

# SUCCESS GUIDE



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY

# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

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Thursday, March 14, 2024  
2:30<sup>PM</sup> - 5:30<sup>PM</sup>



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[www.icpas.org](http://www.icpas.org)



## Virtual Career Fair

The Illinois CPA Society's (ICPAS) virtual fair is intended to connect employers with students or recent graduates seeking accounting internships or full-time positions. Job seekers will learn about the employers and their available positions, as well as develop contacts that could lead to potential first-round interviews.

### Key Benefits:

- Gain access to a variety of well-known employers
- Learn about all types of available accounting positions
- Participate in one-on-one chats
- Enhance your virtual networking skills
- Share resume with all participating employers
- Potential to receive invitations for first-round interviews

All from the comfort of your home!

Regardless of how you plan to take advantage of the Virtual Career Fair, here are some key tips to help you make the most of the experience.

## BEFORE THE FAIR

### Resume Review

- ICPAS is providing professional resume advice to registrants who email their resume in Microsoft Word to [student@icpas.org](mailto:student@icpas.org) by 5:00pm on Wednesday, February 28. Your resume will be returned to you with feedback by Friday, March 8.
- Upload a PDF of your updated resume to the virtual fair platform.

### General Resume Tips

- Include:
  - Email address, phone number and LinkedIn URL
  - GPA if above 3.0
  - CPA eligibility timing (when you will complete 150 credit hours)
  - Education, work experience, specialized skills, volunteerism, extracurricular activities and leadership roles, and honors/awards/scholarships
- Work experience in chronological order
- One page, especially for students and recent grads
- Easy to read: 30 second glance
- Balance white space with text and bullets
- Use standard font (Times New Roman/Arial) 10-12 font size
- 1/2-1-inch margins on all four sides

# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

3.14.24



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY



- Use action words
- Watch present/past tense. If you are no longer in your position, your verbs should be in the past tense
- Avoid use of personal pronouns (I, me, my)
- **Proofread!** Don't rely on spell-check

## Add a Professional Photo

First impressions matter. If you choose to upload a photo to your virtual fair profile, be sure to choose a professional photo. Your photo should be a headshot of you from the shoulders up. Dress professionally and have the photo taken in a bright location with a neutral background.

## Update Your LinkedIn

Once your resume is ready, update your LinkedIn profile so the content on your profile is consistent with your resume. Remember to add your professional photo to your LinkedIn profile as well!

## Make Personal Social Media Private

**Be sure to make your personal social media presence private to be safe.** One of the great things about a virtual event is that information about an organization is readily available on the event page and internet. Remember that information flows both ways – recruiters are also at their computers and can just as easily look you up.

## Research Participating Employers

It's important to know about the employers you want to chat with at the virtual fair. Upon registering, you will have access to more information about the participating employers. If there's an organization you are interested in, we recommend you do additional research on them.

## Practice

Although a virtual event takes away some of the pressure of an in-person event, you should still be prepared with a brief professional introduction, answers to common interview questions, and questions to ask employers. Each employer will be able to see your resume, but you should still be ready to share more about what your resume doesn't convey: your career goals and ambitions, your leadership and teamwork abilities, your technical skills, etc.

### Professional Chat Introduction Example

Hello, my name is **[your name]**. I am a **[year in school]** majoring in accounting at **[your school]**. I recently completed coursework in [intermediate accounting, etc.]. I am looking for a **[summer or winter internship/ part-time position/ full-time position]** with your organization. I am very interested in learning more about your open positions because **[xxx]**.

### Important note:

We are expecting hundreds of students to participate in the virtual fair. Be sure to customize your messages and introductions. You don't want to all be sending employers the exact same message!



# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

3.14.24



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY



## DURING THE FAIR

### What to Expect

In many ways, virtual career fairs mirror traditional, in-person ones. After you join the event, you can choose to enter various booths within the virtual event. Each booth hosts a different employer participating in the fair. When it is your turn to enter the booth, you will be connected to a representative from that employer. You will have a timed chat with each employer.

### Video Feature

Although your conversations with recruiters will begin with a text-based chat, recruiters have the ability to escalate your connection to a video chat. Once you accept their invitation, the video chat begins. Chat-to-video provides a seamless transition from a chat-based conversation to a full video interview, which allows you to move through the recruiting process quickly, talk to more employers, and ultimately, receive offers sooner!

### Scheduling Feature

You may be invited to a Scheduled Chat, which allows employers to schedule meeting times with job seekers in advance of the event. These connections take place at preset times during the virtual fair, which may reduce your wait times and help ensure you speak to the right recruiting representatives.

