

Introduction

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online network with a presence in over 200 countries with over 200 million members. The site aims to unite professionals to make them more informed, productive, and successful. It differs from other social networking sites and alumni databases in that it is strictly professional in nature. In addition, LinkedIn is a live, up-to-the-minute, dynamic information-sharing portal.

Tufts Career Center has prepared this guide to assist students and alumni to navigate the many functionalities of LinkedIn to maximize your experience and presence on the site. Tufts Career Center encourages you to use this guide, filled with specific examples and advice, to further your networking endeavors.

Building a Profile

Overview:

- Before you can begin to contact others on LinkedIn you must create your own profile. Log in at www.linkedin.com to create an account and follow the profile prompts to begin.
- LinkedIn lets you control your profile's content and structure, and offers a variety of interesting sections and features to ensure your profile best represents your professional and academic experiences and interests. Your profile is similar to your resume in that it is carefully and professionally written, including information that is relevant to your career objectives and job/internship search.

Sections:

- In its most basic form, your LinkedIn profile will have sections that list your education, work experience, and skills.
- Your profile differs from your resume in that it does not have a length limitation and may have sections and features not traditionally used on a resume. For example, a LinkedIn profile often includes a photo, interests, summary, and a contacts list.

Key Profile Areas

Professional Headline:

- Underneath your name will be a short "headline". Your headline is the first thing other LinkedIn users will see, so make sure it is simple and engaging. Create a meaningful statement that speaks to your goals, interests, or professional skills. For example, "Graduating Economics major seeking financial analyst position", "Writer, digital editor, photographer", "Junior in English seeking a summer internship."

Photo:

- Include a photo! We recommend that the photo be a "headshot" of you, alone, wearing professional attire. We suggest that you do not use a cropped photo of yourself taken with a group of people. Remember it will be the first image that students, alumni, and other networking contacts have of you. If you don't already have one, stop by the Career Center's LinkedIn photo booth at the fall and spring Career Fairs.

The Summary section:

- Your summary is a short version of what you do and why – or what you would like to do and why. Connect with your reader by writing in the first person and always keep it professional.
- **EXAMPLE Summary:**

I have a strong background in writing and editing; including experience as a reporter for *The Tufts Daily*, and an intern for the Boston Globe newspaper. I'm a capable writer and producer; effective at developing content for print, audio, video, and social media. I am a demonstrated leader and collaborator; active in Tufts Imaginet – Tufts Marketing and Advertising Club, with the goal of pursuing a career in marketing or public relations.

Skills and Expertise:

- This section allows you to include up to 50 key words that you feel represent the skills that you possess and have demonstrated in your experience.

Education section:

- Include Tufts, the degree you are seeking or have earned, and your declared major(s) and minor(s). If you are a current student, include your expected graduation year. Highlight academic honors and academic projects, such as a thesis or other course projects.

Experience section:

- This is where to include employment, internships, and involvement with clubs or activities, regardless of whether they were paid experiences or not.
- LinkedIn provides headlines to help you categorize your Experience section into smaller groups:
 - Organizations
 - Volunteer Experiences & Causes
 - Projects
 - Test Scores
 - Patents
 - Certifications
 - Courses
 - Honors and Awards
 - Languages
 - Creative Portfolio Display

Profile Settings

Profile Settings:

- LinkedIn gives you the ability to control the information visible to connections and non-connections in your profile settings. Carefully consider what information you want to make public.
- Access these controls at the top right corner of your LinkedIn page, where you can hover over your name and select "Privacy & Settings." *Allow employers and colleagues to view your profile by ensuring your visibility is set to "everyone."*
- You may also want to turn off your activity broadcast temporarily so that you can silently create and update your LinkedIn profile until you are ready to let the public see it.

Customized URL:

- LinkedIn gives you the option to edit the URL that directs other LinkedIn users to your profile. You can include your URL in your email signature or on your resume. URL's are created on a first-come-first-take basis. To customize your URL:
 - 1.) Scroll over the picture box in the top right-hand corner of the page. Click *MANAGE* next to Privacy and Settings.

