



# CAREER FORWARD CAREER TREK PLANNING GUIDE

**Career Treks** give students hands-on experiences in the real world. They can shadow professionals, build their network, learn about different career paths, and see what it's like to work in different companies and industries.

The Career Forward Program organizes five treks each school year for undergraduate business students. This guide shares how we plan these treks and offers tips that student organizations can use when planning their own.

## Example Trek Planning Timeline

### 6-9 months before the trek

- Choose your target city, dates, and industries.
- Set clear goals and outcomes for the trek.
- Build a budget and research estimated costs (hotels, transportation, etc.).
- Plan how you'll promote the trek and how members will sign up.

### 4-6 months before

- Make a list of top employers you'd like to visit and identify potential contacts
- Submit funding requests through the Career Development Fund.
- Open applications or sign-ups for students.

### 3 months before

- Book hotel rooms and transportation.
- Aim to have 25-50% of your employer visits confirmed.

### 2 months before

- Finalize your employer visit schedule.

### 4 weeks before

- Host a prep session for attendees to go over trip details and expectations.
- Confirm hotel room assignments and transportation plans.
- Send attendee rosters and resume books to employers.

### 2 weeks before

- Send final reminders and confirmations to both attendees and employers.

### During the Trek

- Assign trek leaders to help manage the group.
- Stay in regular contact with attendees throughout the day.
- Collect contact info from employers to share with students afterward.
- Take photos and videos to document the experience.
- Represent the Wisconsin School of Business professionally—and enjoy the experience!

### 1 week after

- Send a follow-up survey to attendees.
- Email thank-you notes to all employer hosts.
- Encourage students to connect with employer contacts on LinkedIn and meet with their career coach to reflect on the trek and plan next steps.



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# Hotel & Transportation

Choose a hotel within walking distance of your activities and near restaurants or attractions. If booking 10+ rooms per night, ask about a “room block” discount—this often requires a contract and single payment. Contact the hotel’s sales team with your travel dates, budget, room count, and occupancy. If you prefer not to sign a contract, ask if they offer a group booking link or code for individual reservations.



**Traveling via bus:** If you're arranging bus travel from Madison, here are three local companies we've worked with in the past: Badger Coaches, Van Galder/Coach USA, Windstar

**Group airfare:** The Career Forward Program does not book group flights. Attendees are encouraged to book their own airfare and can be reimbursed up to a set amount. If you plan to book flights on behalf of attendees, please contact the airlines directly for details.

## Scheduling

When planning employer visits, leave 30-minute gaps between each one to allow time for walking, transportation, security check-ins, or if a visit runs long. Each visit usually lasts 60 to 90 minutes and may include a tour, a panel discussion, Q&A, and networking. If a visit happens during lunch, you can ask the employer if they’re willing to provide lunch for your group - if so, add an extra 30 minutes to the schedule. Visits should generally start no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and wrap up by 5:00 p.m. With this schedule, you can usually fit in 3 to 4 visits in a full day.

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
7:00 AM	TRAVEL		
7:30 AM			
8:00 AM			
8:30 AM		Visit 1	Visit 1
9:00 AM		8:30 - 10:00 am	8:00 - 9:30 am
9:30 AM		Address	Address
10:00 AM			
10:30 AM		Visit 2	Visit 2
11:00 AM		10:30 am - 12:00 pm	10:00 - 11:30 am
11:30 AM		Address	Address
12:00 PM			
12:30 PM		Visit 3	Visit 3
1:00 PM		Lunch Included	Lunch Included
1:30 PM		12:30 - 2:30 pm	12:00 - 2:00 pm
2:00 PM		Address	Address
2:30 PM			TRAVEL
3:00 PM		Visit 4	
3:30 PM	Hotel Check-In (various)	3:00 - 4:30 pm	
4:00 PM		Address	
4:30 PM			
5:00 PM			
5:30 PM	TBD Alumni or Networking Event	Free night	
6:00 PM			Est. 1 hour to airport + 1.5 hours arrival in advance. Advise students to not book flights prior to 4:30 pm

## Employer Outreach

When reaching out to employers, it’s important to be thoughtful and strategic. Many departments at the Wisconsin School of Business connect with employers, so we want to avoid overwhelming them with too many requests. Make sure your outreach is intentional and purposeful. We recommend working with the Career Forward team to share your outreach plans. They can help you brainstorm ideas or connect you with contacts at your target companies. To secure funding for your student org trek, you must share your outreach plan and final itinerary with the Career Forward Employer Engagement Team. To get started, please fill out the intake form below to connect with our employer relations team.

### Building your employer list

- **Alumni Network** – Reach out to alumni from your organization.
- **Past Partners** – Contact employers who’ve supported your events.
- **Handshake** – Search for recruiters and message them directly.
- **LinkedIn** – Find alumni and contacts in your target industry.
- **Do Your Research** – Identify employers before contacting Career Forward.

### Once an employer visit is secured

- Confirm the following:**
- Date and time of the visit
  - Number of attendees, roster and resume book
  - Name, email, and phone of your group’s on-site contact
  - Any expectations or special requests for the visit
- Collect the following:**
- The physical address of the visit location
  - Their on-site contact person, including email and phone number
  - Special arrival or security instructions
  - Names and roles of the company representatives who will participate



▶ The Career Forward team and the Leadership & Engagement team are here to help make your career trek successful. Complete this intake form and get connected with the right professional staff to assist with planning and logistics, employer outreach, funding, etc.

# Setting Expectations for Attendees

As a student organization, you and your attendees represent the Wisconsin School of Business. We recommend hosting a prep session before the trek to go over expectations:

## Professionalism

Attendees should be ready to engage—ask questions, network, and stay focused during visits. This means:

- No phones or laptops during sessions
- Dress professionally
- Be on time and respectful

## On-Site Roles & Communication

- Designate a trek leader and share their contact information with attendees
- Set up a group chat (e.g., GroupMe or WhatsApp) for easy communication

## Itinerary Awareness

Review the schedule carefully. Prepare attendees for:

- Employer visits
- Quick transitions between activities
- Early mornings and free time

## Safety & Emergency Planning

- Collect emergency contact info from all attendees
- Share the location of the nearest hospital and police station
- Encourage attendees to stay in groups during free time and avoid going out alone

## Resources

### Career Engagement Team + Student Org Partnership Intake Form



The Career Forward team and the Leadership & Engagement team are here to help make your career trek successful. Complete this intake form and get connected with the right professional staff to assist with planning and logistics, employer outreach, funding, etc.

[https://buswisc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eeOWq6xkRDqno34](https://buswisc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eeOWq6xkRDqno34)

### Career Development Fund



Student orgs can request funding for treks to help support large expenses like hotel, transportation, etc. To be approved for funding, you must submit your employer outreach plan and final itinerary.

[https://buswisc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3OA6CQvJHXmMoYt](https://buswisc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3OA6CQvJHXmMoYt)



Individuals may also apply for additional financial support, but approvals are based on financial need.

<https://wisc.academicworks.com/opportunities/72466>

### Emergency Action Plan



An emergency action plan outlines steps to keep everyone safe during a career trek. It includes key contacts, communication methods, and procedures for handling unexpected situations like medical issues or safety concerns. Having a plan ensures quick response, reduces confusion, and helps protect all participants while traveling.

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/yu88r2wmis67nbwzmlvw541tysyakeb8>