### Wear a Professional Outfit

Dressing professionally will put you in the job-hunting mindset. Plus, you'll need to be prepared for chat-to-video opportunities. Make the most of this opportunity by looking and feeling professional.

### Additional Tips

#### 1. Attend the fair from a distraction-free environment

You can attend a virtual fair from anywhere, but that doesn't mean you should. Make sure the room you're in is clean, quiet, and well lit. While you might be tempted to participate from your cell phone, it doesn't always have the same quality or connection as your computer.

#### 2. Be ready to put yourself out there

Once you've been admitted to a chat session, the ball is in your court to introduce yourself and ask questions about the organization and open positions.

#### 3. Use clear, professional business communication

Your communication will be done through written interactions in the chat function of the platform. To make a great first impression, you'll want to demonstrate clear written communication. Write in full sentences, avoid slang and emojis, and watch your spelling and grammar. No "yups," "Ks" or "sups". There is a spellcheck function in the chat box, so be sure to use it!

# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

3.14.24



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY



#### **4. Finding an organization that fits your personality and desired work culture is just as important as recruiters looking for the best candidates to fill their positions**

There are many differences between small, medium, and large accounting firms and companies. Be flexible when considering your employers of interest and manage your time effectively. There may be long wait times for certain booths, so consider visiting others until lines are shorter. You never know what opportunities might arise!

#### **5. Take notes**

Take notes during the conversation so that you have talking points on each employer you can use to send a meaningful follow-up email.

#### **6. Ask for next steps and contact information**

Don't hesitate to ask about the next steps in the process – whether that means getting in touch with human resources, filling out a job application, or setting up time for a phone interview. Before exiting the chat, take down their contact information. You'll need this information for following up after the fair.

#### **What should I chat about?**

Just as this is a chance for you to market yourself to potential employers, this is a chance for employers to share more about their organization, company culture, and available positions. There is limited time to make an impression and gain valuable information about the company, so you should have several questions ready. These questions will help you later when you are ready to determine if the employer and available position is a good fit for you.

#### **Common Questions from Employers**

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose your major?
- What do you like most/least about your studies?
- What are your short/long-term goals?
- Why are you interested in our company/position?
- Why would you be a good candidate for this company/position?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Can you describe your ideal job?

#### **Sample Questions to Ask Employers**

- What career paths are available in your organization?
- What are skills and attributes do you value most in your interns/employees?
- What is the typical work week of an intern/new employee?
- What is your hiring process like for intern/full-time hires?
- What is your remote work policy?
- Do you offer training or mentors to help your employees succeed?
- What is the office culture like?
- What do you enjoy most about working for the company?
- How can I improve my chances of receiving an interview or offer?
- Do you have any advice for someone wanting to enter the accounting profession?
- May I contact you with further questions?



### Questions NOT to ask Employers

- What is the pay range for this position? (Save questions about pay for a follow up interview.)
- Can you tell me about your company? (This shows that you haven't done any research.)

### Illinois CPA Society Info Booth

Have a quick question about the fair? Interested in learning about student member benefits? Just need a confidence boost? Stop by the ICPAS booth at any time during the event for a friendly chat.

## AFTER THE FAIR

Follow up with employers you're interested in within two business days by sending them an email. This is your chance to thank them for their time, explain why you are a good fit with the company, and express your continued interest in the position. Be friendly, creative, and use your notes to make a personal connection to something specific from your conversation.

As a reminder, your resume will be sent to all participating employers after the fair. If you did not have a chance to chat with an employer you are interested in, you can still reach out to their booth representatives to connect.

### Follow Up Email Example

Subject: ICPAS Virtual Career Fair Follow Up

Dear **[First Name]**,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the [position] role. It was great speaking with you and learning more about the position.

I look forward to the opportunity to join [firm/company] and am particularly interested in the details you shared about [something specific from conversation]. I believe my [experience, academic record, other strength] would be an asset to your team. Please let me know what next steps are needed from me, or if I can provide you with any additional information during this process. Attached is my resume for your reference.

Best,

**[Your first and last name]**  
**[Your email address]**  
**[Your phone number]**



### Email/LinkedIn Message to Employer You Didn't Chat With Example

Dear **[First Name]**,

I would have liked to have had the opportunity to connect with you during the ICPAS Virtual Career Fair. I did some research on **[firm/company]** and was really impressed with the work you are doing. I would love to learn more about the **[open position]**. Is there a time we could connect in the next few days? Attached is my resume for your reference.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

**[Your first and last name]**

**[Your email address]**

**[Your phone number]**

### QUESTIONS?

Contact Manal Ahmed, Student & Diversity Outreach Specialist at the Illinois CPA Society at [ahmedm@icpas.org](mailto:ahmedm@icpas.org) or 312.517.7612.