

Michelle Blackburn

Faculty Employment lead and Lecturer in Student Engagement

An academic involved in promoting student employability, Michelle understands the benefit of using LinkedIn as a professional tool. She discusses the difficulties she had with LinkedIn but also the advantages that it provides, for her students and for her own professional standing.

“If somebody like me, an old fogey can create a profile, then so can anyone else.”

Signaling the usefulness of having a LinkedIn profile

Her primary reason for creating a profile was to get her students on LinkedIn. Given her role, Michelle likes to lead by example and so she created a profile to show students how they could use it.

Recognising the benefits it provided to the employability of her students, she now uses it regularly as part of her teaching practice.

“In my very first lecture I always say ‘Go and join LinkedIn.’”

One of her joys is being able to see students’ initial profiles, which generally involve “a really random comment about themselves or a photo with half of somebody cropped out at a wedding.” She can immediately offer advice on their profiles, improving their employability and self-marketing.



For Michelle the idea of a LinkedIn profile was disconcerting initially. “It can be a bit embarrassing. We have the British idea of “don’t blow your own trumpet.” But we’re supposed to show off in LinkedIn.”

A tool for professional recognition

It was only after she discovered the benefits that LinkedIn provides to her teaching practice that Michelle began to explore it in more depth.

“It’s been useful when I’ve been to conferences and met academics that I would potentially want to work with in the future.”

LinkedIn allows her to stay connected to people she meets, with the relationship feature serving as a reminder of how and where she met a particular individual.

Using LinkedIn has now become a habit.

It also shows people that you’re doing things. “You can show that you’ve done research, you’ve not just read research.”

“If there’s a conference I’ve just gone to then it goes straight onto LinkedIn. A book chapter- the reference goes onto LinkedIn.”

It takes just two minutes to complete that simple task yet it has an immeasurable effect on your professional standing.

Written by Haleema Khan

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