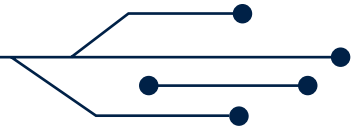


# Student Outreach Guide

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# Introduction

Thank you for joining the Security Industry Association (SIA) and the PSA Network in our efforts to attract a new generation of talent to our field.

The security industry has evolved rapidly over the past decade, driven by evolving risks and advancements in technology like biometrics, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. To remain competitive, security companies need to hire a new generation of engineers, project managers, computer scientists, technicians, and other personnel capable of meeting the demands of the twenty-first century.

One of the best ways to recruit talented young professionals is through the Career Services offices of universities, colleges, and other schools, as well as student organizations and alumni networks. Many larger security companies already have outreach programs, though firms of any size can do their part to connect with students and educators in their networks.

It doesn't take substantial resources or widespread brand recognition to achieve meaningful results. With the information in this pamphlet and the Security Industry Career Guide, you have all the tools you need to get started.

In this guide we will review the steps to establish a strong pipeline of new talent for your organization, specifically:

- Do Your Research
- Build Relationships with Schools
- Engage with Students
- Follow Up
- Measure Your Results
- Develop Internship Programs

# Do Your Research



Before reaching out to colleges and other schools, you should do some research. Namely:

- What kinds of students should you prioritize?
- Which institutions should you contact?
- What employer resources have institutions' Career Services offices already made available?
- What makes your company a great place to work?

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## What Kinds of Students Should You Prioritize?

Many people have misconceptions about the work that we do in the security industry. When a contact at a Career Services office hears “security,” they might think of “guards, gates, and guns.” They might not realize that **we work in a technology-forward industry** at the forefront of innovation in fields such as biometrics and artificial intelligence.

For this reason, your contacts at colleges and other schools might nudge you toward students in criminal justice programs. While we shouldn't turn those students away – as they have expertise in risk management and other relevant skills – you should **explain that you are in the business of security technology**. Often, the students we're most interested in recruiting are the ones studying engineering, computer science, advanced manufacturing, and similar subjects.

## Which Institutions Should You Contact?

Recruiting can be competitive at big-name schools. Remember that your competitors will include not only other security firms but companies from other industries as well.

To that end:

- Reach out to the higher-tier institutions, but don't neglect to cast a wide net.
- Consider recruiting from local colleges and regional branches of state schools (the top two percent of students at a sixtieth percentile school will still be very strong candidates)
- Try to identify institutions that match your company's values and needs. For example, if your company emphasizes cybersecurity, you might prioritize schools with strong computer science programs or those that offer degrees specializing in information security.

- List out these alignments between your company and the school’s programs, student population, specialty degrees, etc., and use them in your communication.

When you have decided which schools to reach out to, look at your own network – do you have any friends, family members, or professional contacts who work at any of those institutions? If so, ask for a warm introduction to the Career Services department, which can help establish a stronger connection right from the start.

## **What Employer Resources Have Institutions’ Career Services Offices Already Made Available?**



Before reaching out to a school, take the time to review the resources the Career Services office already provides for employers. Does the institution have a standard onboarding process for companies looking to recruit students? Is there information on how to share employment opportunities on campus? If so, familiarize yourself with these resources before you send your email.

# What Makes Your Company a Great Place to Work?

Finally, you need to be prepared to “sell” your company to schools and prospective employees by communicating what makes it a great place to work:

- Highlight the company’s core values and mission.
- If applicable, mention flexible hours, remote work options, and understanding management that respects personal time.
- Highlight any wellness initiatives, like gym memberships, mental health support, or wellness days, that promote a healthy work-life balance.
- Mention that the company offers competitive compensation to attract top talent.
- Detail benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, parental leave, and other perks that make the company stand out.
- If your company is involved in community service or environmental sustainability initiatives, highlight these as they show a commitment to social responsibility.

You should touch on these points often in your interactions with schools and students – whether it be in your first email to a Career Services office, a thirty-second pitch to students at a job fair, or a post on a college career portal. Below is an example of a paragraph that you might include in a job listing.

## Example from a Job Listing

Our company is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute.