- 2.) Under the PROFILE section click *EDIT YOUR PUBLIC PROFILE*
- 3.) Click the pencil to the right of the URL displayed on the top right 1/3 of the page
- 4.) Type your new URL in the text box. The new URL must contain 5-30 letters or numbers; do not use spaces, symbols, or special characters. Be sure to keep this professional, and we suggest that you try to keep it short and use your first and last name in the URL.
- 5.) Click *SAVE*

Linking with Others

Overview:

- Once you've created a profile, start building your LinkedIn network with people you know and trust. Invite friends, relatives, work colleagues, and internship supervisors to link with you.
- **REMEMBER - ONLY LINK WITH PEOPLE YOU ACTUALLY KNOW OR HAVE INTERACTED WITH.**
- **SEND PERSONALIZED INVITATIONS.** LinkedIn provides a generic message for each invitation which you should edit to be more personalized and tailored to each person you send an invitation request. More on this below.

Finding Contacts

- When searching for a specific person, simply type his or her name in the search bar at the top of the page. Click the names in the results to view the profiles and verify that this is actually the person you seek.
- To find people you already know on LinkedIn you can also click "Add Connections" under the "Network" tab. By entering email addresses LinkedIn can check if your address book contains registered LinkedIn users and then you can facilitate the invitation process. Remember, we recommend sending personalized invitations instead of the more generic invitation request.

Advanced Search:

- Your best networking contact might not be someone you know from Tufts. Use LinkedIn's advanced search to find contacts by keyword, school, company, job title, and zip code.

Adding Connections

Great! You've found some potential networking connections. Now it's time to reach out to them.

Sending Invitations to Connect:

- From the contact's profile, click the "Connect" button which will prompt you to define your relationship (Colleague, Classmate, Friend, etc.). If none of these apply, select the "I don't know this person" option and you will be required to provide an email address for verification.
- After you have made your selection, Tufts Career Center **STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** that you write a personalized note in the space provided (see sample below).

Include a personal note: (optional)

Dan,

It was nice meeting you at the panel discussion last night. I'm very hopeful that I can take some of the advice you gave and apply it to my internship search. I'd like to stay in touch with you. May I invite you to join my LinkedIn network?

Best regards,

John McMann

Sending Messages:

To Contacts you ARE NOT Linked with:

- To send a message to someone with whom you are not connected/linked to but are perhaps interested in requesting an informational interview: you can find the Send Message button when you hover over a group

member's name in the Members tab of a group to which you both belong. You don't have to be directly connected/linked to someone to be able to send a message to a fellow group member. Also, if you are able, initiate your conversation using the "Send Message" button on the contacts' profile to write him/her directly. Sending a message is the preferred way to communicate with people who you are not directly linked to because it allows contacts to respond to your questions even if they don't know you well enough to accept your formal invitation.

To Contacts You ARE Linked with:

- To send messages to people with whom you are connected/linked: If you are able, initiate your conversation using the "Send Message" button on the contacts' profile to write him/her directly. You can also find the Send Message button when you hover over a group member's name in the Members tab of a group to which you both belong.
- For more information about what to say in introductory messages to potential networking contacts please refer to our NETWORKING handout for examples.

Requesting an Introduction:

Interested in connecting with someone who one of your contacts already knows? LinkedIn has a feature that facilitates introductions to a third party. To request an introduction, simply send a message to your contact. Mention that you are interested in learning more about a particular company/industry and that you noticed she/he was connected to someone that you'd like to speak with. Then, ask if he/she would be willing to introduce you to that individual either through LinkedIn or a personal introduction. Be sure to give them the option to say "no".

