

LinkedIn is a valuable tool that can be used to network, establish and develop your professional image and interests, job search, prepare for interviews, and learn more about your field of interest. It is a social media channel but has a very distinct purpose so your approach should be thoughtful and intentional about how you represent yourself and use LinkedIn.

- Like a resume, your LinkedIn profile will change and develop as your career does.
- Quality over quantity in all areas – the goal is not to collect followers or likes but to have meaningful connections and interactions.
- Always proofread before posting and carefully consider your content, online activity, and comments.
- Explore and take advantage of the many free tools and ways to use LinkedIn.

When & How Do You Create a Profile?

- Now. Your network will grow as you advance but starting now is a great way to connect and maintain contact with people you meet during your college career and internships.
- Use a professional, high quality photo; this should be a headshot, not a distance photo. Include props in your photo only if directly related to your field.
- Highlight your education and include major(s), minor, concentration, GPA and honors or awards.
- Include a portfolio of select projects, design, or work samples.
- Key words included in your profile will help recruiters and hiring managers find you in their searches.
- Claim your URL and personalize with your name to customize and ensure that your profile comes up if your name is Googled.
- Check settings and set to public so people can find you.

Instructions here: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/87/customizing-your-public-profile-url?lang=en>
(While you are thinking of it, this is a good time to check all other social media settings – set to private unless you want a potential employer to see your activity)

Profile Headline

Include a short headline describing your background and objective. Customizing this, rather than using the LinkedIn default will make your profile stand out and provide an opportunity to work in your key words.

Examples:

Marketing Honors student seeking internship opportunity. Experience in digital marketing and social media content creation.

Recent Biology grad with particular interest in pharmaceutical or biotech.

Social worker specializing in family dynamics and early childhood development seeking entry-level counselor position.

Summary

- Provide a brief summary of your skills, experience, and qualifications. This should be one or two paragraphs highlighting what you have to offer. Include key words, describe accomplishments, internships and experience or coursework in specific areas of interest.
- Use Word or similar program to draft, proofread and spellcheck then copy and paste, LinkedIn does not spellcheck.
- If you want to get creative or show personality, the summary is your opportunity to do so. You could include a quote, reference to your aspirations or inspiration to enter a field but keep it brief, professional and be prepared to have further conversation about this. Do not choose something at random – if it comes up in a networking conversation or an interview you should be able to discuss and elaborate on why this is meaningful to you.

Example:

Enthusiastic Business Administration undergrad student with interest and excitement for marketing, advertising and social media. Looking for a summer internship opportunity – let me help you with social media outreach, developing marketing plans, digital marketing and conducting customer research. Specialties in event planning, social networking and marketing, account management, Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), Adobe Suite (Photoshop, Flash)

Connections

- LinkedIn connections are a way to connect and maintain contact with people you have worked with, easily keep up with changes in your professional network, keep people informed about your changes (new jobs, skills, certifications, degrees and projects), and discover the extended networks of people you know.
- Connect with people before you leave school, internships, or positions. It is much easier to make the connections while they are current than to try to track people down later or remind them of who you are and what your skills are.

Tips

When requesting a connection, include a brief note; maximum character count with invite is 300 characters.

Examples:

Hi Jack – It was great meeting you at the employer panel event, I appreciated hearing your perspective on job searching for new grads. Thanks for all the great info, I would love to stay in touch for future possibilities. Best regards, Jill

Hi Jill – I really admire the work that you have done as Director of ABC Non-profit. As a recent grad of SSU entering this field, I would love to talk to you and get advice from a fellow alum. Please let me know if you would be open to a brief informational interview. Sincere thanks, Jack

Remember

- Your activity on LinkedIn will be visible – use this to your advantage. Share content appropriately and professionally, be active in posts, likes, comments, and follows in your field, with your connections and industry thought leaders.
- Connections should be reciprocal, support and assist your connections when possible.
- Connect with people you know and want to know and be associated with.; this may be different from some of your other social media usage.
- Use LinkedIn to research companies, people that you may be interviewing or working with; be aware that people can see when you have visited their profile unless your settings are set to private.
- Take the time to familiarize yourself with the settings; you can keep your profile and activity private as you are drafting it but while private, you will not appear in searches of potential recruiters.
- Changes and updates made to your profile can appear in a newsfeed – set to private when you do not want this.
- Set your notifications to allow updates; important for when you have made big changes like graduating, starting /completing an internship, changing jobs. Done professionally, this is a great time and way to show enthusiasm for your new position, and thank people who have provided opportunities; this can open the door to receiving recommendations which will appear on your profile in the future and keeps your network informed of career changes.
- Recommendations will ideally include those from supervisors and should be limited but having recommendations from colleagues or people you have worked with in different capacities in your academic and professional career will demonstrate broad positive connections.
- Follow employers you are interested in, particularly if you are actively applying there or interviewing; other follows should include schools you have attended, industry groups related to your field and professional development interests. If you follow personal interests not related to your field, they should be a small aspect of your activity and enhance the professional image you are creating. Not only is this the content that will show up in your feed, it is the activity that potential employers and business contacts will see at the bottom of your profile.