



ASNA SURVIVAL GUIDE

Niagara Falls 2025

University of Manitoba Actuarial Club

This is not an official ASNA document.

Made for U of M students, by the U of M Actuarial Club

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Welcome

Fellow U of M Students,

Welcome to the ASNA survival guide.

This guide was created to help attendees navigate and make the most of the ASNA Conference. This edition builds on the excellent work done by Ryan Wiebe *ASNA Representative 2024*, who developed the guide for last year's conference in Montreal. While most of the content remains the same, this updated edition includes changes specific to the Niagara Falls location, such as venue highlights, local attractions, and tailored tips for this year's event.

Jayden Belza
ASNA Representative, 2025

HOW TO USE THE SURVIVAL GUIDE

The ASNA Survival Guide is to be used in tandem with the official ASNA convention booklet and Whova app.

The convention booklet and Whova app are your *itinerary*. It will be your go-to resource for up to date programming and event information. It will tell you **where** to be, **when** to be there, **what** to wear, and other things like maps and contacts. You will receive your booklet upon registration on Friday morning. Until then, the schedule is available on the Whova app and ASNA website. Check out last year's booklet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16HL40iUvDorUi-Ha1x2TZK-epe2LoLCI/view?usp=drive_link

The survival guide is your *sidekick*. It will tell you **why** you should attend each event, **how** to prepare for them, and all types of tips and tricks one should know to make the most of their ASNA experience. The convention booklet should be your primary resource, paired with additional support from the survival guide.

Disclaimer: The advice in this document is derived from personal experiences at past ASNA conventions. Some of it reflects personal opinions, so feel free to take it with a grain of salt. Think of it as just one ASNA goer's guide to the convention.

Section 1 - Arrival & Tourism

Alright, let's kick things off. This section is about getting settled in and enjoying a day off in Niagara Falls.

Airport → Hotel

If you happen to be on the same flight as another U of M student, simplify your trek by connecting with them. For those traveling from Toronto Pearson Airport to Niagara Falls, the most convenient options are taking a shuttle service or the train. Be sure to plan your route in advance to ensure a smooth trip to the hotel.

Hotel Check In

Your first order of business will be checking in to your hotel room, dropping off your bags, and getting settled in. If you arrive before your room is ready, the hotel will happily store your bags in the meantime. Now's the perfect time to tackle tasks like ironing your dress clothes and sorting out your materials for recruitment. Don't put these off until 30 minutes before your Career Fair slot! It's also a good opportunity to walk around the hotel and familiarize yourself with the venue and its surroundings.

P.s. You might want to check out the Sheraton Fallsview's waterpark 🧴🧴

Tourism

Once you feel established, gather your peers, and go explore the Falls! Taking some time to venture off won't just help you loosen up, but it'll give you some cool topics to chat about over the weekend, making networking a whole lot easier. Check out the ASNA travel post in UMAC's December newsletter for some ideas. On Thursday night, we'll plan to find a pub to socialize as a group. It'll make for a great chance to meet your fellow students before a weekend of festivities.



Section 2 - Recruitment

The process of ASNA recruitment is very similar to the U of M recruitment:

	ASNA	U of Manitoba
1. Networking	Career Fair Mingling Sessions Coffee Connections	Info Sessions Fish Dinner Speed Interviews
2. Application	Hand out resumes in person, no cover letter	Submit resume + cover letter online
3. Interviews	30 mins, 9:30am-6:30pm on Saturday	30 mins, full week

FRIDAY - THE NETWORKING DAY

Registration

On Friday morning, the first thing on your agenda is to register. This year, registration is on the third floor of the Sheraton Hotel from 8:00am-5:00pm. You will be asked to present your ticket (check your emails!) with valid ID to receive your name tag and food ticket. If you are in the first Career Fair group, plan to lineup on the earlier side. At check in, you will receive your convention pass and booklet, along with your meal tickets and some other goodies.

Mingling Sessions

Sun Life Mingling Party (11:15am-1:15pm)

This event resembles the Sun Life U of M info session, only this time there's a similar number of Sun Life reps and triple the number of students. You might not get to talk to many reps, if any, but it's a great chance to show your face and have some fun. If your Career Fair slot follows, consider this a warmup. If anything, it's a good conversation starter at the Sun Life booth. In past years, they had board games, cup pong, and a lot of group conversations. This event is a bit more relaxed, so you might not feel the need to walk around with your resume.

