

Handshake Help for Digital Engagement

By now, many of you are in the thick of cancelling career treks, postponing large scale events, and rearranging other services to ensure the safety and health of your students and staff. As a former director, I understand the difficulty in making these decisions and the implications you must consider. I know many of you (and your students) are likely worried about what this might mean for their internship or job prospects this summer. While we all navigate the daily developments of COVID-19, I wanted to provide a few tips that might be helpful to you and your students as you move things online.

Best Practices

We've put together a series of recommendations (below) on how to transition to virtual events and appointments, which are also detailed in this [how-to guide with screenshots](#).

Office Hours

To make sure we help you put this advice into practice, we're offering **two office hours sessions (on March 17 and 19)** with our Success, Support, and Product teams to answer your questions, demonstrate tips, and hear your suggestions for facilitating remote engagement. [Register here](#).

Handshake Community

If you'd like to discuss any of the above (or just hear about what peers are doing), please don't hesitate to participate in or start a thread in our [community](#).

University Involvement

As you've heard from me consistently this academic year, we're committed to engaging our university partners in product development—this time is no different. Next week, we'll be meeting with our **Events & Fairs mini advisory board** members to discuss the future iteration of these product areas. We look forward to sharing updates in a future roadmap webinar.

Our work continues whether we're in the office or working from home; we hope in the midst of crisis planning, the Handshake community can be a source of (at least a little) comfort in helping you, your students, and your employers connect. If there's anything we can do to help you, your teams, and your students, please let us know.

Tips for Maximizing Digital Student Engagement

Host career events online: It's likely that your most pressing concern is around upcoming events. Employers are also shifting towards virtual events as they seek to build connections with students. To help facilitate, consider:

- If the event is institution-hosted, update rooms and buildings or the location of the event to a permanent virtual meeting link. At Handshake, we like using the video conferencing tools provided by Zoom and Google Hangouts. Please note: the links are not live, so you'll have to copy and paste the url into your browser.
- If an event is employer-hosted, ask them to create a new virtual event (once a student has RSVP'ed for an event, it is locked, so it's best to start fresh) and include links to video conferencing in their description fields. This same advice on using links to video conferencing applies to all additional upcoming events.
- Send students an email update to increase awareness of these changes and encourage participation [with this template](#).

If you've had to cancel a career fair: Consider how best to achieve similar outcomes through virtual engagement and information distribution.

- Instead of hosting a virtual fair, shift to a series of individual virtual events. You could even encourage employers to host these events during the same time as the previous event, so students could click into each to simulate the fair experience.
- Before you cancel your career fair registrations, send students the list of registered employers, so they can review and follow any that are relevant; once they follow an employer they'll be notified about any new events.
- If you need to issue a refund, please [refer to this help article](#) and [reach out to Support here](#) for further assistance.

Bring appointments online: It's likely you're also thinking about appointments and how to shift these online without losing student engagement. To this end, consider some of the following tips:

- Create or update office locations of each staff member hosting appointments and career services staff accounts with a video meeting link.
- Create or update appointment mediums to add a video or phone call and update appointment blocks to only support virtual options.
- Note: if you update location and medium, you should not need to update any of your appointment types.
- Same as above, leverage [this email template](#) to encourage students to participate in virtual events.

Follow Handshake best practices for boosting engagement online: We'll send out even more materials for you to send to students next week, but in the meantime remember these tips:

- Remind students the vast majority of engagement with employers occurs online already, so it's smart to follow employers they are interested in to stay updated on any job or event activity.
- Prompt students to fill out their profile to increase their chances of being found. **80% of students who fill out the following three areas of their profile receive a message from an employer:** location preferences, job role preferences, and job type preferences. Share [this blog post](#) with students to spread this message.
- Encourage students to **read Reviews** and connect via **Peer Messaging** to supplement in-person alumni panels, career treks, and employer meetups they might be missing. Students can read over 100,000+ reviews by peers to learn more about what it's like to intern or work at specific companies and use Peer Messaging to conduct virtual or phone informational interviews with current students and alumni. [Here's another blog post](#) you can share with students about the benefits of these features.