

Leveraging LinkedIn: From Building Your Profile to Networking and Job Search

LinkedIn is a social networking platform that allows you to host a professional profile, make career connections, find and apply to jobs, and explore content related to your professional interests, goals, and values. Some individuals use LinkedIn as a way to showcase their career history and aspirations, while others focus on LinkedIn as a networking tool.

In this tipsheet, you will learn strategies for:

- Developing an effective LinkedIn profile page for professional visibility and networking,
- Engaging with your LinkedIn community,
- Growing your professional network on LinkedIn,
- Getting started with your job search.

How you engage with LinkedIn may depend on what you plan to use it for. If you would like to discuss more in-depth strategies, we recommend booking an appointment with a **Career Educator and Coach**.

Developing Your LinkedIn Profile

Creating an impactful LinkedIn profile involves more than just filling out sections—it's about presenting yourself authentically while strategically optimizing your profile's visual elements.

The core sections of a LinkedIn profile (in order of how they appear) are your:

- Headshot
- Banner image
- Headline
- About
- Experience
- Education
- Licenses & Certifications
- Skills

Headshot & Banner

While professional headshots and banners are often recommended, it is important to consider how they align with your personal identity and industry norms as these elements form your first impression on the profile viewer.

- Your banner image serves as a visual introduction to your profile; tailor it to reflect your personal identity and career aspirations, whether through stock images, personal photos, or customized designs.
- Attire should reflect your field's expectations for professionalism.

- Choose a simple, uncluttered background and avoid cropping or including others in your headshot to maintain focus on you.

Headline

Your headline appears below your name across various LinkedIn functions and helps you to communicate your career interests, skills, and values to potential recruiters and connections. Since this text appears alongside your name across most LinkedIn functions, this element can have an impact on whether someone chooses to click on your profile.

- Leverage your headline to include elements such as your current role or career objectives, educational background, relevant skills, and/or values to communicate your unique professional identity at a glance (Note: 220 character limit).
- Choose keywords and phrases that resonate with your desired career path, making it easier for recruiters and other professionals to find and connect with you based on your profile.
- Regularly review and update your headline to reflect changes in your career interests and aspirations, adapting it based on profile views and evolving professional goals.

“About” Section

This section provides an open space to introduce yourself: how your skills, values, interests, and key messages align with your career history and aspirations. It is typically written in the first person to reflect your unique written voice. It can be helpful to review how other people in your network or industry of interest have presented their “About” statements prior to writing yours.

- Showcase your identity by explaining who you are, what you excel at, and why your skills and experiences are valuable to your audience.
- Clearly articulate your areas of interest within your chosen field, emphasizing specific aspects that resonate with you and reflect your passion and expertise.
- Highlight what sets you apart from others by showcasing personal interests and strengths that define your unique professional identity.
- Choose a combination of bullet points and concise paragraphs to maintain readability and engagement. Use formatting techniques such as bolding or bullet points to draw attention to key messages.
- When you edit your “About” section, you have the option to tag skills to highlight them. Tag your top 5 skills focusing on your main strengths and expertise areas. This allows recruiters and connections to quickly understand your core competencies and areas of expertise.

Experience

When building your Experience section, it can be helpful to strategically present professional experiences that align with your career goals. Since your experience is automatically structured in reverse-chronological order, you can optimize this section by highlighting key roles with media content, tangible achievements, and tagged skills.

- Select your experiences based on their quality, relevance, and alignment with your future career aspirations, ensuring that each entry showcases your skills and achievements effectively.
- Move beyond listing tasks and responsibilities to highlight transferable skills and your impact within the role.
- Choose between bullet points, short paragraphs, or a combination of writing styles to effectively communicate your experiences.
- Tag key skills for each position to increase your profile's visibility as recruiters use these tagged skills to find relevant candidates.

Education

Including your educational background, especially as a student or recent graduate, can be a great way to leverage the LinkedIn algorithm in building connections as the platform will suggest people you may know through the same institution(s). This also increases the credibility of the technical skills gained through your program of study.

- Use the formal name of your credentials as they appear on your official degree.
- Specify any major and minors in the "Field of Study" category to provide clarity.
- Decide whether to include your GPA in the "grade" section (you may wish to specify that Queen's uses a 4.3 scale).
- Consider listing clubs or other activities under "Activities and Societies" if they're not included elsewhere.
- Showcase your most impressive work by embedding it as media content to engage your audience effectively.