1st and 2nd Year Event (3:30-4:30pm)

This event is a great opportunity to meet other actuarial students from across Canada. The actuarial community is fairly small, you never know who you might run into in the future!



Career Fair

What the Info Sessions are to the U of M recruitment, the Career Fair is to ASNA. It's the meat and potatoes of your ASNA networking. Your focus should be on having a great Career Fair and filling the rest of your time with additional networking opportunities.

Overview

You'll be assigned to one of three sessions (9:30 am, 1:30 pm, 5:15 pm), each lasting an hour and forty-five minutes (You will get an email before the convention with your Career Fair time slot). There will be 40+ booths, ranging from insurance and consulting to organizations like the CIA and Coaching Actuaries. Amidst a group of 150-200 students, you'll be moving through the room, actively seeking out and talking to company representatives.



Career Fair Goal: Find an open booth → brief conversation → hand out resume → repeat.

SOME CAREER FAIR TIPS:

Research Companies

With over 40 companies packed into one room, it's essential to have a gameplan on which ones you might want to engage with. In an hour and forty five minutes, you can realistically interact with 10-20 companies, so it's wise to have a handful of them that you want to talk to. If you're keen on landing a job with a specific company, don't hesitate to approach more than one rep to increase your number of good conversations. If you find yourself nervous about approaching your dream company, consider starting with ones that don't pique your interest as much. These low-pressure interactions can serve as valuable confidence-builders for the more important conversations later on. And who knows, perhaps that unplanned encounter could be your golden ticket to a job. Researching companies not only helps you determine good fits, but also creates valuable conversation material. Companies truly value well-researched questions, so consider this your advantage in leaving a lasting impression.

See the list of sponsors here: <https://anea-asna.ca/3383-2/>

“Elevator Pitch”

Personally, I prefer kicking off conversations in a more relaxed manner. Get comfortable with an opening phrase that feels natural to you. It doesn't have to be a traditional elevator pitch like, "Hey, I'm ____, a second-year student from the U of M...". Instead, I often start with something like: "Hey, I'm Ryan, how's your day been going so far?" and take it from there. Employers will probably have dozens of conversations throughout the day that start sounding exactly the same, so I aim to steer it in a non-traditional direction. The goal here is to initiate a conversation; that's the tricky part.

When they eventually pop the classic question, “tell me a bit about yourself,” that's when you can pull out your mini elevator pitch. Share some interesting tidbits. Remember, they'll be talking to countless students throughout the day, so your objective is to be memorable. Briefly touch on exams and internships but try to weave in something distinctive that will stick with them.

Handing out your resume

Your main objective of the career fair is to put your resume in the hands of potential employers. Although it might sound a bit like sales, rest assured, it's simpler and less intimidating than that. Consider it more about being a likable candidate, and your resume should naturally sell itself.

Handing out resumes is more of an art than a science. My best advice? Aim for quality conversations. People tend to interview those they genuinely like, especially when just meeting you, so focus on making positive impressions. Resist the urge to bombard people with resumes right off the bat, it's not the most favorable approach. If you handed your resume to all 50 companies, chances are you missed the mark. Instead, stress quality over quantity and strive for meaningful interactions.

As good conversations naturally conclude, consider wrapping up each discussion after about 5-10 minutes or if it begins losing momentum. Politely say something like, “Thanks so much for speaking with me; I don't want to take any more of your time. I hope you enjoy the rest of your ASNA”. If they don't ask for your resume (which they will if the conversation was engaging), you can gently offer it, saying something like: "I am very interested in continuing our conversation, and I'd love to share my resume before I leave.”

Remember, the goal is not just to hand out resumes but to make memorable connections. Quality interactions often lead to better opportunities. So, go out there, engage genuinely, and let your resume be the finishing touch to a fun conversation.

