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LINKEDIN

A Guide for Students

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1. What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform, with over 1 billion members across 200+ countries. Unlike other social media platforms, LinkedIn is specifically designed to help people build and manage their professional careers, connect with colleagues and employers, and discover opportunities in their field.

Think of it as your digital CV, professional diary, and career network all rolled into one — available 24/7 to every recruiter, hiring manager, and industry contact in the world.

2. Why LinkedIn Matters for University Students

Many students assume LinkedIn is only for graduates or working professionals. This is a common misconception. The earlier you build your presence, the greater the advantage you will have when you graduate.



Internships & Jobs

Recruiters actively search for students. Many roles are filled before they are ever advertised.



Industry Networking

Connect with alumni, lecturers and professionals who can mentor you or refer you to roles.



Learning Resources

Access LinkedIn Learning, industry news and expert articles to stay ahead in your field.

Key Statistics

- 87% of recruiters regularly use LinkedIn to find and vet candidates
- Over 58 million companies are listed on LinkedIn
- 1 in 3 professionals on Earth are on LinkedIn
- Students with complete LinkedIn profiles are 40x more likely to receive opportunities
- Over 7 people are hired via LinkedIn every minute

3. How to Create Your LinkedIn Account

Setting up a LinkedIn account takes less than 10 minutes. Follow these steps to get started.

Step 1

Sign Up

Go to [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) or download the LinkedIn app. Click 'Join now' and enter your name, email address, and a password.

Step 2

Add Your Profile Photo

Upload a clear, professional headshot. You do not need a formal suit — just a clean background, good lighting, and a friendly expression. Avoid selfies or cropped group photos

Step 3

Write Your Headline

Your headline appears directly below your name. Don't just write your degree. Use this format: Degree | University | Key Skill or Interest. Example: Bachelor of Commerce | University of Melbourne | Aspiring Marketing Professional

Step 4

Create Your 'About' Summary

Write 3–5 sentences about who you are, what you're studying, what you're passionate about, and what you're looking for. Use first person and keep it warm and professional.

Step 5

Add Education

Include your university, degree name, expected graduation year, and any relevant coursework, academic achievements, or distinctions.

Step 6

Add Experience

Include part-time jobs, volunteer roles, internships, and student leadership positions. For each, describe your responsibilities and key achievements using action verbs.

Step 7

Add Skills

List skills relevant to your field — both technical (e.g. Python, Excel, Adobe Photoshop) and soft skills (e.g. Communication, Leadership). Connections can endorse these skills.

Step 8**Connect with People You Know**

Start with classmates, lecturers, and family friends in professional roles. Aim for at least 50 connections to build your initial network.

Tip: Set your profile to 'Open to Work' (visible only to recruiters) to signal that you're looking for internships or graduate roles without your current employer seeing.

4. Building a Strong Profile

Profile Photo and Banner

- Use a high-resolution photo where your face takes up 60% of the frame
- Choose a neutral or blurred background — avoid busy settings or group photos
- Customise your banner image to reflect your field (e.g. a city skyline for business, code for tech)

Writing an Effective Summary

Your 'About' section is your elevator pitch. It should answer three questions:

- Who are you and what are you studying?
- What are you passionate about and what value can you add?
- What are you looking for (internship, graduate job, mentorship)?

Tip: End your summary with a call to action, such as: 'Feel free to connect or reach out — I'd love to chat about opportunities in [your field].'

Describing Experience

Use the CAR method for each role: Challenge – Action – Result. Focus on impact, not just duties.

Weak Description

"Worked at a café"

Strong Description

"Delivered high-quality customer service in a fast-paced environment, managing up to 150 orders per shift. Trained 3 new staff members, reducing onboarding time by 30%."

