

# Career Center

## LinkedIn Guide

### Learn the elements of a strong profile and how to network using LinkedIn

LinkedIn is one of the best tools for connecting with professionals in different industries. Think of it as a searchable database of resumes. While this guide will help you build a stronger profile, you only need some basic information and a picture if you want to start contacting people. **Creating a Strong Profile**

#### Find LinkedIn profile examples

Before making your own profile, it's important to review 5 to 10 detailed LinkedIn profiles of people who are in your career(s) of interest. What words or phrases do they use to describe themselves? How is their information organized, both in the order of the sections and the content within each section? How are they dressed in their picture, and do they use a background image?

#### Use a professional picture



Most LinkedIn photos are taken from the shoulders up (headshot). Match your attire to the work culture of your career of interest. Choose a neutral background, such as a blank wall. Many Duke students like to use the stone facades of buildings as their background.

How to take a professional photo article from The Graduate School: <http://tinyurl.com/y72lm9t5>

#### Brainstorm the content for your profile

Use these questions to generate ideas of what you want to include in your LinkedIn profile.

- What are your skills or strengths?
- What are your personal qualities?
- What adjectives would your classmates, co-workers, mentors, or family use to describe you?
- What is unique about your experiences or interests?
- What type of work do you want to do? Who will you work with? Who will benefit?

- Why do you want to pursue this career?
- What are your career goals in the next 5 to 10 years? These could be specific job titles or broader skills, responsibilities, and outcomes.
- What qualities are you looking for in a job, in co-workers, and work environment?
- What do you want to be known for?
- What types of employers will be reading your LinkedIn profile? What are they expecting?

From your answers, identify key words and phrases that stand out the most.

#### Write your summary

Elements to include

- Introduction: Who are you? What type of work or careers are you interested in?
- Background: summary of education and experience
- Unique skills: strengths, skill sets
- Motivation: why are you interested in this field?
- Specialties: list of skills and important keywords

#### Example A

Doctoral student at Duke University in Environmental Sciences and Policy program at the Nicholas School of the Environment. Interested in applying research skills to energy problems and impacting policy through analyzing market dynamics. Specializing in renewable energy, clean energy, air quality, climate change, and environmental mitigation strategies.

Areas of expertise

- Life cycle analysis of environmental problems
- Integration of new fuels into energy markets
- Risk assessment of exposure to air pollutants

#### Example B

My work brings together people, learning, and the arts. I am genuinely interested in building meaningful relationships and equitable communities, often creating and often connecting. I am motivated by adult education, encouraging transformative learning

### Example B (cont.)

moments and experiences through the contexts of relationship and community.

Currently, I do this with a venture-backed start-up helping others sell marketing software, with a Methodist church helping others sing songs, and with some other wonderful community members helping others have hard conversations.

Specialties: sales prospecting, customer service and retention, community outreach, event planning

### Example C

I am a data scientist who enjoys connecting the dots: be it ideas from different disciplines, people from different teams, or applications from different industries. I have strong technical skills and an academic background in engineering, statistics, and machine learning. I also have a proven ability to deliver high-quality results for major organizations.

My passion lies in solving business problems with tailored data and algorithms and communicating complex ideas to non-technical stakeholders. I am able to jump across verticals to deliver high-performing AI solutions.

Software and Programming Languages:

Spark (Spark SQL, MLlib, Pyspark), Python (scikit-learn, numpy, scipy, pandas, TensorFlow), R, SQL, SAS, and Microsoft Excel

### Condense your summary into a headline

There are a couple different options for how you write your headline. One is to use the space to make a strong statement. The other is to use your current or expected position title. You have 120 characters to create a headline that will appear right next to your name in search results. Two options for headlines are to make a strong statement or to use a position title..

### Making a statement

What keywords stand out to you from your summary that you would want to elevate to your headline? Do you have specialties you want to emphasize? Or will being a little creative help you to stand out (in a good way)?

