Getting Started on LinkedIn

A guide to building your online professional profile

UCSF Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs
Career and Professional Development

What is LinkedIn?
LinkedIn is the default social platform for professionals in the U.S.

Why create an online professional profile?
A LinkedIn profile is useful for communicating who you are and what you do, learning about different careers, and expanding your network.

1 Set Up the Profile Basics

- [ ] **Create (or get back into) your LinkedIn account** (www.linkedin.com)**.**
  At this stage, you don't need to add contacts yet.

- [ ] **Add a photo.**
  Use a headshot with decent lighting, business casual clothes, and a neutral or professional background. If you need one, the UCSF Student Success Center has a free photobooth for students and postdocs!

  Level Up: *Add a background photo!*

- [ ] **Customize your settings.**
  Consider your preferences regarding visibility and data privacy. Toggle off the "Notify Network" button to avoid telling people every time you make a change.

  Level Up: *Customize your URL. For example, you can change "shirleyly1234" to "shirley-ly."*

2 Describe Yourself

- [ ] **Add a headline.**
  Things you can include (pick 2-3): Current title (use a descriptive one, not "graduate student" or "postdoc"); current institution; title or field you're aiming for; primary value proposition; key skills or leadership positions.

  Level Up: *Add an "About" summary. There's no one right way—find models you like and experiment! Examples are provided below:*

  "[Type of scientist] with [x] years' experience conducting research in [fields]. Expertise in [skills]. Passionate about connecting underserved communities with opportunities, with experience in [student leadership roles; DEI advocacy; mentorship or teaching; volunteering; etc.]"

  "I am a [wet lab scientist] with [x] year of academic experience interested in working to [research goal]. My background is in [field] with additional experience in [other field]. I am interested in learning more about industry while using my expertise to advance cutting-edge research."

  "PhD candidate at [X] lab interested in industry opportunities. Publications available at Google Scholar: [Link]"

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3 List Your Education and Experience

☐ **Add (or update) your education history.**
Things to include: Your PhD-granting institution (even if in progress) with area of study; at least one undergrad institution with area of study; further details are optional but not necessary.

☐ **Add (or update) your experience.**
Include your research experience at the PhD and/or postdoc level and applicable graduate- or postdoc-level internships, leadership roles, and outreach work. Don't include undergrad jobs unless they are relevant to the positions you want.

Level Up: *Add detail to each of your experiences, such as example products (e.g. videos of you speaking, project websites, GitHub), 1-2 bullet points describing your role and accomplishments. If you are interested in recruiter contacts, it's helpful to add 3-5 (searchable) skills to each role.*

4 Add Connections

☐ **Add your first five connections.**
Start with people you feel comfortable connecting with and include a note. A free LinkedIn account lets you add a personalized note to up to five connection requests per month, which is plenty when you're taking an intentional approach! Example notes are provided below.

Current colleague:

"Hi Matt, I'm finally setting up a LinkedIn. Nice running into you yesterday!"

Friendly but lost touch over the years:

"Hi Matt, it's been a while! I hope all is well with you and that you're enjoying UCSF."

Might not remember you:

"Hi Matt, it's been a while since our library clerk days! Congrats on your new role at UCSF."

Level Up: *Add even more connections from your time at UCSF and other academic institutions such as CPD staff, current and former lab colleagues, mentors, mentees, people you met at conferences or in rotations, colleagues or supervisors from past jobs, roommates, and friends from student groups.*

Not sure whom to add? Come talk to us!
https://career.ucsf.edu/appointments

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