Licenses & Certifications

Alongside degrees and work experiences, licenses and certifications help demonstrate your expertise and dedication within your chosen field. Briefly explain the significance of each license or certification, showcasing how it enhances your qualifications and contributes to your professional credibility.

Skills

Developing a standout LinkedIn profile is essential for attracting opportunities. One key aspect is showcasing your skills, which not only highlights your expertise but also increases your visibility to potential employers and collaborators.

- To help you identify your skills, you can use our resources such as the [Queen's Skills Sorter](#) to reflect on and identify transferable skills.
- Alternatively, you can explore profiles of professionals in your field to identify key skills sought after by employers.
- Collaborate with past colleagues or connections to exchange skill endorsements.

Your Professional Network

Now that you have developed your standout profile, you may consider the following strategies when engaging with your LinkedIn community and growing your professional network.

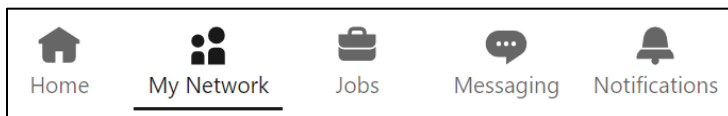
Guiding Principles

Keep the following tips in mind as you engage with the network on LinkedIn.

- Maintain a professional tone and demeanor in all interactions and content shared on the platform. This includes using proper grammar and etiquette in communications.
- Present yourself honestly and authentically, showcasing your skills, experiences, and accomplishments.
- Review and adjust your privacy settings to control who can view your profile and what information is visible to the public. Be mindful of the information you share and consider the implications for your professional reputation.

Building & Managing Your Network

Everyone has their own personal policy when it comes to managing their network.



Select the “My Network” button at the top of the page to view a summary of your network and to see some suggestions that LinkedIn has for you based on your current connections and activity.

Here are some considerations for managing your network:

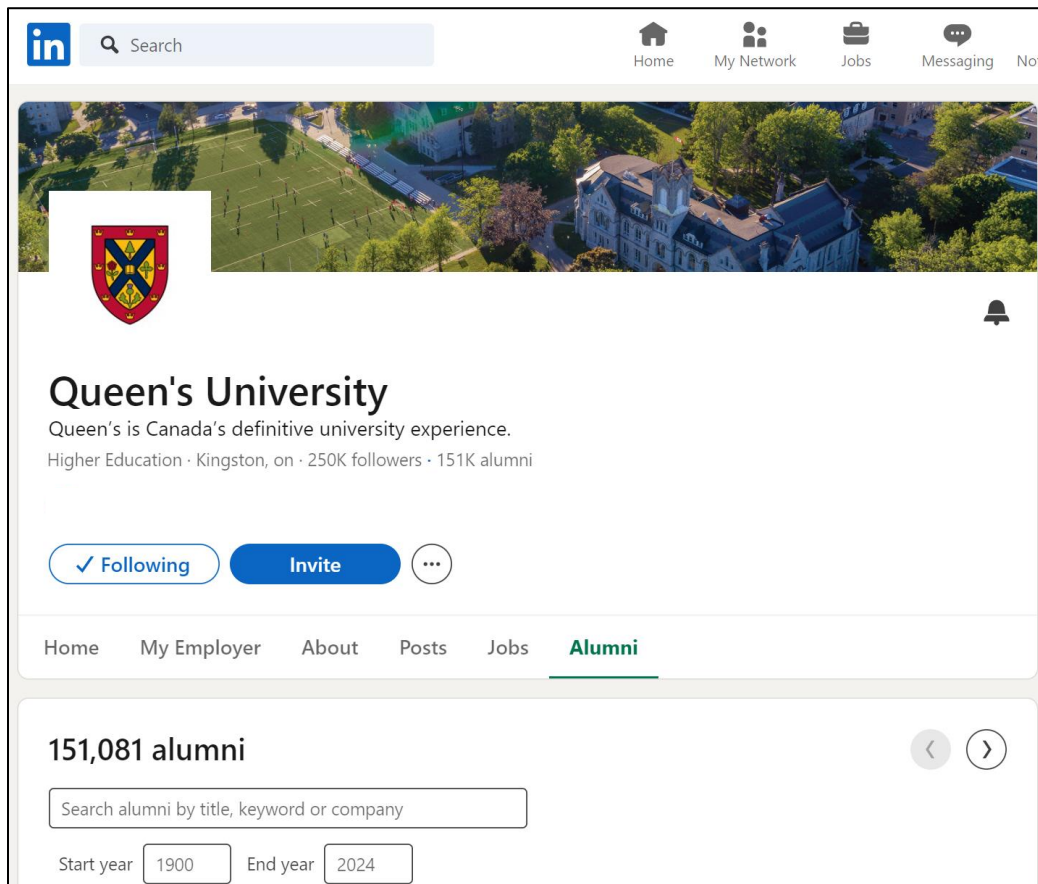
- Make use of the "Add a note" feature when sending connection requests to introduce yourself and communicate your interest in connecting (Note: 200 character limit).



