

**LinkedIn**

A Guide for Students and Alumni

*It’s not only the people you know who have the greatest potential to help. It’s the people they know.*

# Why LinkedIn? — An introduction

LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional online network with a presence in over 200 countries with over 200 million members. LinkedIn’s goal is to unite professionals to make them more informed, productive and successful.

By optimizing LinkedIn, you can make new connections, network with fellow Bearcats and other profession- als, learn about diﬀerent career options, find open positions, and research potential employers.

**About This Guide**

We often hear that we need to be on LinkedIn. But once we get there, we are regularly left wondering what to do next. This guide starts at the beginning with creating a great profile, but goes well beyond that to show- ing you ways to actually *USE* LinkedIn as the valuable research-finding, people-connecting, networking tool that it is intended to be.

For more information about career services for undergraduate students: <http://www.willamette.edu/dept/careers/>

503-370-6413

[career-development@willamette.edu](mailto:career-development@willamette.edu)

For information about career services available to alumni: [www.willamette.edu/alumni/career\_network/](http://www.willamette.edu/alumni/career_network/)

503-370-6875

[akahl@willamette.edu](mailto:akahl@willamette.edu)

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**Setti ng Up or Rebuilding a LinkedIn Profile**

**Profile Overview**

Your profile is your LinkedIn page that describes your career history, skills, education, interests, and accomplishments. Although it sounds like a resume, it’s not. It’s more conversational. More personal. And you can attach projects that demonstrate what you’re saying about yourself and include short recommendations from others. One of the best features is that it can be continuously updated and revised – it’s a huge part of your online presence which you can fully control.

**First Step**

Log in at [www.LinkedIn.com](http://www.LinkedIn.com/) and follow the prompts. You will immediately be asked if you want to import your address book. **You don’t**. Close this box. You want to personally invite people to connect with you, and not have a blanket invitation sent to everyone you know.

## Create an Incredible Headline

When recruiters, hiring managers and human resource professionals conduct searches, they see a list with photos, names and headlines. You want to be the one who stands out. You have 120 characters. Think “elevator pitch.” Use keywords that you find in job descriptions that match the jobs you want to be considered for.

### Examples for alumni:

* Architectural & Interior Designer - Delivering fresh original ideas and impeccable customer service
* Visionary Non Profit Leader - An expert in growing and guiding charitable and faith-based organizations

### Examples for students:

Your headline should highlight two things (1) that you are a Willamette student, your major and what year you’re in (2) your career interests, skills you would like to use in a job or your passions.

* Willamette University Senior - Passionate about alleviating poverty and social injustice
* Willamette University Junior Econ Major - Aspiring Financial Analyst

## Choose a Photo

Your photo doesn’t have to be a stuﬀy headshot, but it should be professional looking relative to the field you’re in or are pursuing. Having a good photo makes you **seven times** more likely to have your profile looked at by others.

## Create a Custom URL

A custom URL is a short, clean readable link that directs people right to your LinkedIn profile. You can include this in your email signature, on your resume and in your cover letter. Follow these steps:

* 1. Move your cursor over **Profile** in the black area at the top of your homepage and select **Edit Profile.**
  2. Click the URL link under your profile photo.
  3. Under the **Your Public Profile URL** section on the right, click the pencil icon next to your URL.
  4. Type the last part of your new custom URL in the text box. Unless you have a common name, you probably want to have a URL that ends with your first name/last name. For instance: [www.linkedin.com/in/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/) Joe Smith.

## Summary

Next to your photo and headline, the summary is the most important element in your LinkedIn profile. Here are a few tips:

1. Use all or most of the 2,000 characters allowed. Load it up with keywords.
2. Write in first person.
3. Tell stories. Share your accomplishments. Grab attention by saying something about yourself that isn’t in your resume.
4. Be conversational and show some personality
5. Break it up with headers, sub-headers and bullets.

