

LINKEDIN GUIDE

LinkedIn is your online resume, personal branding, networking, and job search platform. Unlike a traditional resume, it is searchable, visible to recruiters, and works for you 24/7. A strong LinkedIn profile increases your chances of being recognized for internships, jobs, and networking opportunities.

Profile Photo

A professional photo signals that you take your career and online presence seriously. The **Career Center Photo Booth** is available for students to take professional headshots. Students may include a simple, professional cover image related to their field or interests to enhance their profile. Use the following guidelines when selecting your profile photo:

Do:

- Use a clear, high-quality headshot
- Face the camera with good lighting
- Dress professionally or in business casual

Do not:

- Use selfies, group photos, or cropped pictures
- Use filters or casual photos
- Leave your profile without a photo

Headline

Your headline is what appears under your name and should clearly state who you are as a future professional. This is one of the most important sections of your profile. It helps recruiters quickly understand your career interest and skills when your profile appears in search results. **Examples:**

- Computer Science Major | Python, SQL, Data Analysis | Seeking Summer Internship
- Aspiring Marketing Professional | Social Media Strategy Enthusiast

Avoid vague headlines such as “Student at Indiana State University.” Focus on what you can do and what you are working toward.

About Section

This section is a brief professional summary (5-7 short lines), not a life story. It should provide a concise overview of your academic background, key skills, and career interests in a professional and easy-to-read format.

Recommended Structure:

- Who you are and what you are studying or currently doing
- Key skills or tools and career interest or goal
- What you are currently seeking (optional)

For reference, look at Adam Grant’s About section on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/in/adammgrant/). Although his experience is advanced, his summary exemplifies clear, concise language focused on professional identity, areas of expertise, and value offered to his audience; the same principles apply to student profiles.

Education

The education section helps recruiters quickly confirm your academic background. List your current institution, degree program, major, and expected graduation date. You may also include relevant coursework, honors, or academic achievements if they support your career goals.

Experience

List part-time and full-time jobs, internships, and clinical experiences. Experience does not need to be paid to be valuable. This section should demonstrate the skills you have developed and the impact of your work, rather than simply listing responsibilities. **Results matter more than duties.** Focus on what you accomplished, how you added value, and the outcomes of your efforts.

Example:

- Performed data analysis for 15+ weekly reports used by management
- Increased event attendance by 25% through targeted social media outreach

LinkedIn also allows you to add optional sections such as **projects, certifications, licenses, and coursework** when relevant to your field. You can also include **research, volunteer work, or leadership roles** to these optional sections.

Skills

Your skills section helps recruiters find you when they need candidates with very specific skills. Focus on skills that reflect your academic background, technical abilities, and professional strengths. Avoid listing unrelated or overly broad skills, as quality and relevance are more important than quantity.

Build Connections Strategically

Building connections on LinkedIn should be intentional and professional. Focus on creating meaningful connections rather than collecting many contacts.

Start with people you already know, such as classmates, professors, supervisors, coworkers, and peers. These connections help establish a strong foundation for your network.

Expand your network gradually by connecting with alumni, industry professionals, and individuals working in roles or fields you are interested in.

Personalize connection requests whenever possible by including a brief, personalized message that mentions a shared affiliation, mutual interest, or reason for connecting. This increases the likelihood of your request being accepted.

Share Content and Engage

Engaging on LinkedIn helps maintain visibility and strengthen professional presence. Posting content related to your field (industry news or professional accomplishments), as well as liking, commenting, or reposting content from your connections, helps you remain active and signal engagement to the LinkedIn algorithm. Your profile should be updated every few months or whenever you gain a new skill, role, or accomplishment to ensure your information stays current and searchable. Joining LinkedIn groups relevant to your major or career interests can provide access to industry discussions, insights, and networking opportunities, especially for students exploring career paths.

Use LinkedIn for Job Search

LinkedIn offers a powerful job board with internships and full-time employment opportunities. Recruiters actively use the platform to post positions and search for qualified candidates.

How to search for opportunities:

- Use the **Jobs** tab to search for roles related to your major, skills, or career interests
- Apply filters such as location, experience level, and job type to narrow results

Job alerts and visibility:

- Set job alerts for roles you are interested in to receive notifications when new positions are posted
- Update your job preferences if you are actively seeking employment so recruiters can find you

The free version of LinkedIn provides all the essential tools needed for job searching, including job postings, applications, and networking features. LinkedIn Premium may be useful later for students who want deeper insights into applicant data or additional messaging tools, but it is not necessary to begin or maintain an effective job search. Using LinkedIn consistently as a job search tool helps you stay informed about opportunities and align your profile with employer expectations.