- Be selective and targeted in your connection requests to avoid being flagged for spamming by LinkedIn.
- Prioritize building relationships and gathering information instead of openly seeking job opportunities.
- Remember that you have the option to unfollow influencers, pages, newsletters, or hashtags if their content is no longer relevant or valuable to you.
- Manage your network's impact on your newsfeed by selecting the "contacts" option to view connections based on other avenues such as email and phone contacts. You can also add more contacts, export contacts, and manage synced sources as needed.
- Building authentic connections that support your career goals requires ongoing engagement beyond a simple social media connection. Take the time to interact and nurture your connections over time to foster meaningful relationships.

Connecting with Queen's Alumni

Make sure to leverage the Alumni Search tool on LinkedIn to connect with professionals from within the Queen's University alumni network. You can benefit greatly from the supportive Queen's alumni community by exploring diverse career paths, employers, and job titles relevant to your interests.



- Use the general search bar to locate Queen's University's "school" page, then navigate to the alumni tab to access the Alumni Search tool.
- Use various filters, such as keywords, degree start/end dates, location, industry, and skills, to refine your alumni search and identify potential connections.
- Review search results directly below the filter options provided and consider exploring Alumni Search tools for other schools to broaden your networking opportunities and gain insights into various job markets.

Connecting with other Queen's alumni provide you with an excellent opportunity to learn from others who studied at Queen's and may offer unique career paths. Don't hesitate to ask for informational interviews (20-minute "chat") when connecting with them directly. Refer to our **Informational Interviews** and **Networking** tipsheets to learn more.

Engaging with Your Network

The following professional tips will support you in effectively engaging with others on LinkedIn:

- Share valuable content such as industry insights, articles, or personal achievements to demonstrate your expertise and provide value to your network.

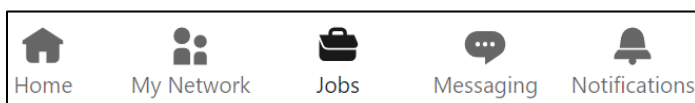
- Show appreciation by following up and expressing gratitude for comments on your posts and messages received.
- Actively engage in networking by connecting with professionals in your industry, alumni, colleagues, and potential mentors.
- Explore profiles of active and influential professionals in your field to discover relevant groups, influencers, hashtags, and companies to follow for valuable insights and networking opportunities.

Considerations within a Canadian Context

- Canadian culture is often viewed as polite or considerate compared to other cultures. Express gratitude and respect for other peoples' time and efforts when engaging with newsfeed content, groups, and/or direct messages.
- Approximately 80% of jobs in Canada are not publicly posted. They are filled through networking.
- It's common to set up informational interviews (20-minute "chats") with other professionals to learn more about their relevant career experiences in certain jobs and at specific companies. This information can inform your applications and help you to stand out. Check out our **Informational Interviews tipsheet** for more tips!
- If you are an international student, try to gain some initial experience working or volunteering in Canada while pursuing your degree. It will allow you to be more competitive when applying for future jobs.

Getting Started with Your Job Search

Access LinkedIn's job board by selecting the "Jobs" button at the top of the page, where you'll find unique features that set it apart from other job boards.



- When you find a job of interest, save it for later by using the "Save" option, accessible through the "My Jobs" button on the starting page.
- Consider setting up job alerts based on specific search criteria to receive notifications when new jobs are posted that match your preferences or identified skills, managed through the "Job Alerts" button.
- If an "Easy Apply" option is available, still apply directly to the role on the company website to ensure they receive your application, even if the job posting directs you to apply on the company's website.
- When using the experience level filter, always include an option to tailor your search to your specific experience level.

Next Steps

Now that you've learned more about LinkedIn, get started with setting up your LinkedIn online presence. To discuss more in-depth strategies or to review your profile, you can either book an appointment with a **Career Educator and Coach** or attend our **LinkedIn Workshop** [@MyCareer](#).