## Experience

Consider this section as your online resume. This is a great place to continue telling your unique story and include important keywords. Here are a few tips:

1. Include all work, paid and unpaid, including internships, volunteer experiences and involvement with clubs and activities if you’re a student or recent grad.
2. Focus on accomplishments instead of just listing duties and responsibilities. What are you most proud of regarding that position? How did you move the company or organization forward?
3. Enter the company name correctly so that its logo pops up. Here’s how: If your current or past employers already have LinkedIn company profiles, enter the name of the employer in the exact same way that the company has it listed and the logo will appear automatically.

## Skills

This section provides an opportunity to load your pro- file with terms and phrases that a recruiter will most likely use to find someone with your specific back- ground. Just start typing a skill you wish to add and a drop-down list will appear. Now choose the ones that directly apply to you. As a student or new grad this list will not be big, but it will grow as your professional experience grows. You can add up to 50, so consider the various terms a recruiter might use for the same skill, like “project management,” “project coordination,” and “program management.”

## Other Sections

Complete as many of the other sections as possible: Education, Honors & Awards, Certifications, Projects and Languages.

## Recommendations

Although recommendations are optional, they provide you with the perfect opportunity to get valuable third party testimonials. A recommendation is a comment written by a LinkedIn member that recommends or recognizes a colleague, business partner or student.

### Here’s how to request a recommendation:

* 1. Move your curser over your tiny photo in the top right of your home page and select **Privacy & Settings**.
  2. Under the **Helpful Links** section, select

##### Manage Your Recommendations.

* 1. Click the **Ask for Recommendations** tab at the top of the page.
  2. Follow the prompts.
  3. In the **Write Your Message** box, create a short personalized message rather than using the generic one that’s provided. Click **Send**.

### Tips for asking:

1. Ask politely. “I know you’re extremely busy, but I was hoping you could…”
2. Provide suggestions for what you’d like them to focus on. “When I interned for you, I successfully managed all the social media. Perhaps that’s what you can mention in the recommendation.”
3. Thank the person and return the favor by writing one for him or her if appropriate.

## Endorsements

An endorsement is an aﬃrmation of your skills by a member in your network. Your skills will appear visually in order of “most endorsed” to “least endorsed.” Some people see these as a professional version of a Facebook “like.” Since it’s so easy to give and get endorsements, they are not seen as being nearly as valuable or worthy as recommendations.

## Profile Settings

You may control the information that is visible in your profile settings. Err on the side of openness if you’re a job seeker and want recruiters to have access to your credentials. To check or to change your settings, move your curser over your tiny photo in the top right of your home page and select **Privacy & Settings** and click on the various links.

LinkedIn notifies your network every time you update your profile. **This may be okay, unless you’re looking for a new position and you don’t want your present employer to know**. Here’s how to change that setting:

1. Move your curser over your tiny photo in the top right of your home page and select **Privacy & Settings**.
2. Under the **Privacy Controls**, select **Turn On/Oﬀ Your Activity Broadcasts**.
3. Un-select the box. Click **Save**.

# Building and Leveraging a Powerful Network

Now that you have a great looking profile, it’s time to start building your network. You want to do this in a thoughtful way, one good contact after another.

## Finding Connections

### Connecting With People You Already Know

We all know people. And they all count. Friends, co- workers, family members, supervisors, professors, professionals you meet at career fairs and other events can be great networking contacts. Remember – it’s not necessarily who you know, but who your connections know, so don’t automatically discount your Aunt Phyllis or your neighbor when looking for people to contact.

When searching for specific individuals, simply type his or her name into the search bar at the top of any page.

1. Hit **Connect** and you will be prompted to define your relationship (colleague, friend, classmate. Choose classmate if you are connecting with a student or alum.)
2. If none of these apply, simply hit the “I don’t know this person” option and you will be required to provide an email ad- dress to verify that you know this person.
3. Delete the generic message and type in a more personal one.
4. Click **Send Invitation**.