We believe in nurturing our employees’ growth, offering extensive career development opportunities and a culture that celebrates innovation. With a focus on work-life balance, we provide flexible working arrangements and comprehensive wellness programs.

Our leadership team is approachable and dedicated to supporting each employee’s journey. We take pride in recognizing hard work and offer competitive salaries and benefits. Join us, and be part of a company that not only excels in its industry but also cares about its people and the community.

# Build Relationships with Schools



Once you have done your research and identified institutions for your recruiting efforts, the next step is to reach out. Your outreach efforts should focus on:

- Career Services Offices
- Student Organizations
- Alumni Networks

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## Career Services Offices

Career Services offices are responsible for organizing a school's job fairs and other recruitment events. They are usually your best point of contact on any campus because they have the same goal as you – to connect students with jobs!

You should reach out to a school's Career Services office by email. Here are some best practices for this introductory email:

- Send your email to two people to increase your chances of a response.
- Introduce your company, its mission, and the open roles within your organization.
- Express interest in participating in the school's job fairs and ask about the process and requirements.
- End with a question to move the introduction forward to a meeting.
- Tailor your outreach to each institution. Mention specific programs, events, or faculty members to show you've done your homework.
- Keep your email concise and to the point.



## Example Introductory Email to Career Services

Subject: Partnership Inquiry for [College/University] Job Fair and Talent Pipeline Development

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Dear [Career Services Contact Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am [Your Position] at [Your Company]. We are highly impressed with the caliber of talent that [College/University] produces, particularly in the fields of [Relevant Fields], and we want to help your students transition to the next chapter of their lives.

We here at [Company Name] want to empower your students with knowledge and skills needed for the workforce. Are there any upcoming job fairs or recruitment events we could participate in? Additionally, because of our commitment to supporting the next generation, we are interested in exploring opportunities to host information sessions, workshops, and potentially offer internships to your students.

Our company is dedicated to [Briefly Describe Company Mission and Values]. We believe that [College/University] students would find rewarding and impactful experience with our team.

When would be a good time to chat? Does next [Day] work for you?  
Thank you for your time. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,  
[Your Name]  
[Your Position]  
[Your Contact Information]

If it makes sense, use your meetings with Career Services as an opportunity to schedule follow-up discussions. Try to build an ongoing relationship with the school's Career Services office: keep lines of communication open and establish a cadence for checking in outside of hiring periods. Ultimately, your goal is to create a consistent pipeline of talent, not to hold a single workshop or attend a single job fair.

## Student Organizations

Besides Career Services offices, you can also reach out directly to student organizations, such as engineering societies or computer science clubs. Consider which student organizations and clubs are most relevant to your recruitment goals and reach out to them. Sponsoring workshops and other events or providing guest speakers can help build awareness of your company among students.

Some examples of student organizations that you might reach out to include:



Engineering societies  
(e.g., IEEE, Society of  
Women Engineers)



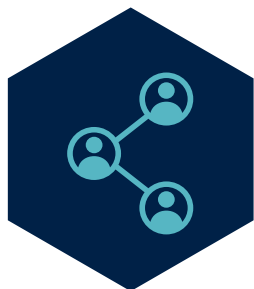
Computer science  
clubs (e.g., ACM  
chapters, coding clubs)



Cybersecurity  
organizations



Criminal justice or  
forensics clubs



Professional networks  
(e.g., business  
leadership or industry  
sectors)



Data science or  
analytics groups



Special communities  
or alliances

## Alumni Networks

Alumni can provide valuable insights and connections to key contacts. Look for employees in your company who have ties to academic institutions and ask if they can arrange introductions. For example, an employee at your company who graduated from a target school might be able to put you in touch with a decision-maker in the Career Services office or a faculty member in the school's engineering department. While faculty members may be limited in what they can share about students, they may be able to offer useful information about workshops and other events.

# Engage with Students



Ultimately, your goal is to interact with students – that is, prospective employees. Through your contacts in Career Services offices, student organizations, and alumni networks, you should:

- Learn about and register for upcoming job fairs and other recruitment events.
- Offer to hold informational sessions and workshops.
- Post job opportunities to college career portals.

