

Tufts Career Center FAQ of the Week

Do I have to network? What are the best ways to network with Tufts alumni and employers?

Asking “Do I have to network?” is like asking your dentist if you have to floss your teeth. No one is going to make you floss; it’s up to you. Will your teeth be healthier if you floss? Yep! Will your career development journey be more productive if you network? Yep! But in keeping with our analogy, YOU have to be the one to decide that it’s important.

Fortunately, there are many ways to network, and they don’t have to feel intimidating or take up all your time. Why not try talking to someone who has an interesting job or internship? [This is called a career conversation, a.k.a. an informational interview.](#) Not only will you learn things that could help you move forward in your career research, but there’s a chance that your conversation will lead to other good things.

Consider this scenario: I’m a Tufts alumna. I have a conversation with a Tufts student who wants to hear about my job. We talk for 20 minutes, the student asks good questions about my career path, and simultaneously, I learn more about her interests and goals. After our chat, she follows up with a thank you email and expresses her desire to stay in touch. Flash forward to a few weeks later, and I learn that my organization needs interns for the summer. Who am I more likely to contact -- the Tufts student with whom I had a career conversation? Or students I don’t know?

Not every networking conversation will lead to a job or internship offer, but each conversation provides something valuable, e.g., insights into a career path and whether it’s for you (or not!), tips for what a particular employer is looking for in a successful candidate, and/or the names of other people to contact for advice.



Explore



Build



Launch