Example Message:

*Dear Joe, It was nice meeting you at the Willamette After Hours event last week at the Portland Hilton. I’m impressed with what you’ve been doing in your job at Nike and would like to add you to my network on LinkedIn. Thank you! Joe Smith*

### Connecting With Alumni

The Willamette University Alumni Association (WUAA) is 25,000 members strong with alumni in every conceivable field all over the globe. **There are two ways to connect with alumni through LinkedIn: the Find Alumni tab and the WUAA LinkedIn group.**

#### The WUAA LinkedIn Group

Nearly 3,000 alumni have chosen to be in this group, making themselves known and available to students and fellow alumni. Joining this group is an excellent place to start building your professional connections. Beyond the knowledge you gained or are gaining in school, your alumni network is an important benefit of a college education.

Join the group by searching for Willamette University Alumni in the search box at the top. This is a closed group so after you click Join, someone will get back to you if you have been approved. A complete profile with photo is required to join the group. Once you’re in, start asking to connect using the same process as described above. Make sure to mention that you are a Willamette student or alum – this is a powerful reason why people will accept your invitation to connect.

### Find Alumni Tab

Hover over the **Connections** tab in the black bar at the top of the page, then select **Find Alumni**. You can quickly see where over 10,000 alumni live, what industry they work in and what company or organization they work for. Easy-to-use filters allow you to narrow your search so that you can find something as specific as: Portland Area, Intel Corporation, Marketing. Once you have identified someone you want to connect with, follow the steps above.

### Getting Introduced

When you’re looking at the profile of someone you want to connect with, look in the middle of their pro- file page on the right and locate **How You’re Connect‐ ed**. If there’s a person in between you and the person you want to connect with, you can ask that middle person to make an introduction. Click **Get Introduced** and follow the prompts. Someone is more likely to connect with you if they are being asked by someone they know.

#### What are the Degrees of Connection?

Your network is made up of your 1st degree, 2nd degree, 3rd degree connections, and fellow members of your LinkedIn groups.

**1st degree** - People you're directly connected to because you've accepted their invitation to connect, or they've accepted your invitation.

You can contact them by using the **Send a Message** button near their profile picture.

**2nd degree** - People who are connected to your 1st degree connections. You can send them an invitation by clicking **Connect** or contact them through an InMail. InMail is a premium service that you pay extra for.

**3rd degree** - People who are connected to your 2nd degree connections. If their full first and last names are displayed, you can send them an invitation by clicking **Connect**. If only the first letter of their last name is displayed, the only way to contact them is through an InMail. InMail is a premium service that you pay extra for.

#### Responding to Invitations

Once you join LinkedIn you will start getting invitations to connect. You don’t have to say yes to everyone.

Consider accepting invitations only from people you know or from Willamette students or alumni. When you’re asked, you will have the opportunity to select one of the following options: Accept, Reply (use this if you don’t want to accept yet but are willing to respond to the message), Ignore or Report as Spam.

## Leveraging Connections

With a terrific profile and a growing network, it’s time to start leveraging those connections. This is some- thing to continuously do, whether you are actively searching for a job, building contacts for your business, or thinking towards the future. Let’s focus on using LinkedIn for a job search. Here are two key strategies:

**First Strategy:** Find a 1st or 2nd degree connection who’s working at a company or organization you are interested in.

1. Type the company name in the box at the top.
2. In the upper right corner of the page, you will see your 1st and 2nd degree connections.
3. If it’s a 1st degree connection, select their profile then click Send a Message. You can ask if they’d be willing to provide information about their company or introduce you to their hiring manager.
4. If it’s a 2nd degree connection, check to see if and how you’re connected and ask for an introduction. (See pg. 6) You could say something like: Hi Marti. I see that you’re connected to Patty Palmer at Mentor Graphics. I’d love to work for Mentor. Would you be willing to introduce me so that I can ask her a few questions? Thank you! Joe Smith