5. The Dos and Don'ts of LinkedIn

Profile Dos and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
✓ Use a professional profile photo with good lighting ✓ Write a compelling, personalised headline ✓ Keep your experience and education up to date ✓ List relevant skills and seek endorsements ✓ Include a customised LinkedIn URL (e.g. linkedin.com/in/yourname) ✓ Add certifications, awards, and volunteer work ✓ Use keywords from job descriptions in your profile	✗ Use casual, blurry, or group photos as your profile picture ✗ Leave your headline as just your degree title ✗ Copy-paste your CV word for word ✗ Leave large, unexplained gaps in your experience ✗ Use an unprofessional username in your URL ✗ Exaggerate or falsify your qualifications or roles ✗ Leave your profile incomplete or dormant for months

Networking Dos and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
✓ Personalise every connection request with a short message ✓ Connect with lecturers, alumni, and professionals you meet ✓ Congratulate connections on new roles or achievements ✓ Follow companies and thought leaders in your field ✓ Engage genuinely with posts by commenting thoughtfully ✓ Ask for informational interviews with professionals	✗ Send blank connection requests to strangers ✗ Immediately ask for a job after connecting ✗ Spam connections with mass messages ✗ Only connect with people you already know well ✗ React to posts without reading or watching them ✗ Ignore messages or notifications for weeks at a time

Content and Posting Dos and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
✓ Share insights, articles, or reflections relevant to your field ✓ Post about academic projects, placements, or achievements ✓ Write in a professional but conversational tone ✓ Use relevant hashtags to increase post visibility ✓ Acknowledge and thank people who have helped you ✓ Post consistently — even once a week adds up	✗ Post overly personal content (holiday photos, rants, etc.) ✗ Share controversial political or divisive opinions ✗ Complain about university, employers, or colleagues ✗ Repost content without adding your own perspective ✗ Use excessive exclamation marks or ALL CAPS ✗ Post content with spelling or grammatical errors

6. Networking Effectively as a Student

Networking can feel daunting, but it is simply about building genuine, mutually beneficial relationships. On LinkedIn, you have the ability to reach people outside of your existing network and geographical location.

Writing a Great Connection Request

Always include a personalised note. Here is a request template for students:

Sample Connection Request:

"Hi [Name], I'm a [Year] student studying [Degree] at [University]. I came across your profile while researching careers in [Industry] and was really inspired by your work at [Company]. I'd love to connect and perhaps learn more about your journey. Thanks for considering!"

Engaging with Content

- Like and comment meaningfully on posts from people in your target industry
- Share articles with your own commentary — this shows analytical thinking
- Tag relevant connections when sharing content they would find useful
- Join LinkedIn Groups related to your degree or career interests

Reaching Out for Informal Interviews

An informational interview is a short (15–20 minute) chat where you ask a professional about their career, not about a job. It is one of the most underused tools by students and one of the most powerful.

- Keep your request brief and specific
- Offer flexibility with their schedule
- Prepare 5–7 thoughtful questions beforehand
- Send a thank-you message within 24 hours

7. Your Quick-Start LinkedIn Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure your profile is set up for success from day one.

Profile Setup

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Professional profile photo uploaded |
| ☐ | Custom headline written (not just your degree) |
| ☐ | About/Summary section completed |
| ☐ | Education section filled in with details |
| ☐ | At least one Experience entry added |
| ☐ | 5+ relevant skills listed |
| ☐ | LinkedIn URL customised |

Content & Activity

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Followed 10+ companies in your industry |
| ☐ | Connected with at least 20 classmates or colleagues |
| ☐ | Commented on at least 3 posts this week |
| ☐ | Shared one piece of content with your own commentary |

Networking

- ☐ Sent 3+ personalised connection requests
- ☐ Reached out to at least one university alumnus
- ☐ Turned on 'Open to Work' for recruiters

8. Final Tips for Long-Term Success

- Consistency beats perfection — a slightly imperfect profile that is active beats a perfect profile that sits idle.
- Be genuine — people respond to authenticity, not corporate speak.
- Think long-term — the connections you make today may lead to opportunities in 5 years.
- Keep learning — use LinkedIn Learning to pick up new certifications and skills.
- Review your profile every semester — update it as you grow.

Tip: Your LinkedIn profile is often the first impression a recruiter or employer has of you. Treat it with the same care you would a job interview. A strong, well-maintained profile is key.