Sample introduction email:

Dear John,

I hope you have been well! As you know, I will be graduating soon and I'm trying to connect with individuals who know about marketing. I noticed through LinkedIn that you are connected to Jennifer Thompson at HubSpot. This company specializes in the area of communications that I am interested in, and I would really like the opportunity to speak with Jennifer about her experience in the field. Would you be willing to facilitate an introduction for me? Thanks for considering my request.

*Warm regards,
Susan*

Responding to Link Requests:

Because LinkedIn is a two-way street, other LinkedIn members may invite you to connect with them. LinkedIn strongly recommends that you only accept invitations from people that you know. You may also be willing to accept invitations from fellow Tufts students or alumni, co-workers, etc. *simply because you share common interests or experiences.* Whatever your comfort level may be, it is important to remember that you have options when you receive an invitation to Link.

Accept

- Click this button to add a contact as one of your first-degree connections. Other LinkedIn members will be able to see that you are linked.

Reply (don't accept yet)

- Click the dropdown on the right side of the Accept button to see this option and reply without accepting the invitation.

Ignore

- Clicking this button will move the invitation to your “Archived” folder without accepting it. The other person won’t be notified that you’ve ignored their invitation so they may try to Link with you again. After you click the Ignore button, you will have the option of clicking “I don’t know (name)” to prevent that member from sending you any more invitations.

Report as Spam

- Clicking this button will report the invitation as spam.

Find Tufts Alumni:

Using LinkedIn’s [Find Alumni](#) function (nested under the “Network” tab), you can view the career paths of thousands of Tufts alumni. Try filtering your search by keyword, company, major, or field. If you find someone whose career path is relevant to your interests, consider reaching out and politely requesting an informational interview.

Join and Engage with Tufts LinkedIn Groups

Joining GROUPS is one of the best ways to find and reach out to potential networking contacts. Even if you are not connected, LinkedIn allows group members to message one another via the group’s page. To message a fellow group member who you are not Linked with yet, go to the group’s page and click on the “Members” link, located in the top right of your screen. Use the search bar to find the right contact. Your contact’s name will appear, along with the option to “send message.” E-mail a short personalized note requesting an informational interview. Do not ask a networking contact directly for a job! See our Networking Handout for sample e-mail messages.

Tufts Career Center moderates the **TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP** on LinkedIn. Members of this group have actively volunteered to help and engage with one another. This is a great place to start your networking and reach out for informational interviews. See our Networking Handout for additional information on how to use an informational interview to your advantage. Informational interviews are a GREAT way for students to meet new networking contacts and learn about career fields, industries and employers of interest.

Joining TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP:

Members of Tufts Career Networking Group are Tufts students, alumni, faculty members, administration, and family and friends of Tufts University who want to share information across industries and geographic areas. Moderated by the Tufts Career Center, this group is a great place to ask for career advice, schedule informational interviews, conduct company research, and get information related to your job/internship search.

Students:

1. Create a LinkedIn Profile
2. Complete Tufts Career Center’s networking requirements:
 - a. Read the LinkedIn Guide and Networking section of our website
3. Request to join group
4. An administrator will review your request and grant you access within 1-2 business days

Tufts Alumni:

1. Create a LinkedIn Profile
2. Request to join group
3. An administrator will review your request and grant you access within 1-2 business days

Engaging with the TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP:

Once you are a member of the TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP, there are several ways to engage with fellow group members to both share and acquire information.

Post a Discussion:

- The “Discussions” tab is a great resource for soliciting the perspectives of the group. If you would like to pose a relevant question to the full group, Tufts Career Center recommends posting a discussion. In your discussion post, be sure to provide a brief summary of who you are and why you are seeking this specific information. Because this post will be visible to all group members **be sure that it is free from typos and does not ask for a job/internship opportunity.**

Send Messages to Members:

- Because you share a group, you are able to send a message to fellow group members. “Send message” appears to the right when you hover over a members name in the “Members” tab. Identify individual group members in your field, industry or geographic area by clicking on the number of group member’s link to the right of the group name. Individual members might be great candidates for informational interviews, or you may simply want to message them directly with more specific questions related to their career path and expertise.
- Tufts Career Center strongly suggests that you send a message **before** inviting a group member to Link. Remember to customize your message as discussed in the “Adding Connections” section of this handout.