Tip: Every company will offer you merch to take home. So, by your 10th booth, you will be juggling 3 water bottles, 4 pens, a couple stickers, and the list goes on. Try to make your first piece of merch a tote bag, then you can fill it with all your new treasures. 😊

Things to bring to the Career Fair

- **20+ printed resumes** (One page, with your ASNA-ID in the top right corner. You will find your ASNA-ID in your confirmation email. It looks like “ASNA-###”)
- A portfolio or binder to carry your resumes around in. You can also use it to carry around the convention booklet, a printed copy of this very survival guide, interview prep materials, a list of questions to ask employers, a notebook and pen, etc.

Ranking Companies

On Friday, ASNA will ask you to rank the companies you want to interview with in case you get several offers. This helps ASNA match you with your top choices. After the career fair, make a note of the companies you talked to - Trust me, it's harder than you think to remember them all several hours later. When ranking, consider companies you're keen to interview with but also those in which you had a great conversation. One suggestion would be to loosely rank by the best interaction, as that strong first impression will pay dividends during the interview.

SATURDAY: THE INTERVIEW DAY

In the wee hours of Saturday morning, interview and coffee connection offers are released. Typically, interview offers hit most inboxes between 3:30am and 5:00am (make sure to thank the ASNA organizers that stay up all night to make this happen!). Since coffee connections start at 8am, you should be setting an alarm plenty early to check your phone. If you have an interview offer, you better start getting ready! Also, keep in mind that there are only a limited number of interview slots on Saturday. It's not uncommon for companies to reach out after the convention to schedule interviews. So, be patient, and don't hesitate to reach out post-convention to try and secure an interview.

Coffee Connections (8:00-9:30am)

If you get an offer for a coffee connection, it means a company liked you and wants to continue the conversation. While this is not an interview, it's a chance to make a good impression and hopefully the coffee connection will lead to an interview down the road.

The coffee connection is a 'formally informal' chat over coffee and breakfast. You will be at a round table with 1 or 2 company reps and maybe 4 or 5 other students. Be personable and have fun with it.



Interviews (9:30am-6:30pm)

Interviews run all day Saturday. If you crushed your networking, you might have several back-to-back interviews, so get ready for a marathon. When offers are released, make a note of the time and room number of your interviews. Give yourself plenty of time to find your interview rooms, you don't want to miss one!

Make sure to brush up on your interview skills. You can find great guidance here:

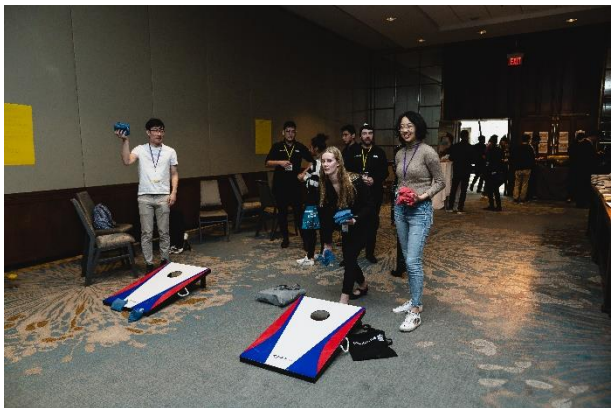
The Asper CDC: https://umanitoba.ca/asper/sites/asper/files/2021-03/MBA_Interview_Guide.pdf

The UMAC Actuarial Survival Guide:

https://www.umactuary.ca/files/ugd/5a0b8d_3210f008b75e4ab59539e1002fd5d164.pdf

SUNDAY - THE ADDITIONAL NETWORKING DAY

With most of the ASNA festivities having concluded by Sunday, there's still some last minute opportunities to network. Canada Life, Aviva and Munich Re all have events on Sunday morning. Go say hi, you never know what it will lead to!



Section 3 – Professional Development

Throughout the weekend, amidst the grind of recruitment and the excitement of the festivities, ASNA puts on some great professional development events. Enjoy this brief overview of how you can leverage ASNA to kickstart your career.

Friday

CIA Career Lounge (Headshots)

If there is only one thing you take home from ASNA (other than a job), please let that be a professional headshot. We want that LinkedIn profile looking good. On Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, you can get a professional headshot taken at the CIA Career Lounge. Beware of the extremely long line. Last year, the line was much longer on Friday, so don't be afraid to hold off until Saturday.



