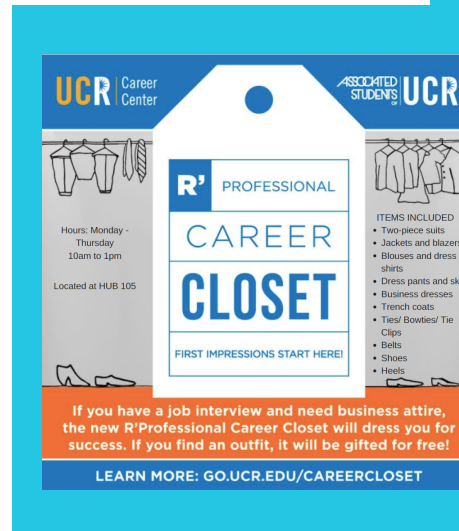
# Dress to Impress

You never get a second chance to make a first impression



# Dress to Impress: Who would you hire?

- Dress to make a positive first impression
- Conservative, colored suit
- Eye contact and handshake are important
- Be confident, enthusiastic, positive, and polite
- Look polished
- Visit the R' Professional Closet in the Bear's Den across the Scotty Store



# Dress to Impress: Business Casual vs Business Professional

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# Communicate to Impress

Communication –the human connection–is the key to personal and career success





# Initiating the Conversation with Employers

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After selecting employers to contact at the career fair, prepare a **30-second synopsis** summarizing your professional background, skills, and interests.

- This will create a smooth start to your conversation.
- Include the following information:
  - Name
  - Class level
  - Major
  - Opportunities you are seeking
  - Relevant experience
  - Highlights of skills and strengths
  - Knowledge of the company

## 30-Second Pitch Example

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Hello! My name is Sam and I'm working on my Bachelors in Business Administration. I have a great passion for marketing specifically. Last summer I had an internship with a small start up company where I had the opportunity to work on their social media branding. I gained a lot of great skills from this internship and I am looking forward to applying what I have learned in a career position. I noticed on your company's website that you do a lot of work in \_\_\_\_\_ and I was interested in learning more about that aspect of your business.



# Activity

## Practice Makes Perfect

- Briefly prepare your 30-Second Pitch.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbor and give your “30-Second Pitch”...
- Give feedback to your partner
- Now switch



# Initiating the Conversation with Employers

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## Examples:

- What kinds of skills and experience do you look for in the employees you hire?
- What are the characteristics of your most successful employees?
- Are graduate degrees important to advancing within your organization? Which ones?
- Which courses or experiences do you suggest to be a successful candidate?
- What kind of entry-level positions (or internships) exist within your organization?
- Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
- How long does the hiring process take? What does it consist of?
- What percent of applicants are eventually hired? What is the retention rate?

# Continuing the Conversation

- Keep the conversation on a professional level.
- If you are asked, tell the recruiter your cumulative, major and/or quarter grade point average.
- If your GPA is not stellar it may not matter, depending on the employer. Do not attempt to justify or over explain your GPA.





# Impress with your Resume

Your resume says a lot about you, it determines whether you will be called in for an interview or not.



# The Resume

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## Resume Transaction

- After generating that initial connection with the employer, you will most likely be asked to provide them with a copy of your resume.
- Some employers will provide you with resume feedback.
- A resume that is **polished and mistake-free**, along with your conversation with the employer, will help you stand out as a candidate.
- Don't be surprised if an employer can not accept your resume.

## Resume Tips

- Print your resume on neutral-colored paper that is **professional** in appearance.
- Use black ink.
- Tailored objectives/general objectives.
- Do not include any graphics or pictures on your resume.
- Use a font that is easy to read at a glance.
- Keep resumes in an easily **accessible** location.
  - Also make sure that your resumes are not wrinkled, rained on, or otherwise blemished.
- Be sure to **bring plenty of copies**

# Create a lasting Impression

You never get a second chance to make a first  
impression



# Things to Remember

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- Bring a **pen and paper**
- Dress in **professional business attire** (i.e., a suit).
- Wear comfortable business-style shoes—lines can become quite long.
- Consolidate the number of items you are carrying.
- Please be aware that you can not leave your backpack inside the facility. The Career Center is not responsible for your belongings.
- Act in a way that is **polite** to everyone with whom you come into contact as soon as you are on the job fair property.
  - Employer representatives are not just located at their booths!
- Remain **calm** while waiting in line. Becoming impatient does not create a positive first impression!
- If you have last minute questions, visit the Career Center table.





# After the Fair

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## Follow-up

- Within 24 hours
- Send a thank you note or e-mail to each recruiter with whom you met.
- Express your appreciation for the time and advice offered, let the recruiter know that you have completed anything he or she has asked you to do and reiterate your interest in the company.

## Undertake next steps

- Apply online
- Sign up for the organizations on-campus interviews (check with the Career Center for this information)



# How Can the Career Center Help?

- Come to drop-in hours for a quick resume review.
- Make a career counseling appointment
- Check our google Calendar for employer activity
- Use “Career Shift” located in your UCR Handshake account to research companies and more!







# Questions

There is no such thing as a stupid question





# Thank You

10AM-1PM Bears Den HUB 105

[careerrecruiting@ucr.edu](mailto:careerrecruiting@ucr.edu)

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## Come See Us

### Hours:

Mon. - Fri. 8 am to 5 pm  
except Wed. 9 am to 5 pm

### Drop-In Hours:

Mon. - Thurs. 10 am-3pm  
Fri. 10 am-12 pm



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