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## Participate in Job Fairs

One of the most common ways to recruit students is to participate in job fairs. At a job fair, prospective employers set up booths or tables where they can showcase their companies, share information about job and internship opportunities, and interact directly with interested students.

Job fairs typically take place near the middle and end of the fall and spring semesters, but you should reach out well in advance. Many events are planned at least six months in advance. Early engagement can also secure better spots at events and allow for more thorough preparation.

Every institution's approach to job fairs is different: a smaller school might hold a single, all-inclusive event, while others host job fairs and other career events for specific schools and departments, such as business, engineering, and science and technology. Regardless, you should always follow certain best practices:

- Ensure you have an attractive and informative booth setup.
- Send knowledgeable and engaging representatives who can speak about your company and answer questions.
- Bring takeaway collateral, such as the SIA/PSA Security Industry Career Guide and materials that include information about your company and its contact information.
- Bring a sign-up sheet to collect contact information from interested individuals/potential applicants.

## Note

Job fairs and similar events may have a cost associated with participating. Some events may have sponsorship opportunities available.

## Offer Informational Sessions and Workshops

Besides participating in job fairs, your company can also hold informational sessions and workshops. In your discussions with Career Services offices and student organizations, propose hosting information sessions, workshops, or guest lectures. These events should be targeted at relevant student organizations or schools/departments. For example, experts from your company might lead a workshop on the basics of ethical hacking for cybersecurity students or give a guest lecture on the role of artificial intelligence in modern security systems for a computer science class.

Hosting events of this kind positions your company as a thought leader, allows for more interactions with students, and raises awareness of your company among potential future job candidates.

## Post Jobs on College Career Portals

Another, less direct way to engage with students is to post job opportunities to career portals. You can – and should – submit job postings to the Foundation for Advancing Security Talent (FAST), the 501(c)(3) co-founded by SIA and the Electronic Security Association (ESA) to recruit new talent to the industry. (Visit <https://advancingsecurity.org/> for information on how to submit job postings.) However, many colleges have their own career portals that you should take advantage of as well.

Portals vary from one institution to another. For example, one may use Handshake, while another may use Simplicity. Regardless of the platform used, your job descriptions should always be clear and attractive, with information on career growth, training opportunities, and company culture. Because your audience will be students and recent graduates, the job postings should also be tailored to entry-level candidates.

# Follow Up



After participating in a job fair or other event, you should follow up with any Career Services staff, students, and faculty members you interacted with. For example, you might thank Career Services for the opportunity to participate or tell a promising prospective employee that it was a pleasure to meet them and remind them to submit an application for a job opening if they're interested.

You should also gather feedback from the institution, as well as from any of your own team members who participated in the event. This information can help you improve your approach and materials for future engagements.

In the longer term, remember to check in occasionally with Career Services, faculty members, and other schools contacts. This way, you can maintain those relationships and stay informed about future events.

# Measure Your Results



Internally, you should track the effectiveness of your outreach efforts. Some metrics that you should track for each school or program include:

- Number of applications received
- Hires made
- Retention rates of new hires

Paying attention to this data helps you see what's working, what isn't, and how you can fine-tune your approach to make the most of your recruitment efforts.

# Develop Internship Programs



As your company reaches out to schools and engages with students, you should also consider developing internship programs that provide current students with meaningful work experiences. These internships allow you to establish a new talent pipeline drawing from diverse candidate pools to introduce fresh perspectives and evaluate potential full-time employees. Internships can serve as a cost-effective recruitment strategy and help to minimize skills gaps by providing training opportunities to interns and preparing them to meet the unique needs of your company and the broader security industry.

You can post opportunities for internships on college career portals, just like traditional job openings. You can also advertise them at job fairs and other events.

## Next Steps

In our ever-changing industry, security companies like yours need young engineers, computer programmers, and other skilled professionals to stay on top of the latest developments and maintain a competitive edge. Colleges and other schools are some of the best places to discover and connect with this new generation of talent.

***With the Security Industry Career Guide, you already have everything you need to craft effective messaging. Now it's time to reach out and start the conversation.***





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