RGA Panels (1:30pm & 4:45pm)

Alongside the career fair, RGA hosts panels in collaboration with the SOA, CAS, and CIA, discussing various actuarial topics and taking your questions. During the career fairs, the panels are the only other thing going on, other than getting your professional headshot taken. So, if you want something to do, give this a shot!

Saturday

Seminars

Saturday at ASNA boils down to two main activities - Interviews and Seminars. If your interview schedule is jam-packed, seminars might not be your priority. However, if you find yourself with some spare time, pop into a few seminars! Running from 10:30 am to 6:30 pm, these sessions cover a wide array of actuarial topics. Most participating companies will host a seminar, delving into something new, innovative, interesting, or related to professional development. You can



get an overview of all topics in ASNA's January Newsletter. Once you have your convention booklet, it will provide detailed descriptions of all seminars, helping you decide which ones to attend. Additionally, don't underestimate seminars as a networking tool. If you're eager for a job at a specific company but missed out on an interview, attend their seminar, and ask good questions.

Section 4 – Having Fun

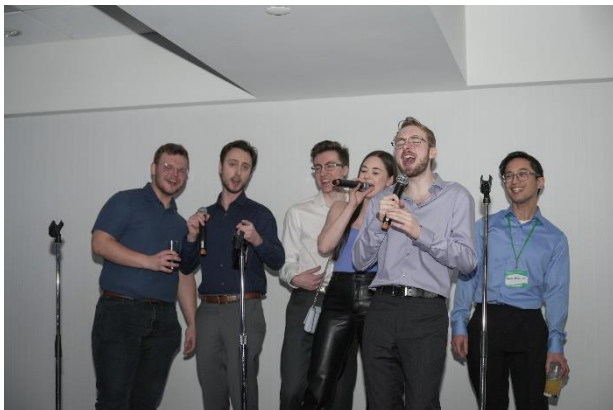
Thursday

As touched on in Section I, Thursday is pretty much an entire day of fun. If you arrive early, you will have plenty of time to explore Niagara Falls before the convention. Last year, several small groups and individuals did their own tourism during the day, before meeting up at a Pub in the evening. It was a nice balance of tourism and camaraderie. This year in Niagara Falls, we will stay connected on the WhatsApp group chat and most likely do something similar.

Friday & Saturday

Intact Club Night

Get ready to dance! If you've never experienced a nightclub filled entirely with actuarial students, you're in for a fun treat. Keep your eye on WhatsApp to monitor where the group is going. We might kick off the night socializing in a hotel room, and who knows where the night will take us.



Manulife Social Night

Missed out on the Intact Club Night because you were preoccupied with recruitment? Here's your shot at redemption. The Manulife Social Night provides the same energy-filled atmosphere but with low-key alternatives for those seeking a break from the dance floor. Last year's activities included karaoke, card games and smaller social circles, creating a comfortable setting to unwind.

Nightlife Dress Code: "Night out", clean and fashionable. Some were in dress clothes, others in t-shirt and slacks. There's a big range to work with.

Tip: Last year, you could not purchase alcoholic drinks at the social events. You could only acquire them using drink tickets given by Intact and Manulife reps. They roamed around the social events handing them out so, if you want some fun time beverages, go talk to the company reps!



Extras

Meals - For the ASNA meals (Friday dinner, Saturday lunch & dinner), I would recommend arriving a bit early. The room fills up fast so if you like sitting with your friends, it's a good idea to show up on time.

Dress code - If you're ever unsure of what to wear for an event, go see last year's pictures (on the ASNA website). You'll see exactly how others dressed for each event.

Conclusion

Congratulations on navigating the second edition of the ASNA Survival Guide!

As you gear up for Niagara Falls, keep this in mind: try to have some fun. When you're a seasoned actuary looking back in 15 years, your ASNA memories could very well be the highlights of your university journey. Soak in the experience, dive into each interaction, and make the most of every opportunity. I genuinely hope this guide provided you with valuable insights to bring with you on your Niagara Falls adventure.

Safe travels, best of luck, and may ASNA 2025 be everything you aspire it to be.

Jayden Belza
ASNA Representative, 2025