LinkedIn.com operates the world’s largest professional network on the internet with 300 million members in over 200 countries. LinkedIn is a great resource for anyone, whether you are an undecided student exploring options, or a strategic job seeker. One key aspect of using LinkedIn effectively is having a complete profile. “Users with complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn.”

As you build and update your profile, follow LinkedIn’s instructions for profile-completeness. One thing to remember is that you can decide in which order your profile sections appear, just by clicking and dragging sections!

☐ Create a professional “headline”
Describe who you are and what you want to do in 120 characters or less. Nothing too personal (“cat lover looking for work”; “beer connoisseur”), nothing too clever (“marketing ninja”). This is the place to briefly summarize your professional identity. Effective headline examples include: “Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Analyst”; “Graduating Senior, Math Major, University of Washington”; “Engineering Major, Aspiring Inventor, Robot Enthusiast”. Tell people what you’re excited about now and the cool things you want to do in the future. Check out the profiles of professionals and other students for headline ideas.

☐ Add a (professional-looking) photo
Help people remember you by adding a professional-looking photo to your profile. High-quality head-shots are recommended. Don’t forget to smile! LinkedIn is not the venue for photos of you & your puppy.

☐ Add your summary/background
What do you want people to know about you? Consider emphasizing important strengths, qualifications and career interests. Use this section as you would a summary of qualifications section that you’d put on a resume. Make this interesting to read. Use short blocks of text or bullet points. Include keywords, job specific skills and industry-specific qualifications. Describe what motivates you, what you’re skilled at, and what’s next.

☐ Add your education
Enter your school(s) and LinkedIn can help you re-connect with your classmates and meet alumni. Include your major(s)/minor(s). Highlight coursework, study abroad, awards, activities, skills-developed.

☐ List your experience
Keep your network informed about your key experiences: organizations, achievements, honors, service, jobs, internships. Include details of your responsibilities, day-to-day tasks you performed and key contributions and accomplishments. Including examples, photos and videos from your work is quite appropriate.

☐ Add (at least) 5 skills; get recommendations
Be found in searches. Enter keywords to represent your industry and function, e.g. IT, marketing, biotech. Ask politely for quotes (i.e. recommendations) from those that know you well (coworkers, mentors, bosses, instructors) to help you prove you’ve got what it takes. Recommendations give extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

☐ Join groups
Most students start by joining their university’s LinkedIn group as well as the larger industry groups related to career interests. Joining groups and displaying the group badges on your profile is a great way to fill out the professionalism of your profile and show your desire to connect to people with whom you have something in common.
Additional Tips

- **Customize** (for example: linkedin.com/in/joesmith) your **profile URL** when in profile-editing-mode.

- **Proofread** carefully & update your profile regularly (as your experience, education and skills expand)

- “**Follow**” employers (Nike, Teach for America, Tesla, Sony, Disney, Yelp, NPR, Amazon, Gates Foundation, UW, Microsoft, K2 Sports, King County) and *industries* (IT, Health Care, Sports Marketing, Non Profits) of interest. Find employers to follow by searching the “companies” tab. Learn also about industries and employers to follow by viewing other people’s profiles.

- **Account Settings & Privacy Controls.** There are *many* options, so **review** your settings to determine how you and your contacts will experience your profile. For example, you can set who is allowed to view your profile and how much they can see. You should consider de-activating your “activity broadcast” (which allows others to see your activity and profile updates), to spare your connections from too much information. The default setting for your activity broadcast is “on”, so consider changing that once you begin using LinkedIn.

Networking Tips

- **Always customize messages and connection-requests you send through LinkedIn.** Simple reminders of where you met or what organization you have in common is appreciated. If you are being referred by a mutual contact, write a brief intro of who you are and why you would like to connect.

- Many LinkedIn experts believe you need at least **30-50 connections** for your LinkedIn network to be strong. Think quality of connections, not quantity. Connect first with family and friends (people you know and trust), then build your network from there. a) family & friends b) university affiliations c) work / internship affiliations d) volunteer affiliations.

- **Be sure to support your online networking with real human contact.** Set up phone calls, attend live events and send emails to people you interact with on LinkedIn. Online methods should supplement, not replace, in-person relationship-building.

Useful LinkedIn Features & Resources

- [https://www.linkedin.com/college/alumni](https://www.linkedin.com/college/alumni)
  **Find Alumni:** Use the above link, or if you are logged into LinkedIn, under the ‘Connections’ tab in the main bar at the top of the page, select ‘Find Alumni’, and search (by keyword or sort via categories) through 217K profiles of Huskies and find out “where they work”, “what they do”, “where they live”, “what they studied”, “what they’re skilled at” and “how are you connected”.

- [https://www.linkedin.com/edu/fos](https://www.linkedin.com/edu/fos)
  **Field of Study Explorer:** Use the above link, or if you are logged into LinkedIn, under the ‘Education’ tab in the main bar at the top of the page, select ‘Field of Study Explorer’, to investigate what careers all LinkedIn members with that major have pursued. For example, if your major is ‘English’, you can see what 2 million+ LinkedIn members who studied English, are doing in their careers! Incredible research tool for career ideas, options and possible contacts.

- [https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students](https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students)
  **LinkedIn for Students:** Resource with useful tips, videos and advice for maximizing your time and strategy.

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