

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

OPEN DAYS

This is when colleges and universities open their doors to potential applicants. It's your chance to:

- See what facilities the college or university has
- Meet students who are already there and find out what it's really like to be there
- Talk directly to learning providers about the courses and programmes they offer
- See demonstrations or exhibitions of students' work, and sometimes get some hands on experience
- Sample the atmosphere!

All of which can help you to:

- Compare the style, teaching methods, facilities and outlook of different institutions
- Firm up your application plans
- Get your backup plan sorted out.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Find out the basics. The dates, times and place.
- Find out who will be there. A list of exhibitors is usually available.
- Think about what you want out of your visit. Do you want information, advice or ideas?
- Decide who you want to speak to.
- Make a note of any questions you want to ask.
- Take paper and a pen to note down information or contacts.
- Be prepared to impress!

ON YOUR VISIT

- Find your way around.
- Get a copy of the exhibition floor plan or map of the college or university campus.
- Look at it carefully and mark where you want to visit.
- Don't get sidetracked: focus on your priorities, not your friends', if you are part of a group.
- Mark the times of any demonstrations or talks you want to attend.
- Ask your questions (see 'My Career exhibition or open day notes') or ask for general information and advice.
- Look at your notes. Have you found out everything you need to know?
- Keep a note of anything important, and copies



of useful information (prospectuses, leaflets or booklets).

- Have a general look around. Maybe there are other opportunities you've not even thought about.

AFTERWARDS

- Follow up any useful contacts or organisations for more information.
- Use what you've learnt to make decisions and plan ahead.

MY CAREER EXHIBITION OR

OPEN DAY NOTES

If you keep some basic notes about the event and what you want out of it, it will help to jog your memory. Here are some headings you could use.

The stands (or departments) I want to visit are (use the floor plan or campus map):

I want to ask (note down your questions):

They told me (note down the answers):

Names and addresses to contact for more information:

After the exhibition or open day I need to (list any action points):

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MAKING THE MOST OF CAREERS EXHIBITIONS, JOBS FAIRS AND OPEN DAYS

Going to a careers exhibition, jobs fair or college or university open day is your chance to get a whole range of information and advice about all aspects of work and learning straight from the organisations that provide the opportunities.

To make the most of your visit, it's best to have a focus.

WHY GO?

- You can get information on a 'one-to-one' basis from the people who know
- You get the chance to have your questions answered
- You can get a lot of information in one place at one time, and get the chance to compare what's on offer
- You might even have some fun!

WHO ARE THEY FOR?

Some events are for specific groups, such as school pupils, graduates or adults returning to education. The publicity material will tell you more.

General careers exhibitions and job fairs are usually for everyone – pupils and students, adults looking for a new career or further study, young people looking for their first job, parents and anyone else interested in their future.

College and university open days are usually open to everyone too, though most helpful to those who are beginning to think seriously about future applications.

You can go alone or in a group, with friends or members of your family.

The main thing is to go along and use your time there to take a step forward in planning your future.

CAREERS EXHIBITIONS AND JOBS FAIRS

At a careers exhibition or jobs fair you will usually find:

- Employers
- Training providers
- Colleges
- Universities and higher education institutions
- Professional or trade organisations
- Voluntary organisations
- Career advisers.



This will give you the chance to:

- Speak directly to the people who recruit staff or deal with admissions to courses
- Talk to trainees, students and employees actually doing courses and in real jobs
- Ask the questions that matter to you
- See displays, demonstrations or samples of work
- Get advice from careers advisers.

All of which can help you to:

- Get new ideas, open up your options
- Get your ideas together if you haven't made up your mind yet
- Firm up your plans if you're not quite there yet
- Increase your self confidence
- Make useful contacts
- Explore alternatives, get a backup plan
- See the big picture.

There will usually be a number of different stands or displays where exhibitors (employers, universities, colleges and other agencies) will be keen to tell you what they have to offer. They'll be able to give you information, answer your questions and tell you what it's really like out there.

There might also be a programme of seminars or speakers talking about topics such as employment prospects, finance for study or the skills involved in looking for a job.

Some stands might even be running special demonstrations or events (such as fashion shows, hairdressing or bricklaying).

And who knows, if you are actively looking for a job, you may have the chance to make a good impression on your future employer!