



ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS
OFFICE OF
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK WITH LINKEDIN

LinkedIn – What is it and how can you use it?

[LinkedIn](#) is a professional networking website with over 300 million users worldwide and over 100,000 UConn alumni.

You can use LinkedIn to explore options, identify alumni and professionals in your field of interest, and as a networking tool when searching for research-related internships and jobs. Viewing profiles of professionals in your areas of interest can also give you a picture of where they began their careers and how they've progressed. If you have specific research centers, organizations, or employers in mind, you can search for alumni or others working at those sites that you can contact to discuss possible options for getting involved.

Getting Stared

The first step to using LinkedIn is to create a professional profile. This step is necessary; you will not be able to conduct searches unless you have established a profile. Complete your profile before you begin searching or use LinkedIn to reach out to alumni or professionals.

Building Your Profile

Your LinkedIn profile is the equivalent of your online résumé. Remember, this is a *professional* networking site, not a social networking site; your photo and content should represent the professional you are working to become.

Include the following information in your profile:

- Professional “Headline” – After your name, this is the first line LinkedIn users will see. Go beyond simply listing “Student” in your headline.
 - Examples: Sophomore Anthropology Major at the University of Connecticut
 Junior Biology Major/Research Assistant in Professor Smith’s ABC Lab
 University of Connecticut Freshman Exploring Biomedical Research Careers
- Photo – This is the first (and only) image a LinkedIn user will have of you. Be mindful of the image you want to project and be sure it’s appropriate for your field.
- LinkedIn URL – Claim your personalized URL. LinkedIn automatically assigns each user a unique URL, which is typically a random series of numbers and letters. In your profile, change your URL to something that would be easy to include in emails or on your résumé, such as www.linkedin.com/jonathanhusky.uconn.
- Summary: Use this section to highlight key information, such as your research interests, relevant coursework, current or previous work experiences, or any special skills you may have.
- Experience: This should include any work experiences you’ve had, with special emphasis on ones that are relevant to your goals. Include on-campus positions, especially those that include a research component. Make sure to give a brief description to help people evaluate your experience and skill set.
- Education: List your educational experiences in reverse chronological order, with UConn first and then high school. In your education section, include your major (if declared).
- Additional Sections & Information: You can choose to add additional sections to your profile, or incorporate this information into your education, experience or summary sections. Options include: Languages (include only if you have at least an intermediate level of proficiency); Volunteer Experiences; Certifications; Publications; Honors & Awards; Student/Professional Groups; Skills and Expertise.

Connect With People You Know

The bigger your network the easier it will be to connect with alumni and professionals in your field of interest. Start by searching for people you already know using the Advanced Search tool and sending them an invitation to connect. Make sure to customize your invitation!

- Potential people to include in your network: Friends, relatives, UConn classmates, high school classmates, current and former professors (only invite professors you know well to connect), co-workers, current and former supervisors

Join Groups

This is a step that many people neglect; not joining groups will impact your results when you search for alumni and professionals. When you search, your results will be limited to people who are within three degrees of connection to you or who you share a group with. Joining relevant groups will positively increase your search results. Click on “Groups” in the “Interests” tab to begin searching for groups.

- UConn Groups: There are many UConn affiliation groups to join; some are general and some specific to those with certain school or college affiliations. Join all that interest you.
- Industry and Interest Groups: There are groups for every industry and interest area, including the following: “Research, Methodology, and Statistics in the Social Sciences,” “International Society for Stem Cell Research,” and “Food & Nutrition Research.”

LinkedIn Etiquette

Only send invitations to connect to people you know and/or have met in person. Most people won’t accept an invitation to connect from someone they’ve never met. For those people you don’t know yet, but want to get to know, stick to sending them “InMails,” which are LinkedIn’s version of emails. Please note that with a free, basic LinkedIn account you are only allowed a limited number of InMails, so use them wisely.

Searching for Contacts

There are three ways to conduct a search for alumni and other professionals on LinkedIn – general search, advanced search, and through the “Find Alumni” tool in the “Connections” tab.

General Search

You can find the search box along the top navigation bar on any LinkedIn page. The general search tool will allow you to quickly pull up profiles of individuals working in companies you’re targeting, or to search for a specific person.

You can also search for profiles of companies, non-profits, or research centers of interest. Employer profiles can help you learn more about the organization, as many profiles contain an overview of the organization/employer, the latest company news, and information on their products and services. You can also use employer profiles to identify possible connections, and learn about similar organizations you can look into.

Advanced Search

Along the top navigation bar, to the right of the general search field, you can click on “Advanced” to conduct an advanced search. The search tool that comes up will allow you to enter multiple search criteria, helping you to hone in on alumni and other professionals that match your target criteria. You can search by *School*, which allows you to find people with “University of Connecticut” in the education section of their profile, *Location*, which is helpful if you’re targeting specific geographic areas, *Company*, *Industry*, and *Keywords*.

“Find Alumni” Tool

Along the top navigation bar in LinkedIn, in the “Connections” menu you can access the “Find Alumni” tool. This tool will help you explore UConn alumni profiles. Similar to the Advanced Search tool, you can filter your search by select criteria to help you hone in on people of interest.