Group Rules:

- The Tufts Career Networking Group is a professional forum for students, alumni, faculty and staff to connect with each other and share their career questions and advice. All members are encouraged to post relevant and appropriate questions, comments, or advice about career-related topics. Alumni may also receive requests for informational interviews.
- Any post that is deemed inappropriate will be removed. An inappropriate post is defined as one that:
 - Includes profanity, abusive, or other offensive language
 - Attacks an individual or an individual’s character
 - Contains unlawful, obscene, threatening, disrespectful, hateful, or embarrassing material
 - Solicits services, payments or donations (no matter how worthy the cause)
 - Advertises for a particular business or company
 - Contains “spam” or chain messages
- Job postings may be added within the “Jobs” tab of the group. Jobs posted in other locations will be moved to the appropriate location. All job postings are subject to review, and the Career Center reserves the right to remove any posting deemed inappropriate for the group.
- Employers interested in hiring Tufts students should review the Career Center website (<http://career.tufts.edu/employers/index.asp>) for information about posting jobs/internships and attending Career Fairs.
- The opinions posted in the Tufts Career Networking Group do not necessarily represent the opinions of Tufts University.

Communication Preferences:

As an alum or student member of the TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP, it is important that you select how you want to receive updates from the group. You can manage these preferences with the group page under the “More...” tab > “Your Settings.” To make the most of your group membership, Tufts Career Center recommends the following settings:

Member Messages: Tufts Career Center recommends checking this box to allow members of the TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP to send you messages on LinkedIn. This does not mean that the group members will have your email address, but it will make it easier to strike up a conversation via LinkedIn. If you do not check of this box, members of the group may not have the ability to send you a message directly.

Contact Email: Select your preferred email to receive communications from the group. Be sure that this email address is current.

Digest Email: Tufts Career Center recommends checking this box to receive digest email of all activity in the group. You can specify the frequency as *daily* or *weekly*.

Announcements: Tufts Career Center recommends checking this box to allow the group administrators to send you direct emails.

More Group Networking Tools and Resources:

Additional LinkedIn Networking Groups:

- LinkedIn is home to hundreds of groups with members who have specific professional interests in common such as working in the environment, working with children, working abroad or conducting research. Seek out and request to join groups related to your specific interests.
- There are currently 18 Tufts related groups on LinkedIn with 400+ members including:
 - Tufts Career Networking Group
 - Tufts Professional Network
 - Tufts Entrepreneurial Network
 - Tufts Alumni Association*
 - Tufts Financial Network*
 - Tufts Environmental Alumni*
 - Tufts University Alumni*

** Must be an alum to join*

- As a member you can learn about current topics and trends, research members' career paths and identify new networking contacts, just as you would in TUFTS CAREER NETWORKING GROUP. Groups can help you explore your area of interest in depth, expand your reach for specific information about industry expectations and qualifications as well as related career paths or types of jobs you may not have previously know about.

Finding and Joining Groups:

- Search by keyword or group name in the search bar at the top of any page, and then choose "Groups" as a search category on the left of the search bar.
- Click on the group name to review the group description and any specific criteria to join, then click on "Join Group". Some groups are "open" and you will have access right away, others have specific criteria to join and it may take a few days to be granted access.
- Once you have access you can begin networking with this group of professionals. **Remember, don't ask for a job – the purpose is to get career insights and information.** Review the groups that you belong to in the "Interests" tab.

Events & Networking in Person:

- Attending events is one of the most common ways to meet new people. Tufts Career Center hosts many events on and off campus to help students and alumni network with each other and employers, including: panel discussions, Professional in Residence programs, employer information sessions, networking nights and more!
- LinkedIn is an outstanding resource, but it is a *supplement to* and not a *substitute for* attending events and networking in person.