Examples

- Qualitative Researcher Specializing in Survey Design and Marketing Research
- Computational scientist specializing in metamaterials and plasmonics
- Scholar, Community Advocate, Educator, and Counselor
- Cultural Heritage Scientist

- Wordsmith translating business objectives into communications strategies
- Problem Solver and Adventurer in Data Science
- Energy Markets and Policy

### Current or expected title

Many users choose their current position title and organization for their headline. This can be a little tricky since “Student” or “Graduate Student” does not convey much to an employer. You can start referring to yourself as a humanist, researcher, analyst, engineer, etc. even if your experiences have chiefly been in college or at an internship.

Examples

- Digital Humanities Librarian at Duke University
- Machine Learning Data Scientist
- Medical Device Engineer | Biology Instructor
- Social Psychologist
- Biomedical Chemist
- International Policy Analyst
- Graduate Student Researcher at Duke University
- Master’s Candidate at Duke University, specializing in international development

### Add media

You can add examples of your work on LinkedIn, either in files or links to websites. Consider what outcomes or products an employer would expect from you, whether it is reports, presentations, code (such as on GitHub), publications, videos, or something else.

### Experience

Any sort of experiences can appear in this section, paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, internship, job or co-op. Select the experiences that are most relevant to your career goals and showcase your skills. Write content in this section similar to a resume using bulleted information in accomplishment statements: strong verb + context + outcome. Emphasize the methods, purpose, and impact where it’s useful. See our resume writing guide for more information, <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/resume-cv-guide>.

### Projects

The experience you have gained may be better organized into projects. These could be course projects, research projects, group projects, extracurricular projects, or personal projects. Similar to the Experience section, use this space to describe the purpose of the project, your contributions, and the overall results.

## Education

List your previous and current educational pursuits starting with undergraduate studies and community college. You can include majors, minors, certificates, and other degree programs. Relevant courses can also go in this section or you can add a separate section for Courses, depending on how much attention you want to give that information.

## Recommendations

Recommendations are a way to show that others value your contributions. Consider asking 1 to 3 people in your network for recommendations, especially if you ask them to focus on particular skills or projects. Here are some examples of people you might ask.

- Faculty
- Mentors
- Internship supervisors
- Thesis or dissertation committee members
- Co-workers and supervisors in projects, jobs, service, and group work

## Publications or Patents

List relevant publications or patents that you have contributed to or authored, including peer-reviewed publications, news articles, op-eds, or blog posts. If you have published a lot of material, choose the best samples you would want employers to see.

## Customize your URL

LinkedIn allows you to edit your URL so that it is shorter and easier to type into a web browser. You can try shortening the link to a variation of your name. Then you can include the shorter link on application documents and business cards.

## Order of your sections

Once you have content in your different sections, you should consider the order of the sections on your profile. Readers expect that the most important and relevant information will appear closer to the top of the page.

## Connect with People You Know

Consider connecting with these people on LinkedIn to start your network. Make sure to click on their profile, select the “Connect” button, and then “Add a note” to personalize your message. It’s more meaningful for your contacts to receive a note from you rather than the standard message LinkedIn sends.

This is especially important when you start to reach out to professionals you may not know.

- Family members
- Friends from high school, college, and graduate school
- Faculty mentors and teachers
- Colleagues and supervisors from on-campus groups, internships, summer programs, previous jobs
- Classmates

## Join Groups to Make New Connections

Groups on LinkedIn are a powerful, underestimated tool. While it can at times be difficult to contact a specific person, if you are in the same group, you can send them a direct message by searching through the list of group members. So, you should join as many relevant groups as you find useful. Many groups are also active communities sharing information and leads on jobs and internships.

Consider joining these LinkedIn groups:

- Duke University Alumni Network
- Duke University Graduate School
- Linking the Triangle
- Groups for Duke academic programs, majors, institutions, etc.
- Identity groups broadly and in your career(s) of interest
- Alumni groups of past colleges and universities
- Career(s) of interest
- Technologies and methods relevant to your experience
- Professional association groups
- Groups in geographical regions of interest

For more specific recommendations, see our pages on Resources for Exploring Careers, <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/explore-careers>.

LinkedIn will allow you to join 50 or more groups, so join as many as you can to maximize your chances of being able to connect with professionals in these different fields.