**Second Strategy**: Share updates on a regular basis. Sharing updates on LinkedIn is almost like Facebook, but it’s not at all personal! Instead, you want to post about interesting things you’ve learned about your industry, articles you think are worthwhile, news of conferences you’re attending, etc. Just click **Home** in the upper left corner and share your update in the box. Updates appear directly in the news feeds of your connections and show that you are engaged. Perhaps they will remember this when they have a job to post…

# Researching Companies and Organizations

Whether you’re preparing for a job search, a career transition or an interview, LinkedIn is a terrific place to go to research companies and organizations. Just type in the name of the company or organization in the search box. Click the blue **Follow** button. Then click the blue **View** button. Once on the company’s profile page, you can find invaluable career-related information, including:

* News of new projects, innovations, products, and new hires.
* Job openings.
* Career information about what it’s like to work there.
* A list of your LinkedIn connections to company employees.
* Insider information about the company.

#### Why Is This Information Important?

* You can incorporate it into your cover letter.
* You can appear “in the know” during your inter- view.
* You can find people in that company to do informational interviews with.

You can find industry keywords to use in your pro-

file and resume.

# Using LinkedIn to Find Open Positions

##### For students and new grads:

* Go to Linkedin.com/studentjobs.
* In the drop-down box, select an industry. Click Search Jobs.
* On the next screen, you can select location, company, salary, job function, industry, and experience level to narrow down the field of options. Click **View** to see the position description.

##### For all other job seekers:

* Click **Jobs** in the top black bar.
* Type in an industry or field.
* On the next screen, you can select location, company, salary, job function, industry, and experience level to narrow down the field of options.
* Click View to see the position description.

Use the Advanced Search button at the top left of the screen to narrow down your search.

# Joining and Engaging With Groups

Joining and participating in groups is a great way to get on the fast-track with LinkedIn. The purpose of LinkedIn groups is the same as that of any other groups – to get people together who share a common bond or goal, and to create an opportunity for them to communicate with each other.

## Finding Groups

A great way to find groups is to look at the profiles of people who are doing what you want to be doing, and scroll down to the bottom of their profiles to see what groups they belong to – then join those!

You can also use the search box and put in information that is specific to your industry, your job function, your geography, AND ALWAYS JOIN YOUR UNI- VERSITY ALUMNI GROUP (see page 6).

#### After I Join a Group, Then What?

* Jump into group discussions. Be a thoughtful contributor. Ask insightful questions.
* Start your own discussion thread by asking a question or sharing an article that’s relevant to the group.
* Look at jobs that have been specifically posted to your group.
* Contact fellow group members. THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF BEING IN A GROUP. YOU

DON’T HAVE TO CONNECT WITH SOMEONE TO

SEND THEM A MESSAGE. Just click **Members** on the top bar and the list of members will appear. In each person’s box you have the opportunity to click **Follow/Unfollow, Send Message** and **Connect.** You can send a message before or instead of inviting them to connect with you. Feel free to ask them specific questions related to their career path and expertise. Just don’t ever come right out and ask for a job or internship.

* Ask to connect with members in your group.

## Managing Group Communications

You get to select how you want to receive updates from your groups. You can manage these preferences this way:

1. When you are on the Home page of a group, select the i in the upper right corner.
2. Click **Your Settings**.
3. Make sure you have the email address you want to use for group notifications.
4. We **do not** recommend you click the box to receive emails for each new discussion.
5. We **do** recommend you select the box to receive a weekly digest.
6. We recommend you select the boxes to receive Announcements and Member Messages.
7. Click **Save Changes**.

# Additional LinkedIn Resources

Students, go here for “how-to” videos, tip sheets, and checklists: https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students

Jobs for Students and Recent Grads htt[ps://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs](http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs)

LinkedIn Help Center https://help.linkedin.com/app/home

*It’s important to remember to keep your LinkedIn profile updated and to continue engaging with groups even after you land a job because you need to keep the door open for new opportunities. And don’t forget to pay it forward by oﬀering advice and encouragement whenever you can. This is how a network works best, by people reaching out and helping one another.*