

Guidance for students

LinkedIn for first year students



LinkedIn is an online network where you can share information about your skills, work experience and interests. You can use it to connect with professionals from a variety of career areas, with your fellow students and academic staff. It's a great place to present your skills and achievements online in a professional way.

I'll do it next year...

So, why should you have a profile on LinkedIn in your first year? Can't I just leave this until my second year when I start to look for placements or my final year when I'm looking for graduate jobs?

Here are two reasons why you should consider developing your profile during your first year:

1. Building your professional online identity

You're probably already on a range of online platforms but how many of these present you in a way that you might want to be viewed by a future employer?

When employers search for you your LinkedIn profile is likely to appear on the first page of their search results

This is where LinkedIn can help! LinkedIn is a professional platform - you won't find endless selfies or cat photos here - but developing your profile on LinkedIn from an early stage will help you to demonstrate to employers that you will be able to present yourself professionally in the workplace. Many placement providers and graduate recruiters will search for information about candidates online and if you have a LinkedIn profile this is likely to appear on the first page of search results. This can help to easily signpost employers to useful information about your skills and achievements.

2. Networking

Having a degree does not automatically guarantee your chance of gaining a graduate role after university. But developing a strong network of connections during your time at university may help you to access the "hidden jobs market" of jobs that are never advertised. Using LinkedIn can help you to build a network of connections including employers, academic staff and graduates from your university who may be able to provide you with useful information or opportunities in the future.

Start with your CV

Before you develop your LinkedIn profile online, it's a good idea to first develop your CV. Seek advice from your university's careers service on how to do this. You can then use some of the information on your CV to help to craft your LinkedIn profile. Some careers services will also offer specific advice on LinkedIn through workshops or appointments.

Settings

As with any other social network, always familiarise yourself with its privacy settings. If you're still developing your LinkedIn profile and you're not yet comfortable with the idea of someone discovering it through a search engine until it is fully complete, then ensure that you adopt the appropriate privacy settings. Remember that privacy settings change frequently and managing them isn't a one-off activity in social networking sites like LinkedIn - you need to keep them updated.

Who to connect with as a first year student

In your first year, your LinkedIn network could include:

- Fellow students - remember that the person that you sit next to in your seminar group could be your boss in the future!
- Academic staff
- Careers advisers
- Part-time and campus job supervisors
- Volunteering project supervisors

Explore other features of LinkedIn

LinkedIn is not just a home for your 'online CV' - it has other features that can help you during your time at university, including:

- **Student Jobs:** explore internship opportunities that can improve your chances of securing a placement or graduate role.
- **Company pages:** get updates from companies on their latest developments. Showing that you're knowledgeable about an organisation's values and latest projects can help you when you apply for jobs and attend interviews.
- **Influencers, channels and publishers:** Following influencers, channels and publishers can help to build your commercial awareness. Commercial awareness is a key skill that many recruiters are looking for from graduates.
- **Find Alumni feature:** get inspiration for your future career path by using the find alumni feature to locate profiles of graduates from your university.

Further resources:

You can find additional resources on LinkedIn at: <https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students>

Written by Kelly Snape

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