LinkedIn

What is it?

- LinkedIn (linkedin.com) is the world’s largest, free of charge, on-line professional network that connects you to people you know and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals.
- Individuals and companies use LinkedIn for networking, job searching, hiring, company research, and connecting with alumni, industry, and a variety of other business related groups.
- LinkedIn is NOT the same as Facebook; LinkedIn is for professional networking purposes. As such you should represent yourself in a professional manner in terms of the photo you may choose to upload and the information you enter about yourself.

Why use it?

- **Networking** – You’ve probably heard the best way to find a job is through networking. You should build your network before you need it!
- **Research** – If you have an upcoming interview for a job or internship, you can research the company and person/people you will be meeting. This will make you feel more prepared and confident and provide you with some good conversation starters.
- **Information Sharing** – You can post a question to a group you join and engage in group discussions.
- **Explore Opportunities** – With a powerful search engine, company research tools, and a jobs board that shows who you know at listed companies, LinkedIn is the place to turn for new opportunities.

Getting Started on LinkedIn

Step 1: **Create an account.** Go to the LinkedIn homepage (linkedin.com) and then follow the prompts to establish an account (you will be entering your Gettysburg email address and creating a password).

Step 2: **Create your profile.** Your profile represents a summary of your experience, interests, and capabilities; it should be as complete as possible and consist of the following elements:

- A professional looking photo
  - This is your first impression for potential employers and professional contacts. As a college student, your photo needs to project a mature and professional image. Take a photo in business professional attire.
- An informative headline which gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Use this as an opportunity to brand yourself. Use descriptive phrases that are keyword-heavy.
  - Examples: “Full time student, Gettysburg College”, “Aspiring legal professional”, “Environmental Studies student seeking an internship” or “Graduating senior seeking work in public relations”
- A summary paragraph. Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter – concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. It should be keyword-rich and outline your skills and experiences that are relevant to the industry or career field that interests you. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text or bullet points for easy reading.
- Specialties is a section to list software programs, languages, and other areas of knowledge. This is the place to include key words and phrases that others may type into a search engine to find a person like you.
- Your experience section should include relevant current and past positions, paid and/or unpaid, and leadership experiences. You should also include dates and action statements for each experience that describe your accomplishments.
- The education segment should reflect your academic degree/major at Gettysburg College and any study abroad experience.
- Recommendations are an important aspect of your profile. You may have a professor, supervisor, or anyone who can speak to your academic and professional achievements provide a recommendation for you. Include three or so recommendations from different sources.
For college students and recent graduates - LinkedIn has also developed profile sections specifically for you. Here are some sections you may want to add to your profile: Projects, Honors & Awards, Languages, Certifications, Organizations, Test Scores, Courses, and Volunteer Experience & Causes. To add student sections to your profile:

- Go to your LinkedIn profile page in edit mode and click the blue “Add sections” bar under your profile summary
- Then, browse the available sections and select a section to add to your profile.
- When editing the section, include examples and specifics about your contributions, and how the experience added to your skills and abilities

LinkedIn Key Features

Groups - LinkedIn supports the formation of interest groups. The majority of groups are employment related or focused on professional and career issues. There are currently 128,000 groups for both academic and corporate alumni. Gettysburg College maintains a group on LinkedIn titled “Gettysburg College Professional Network” which you are urged to join; the group consists of alums, parents and students.

LinkedIn groups may either be private and accessible to members only (such as the Gettysburg College Professional Network) or open to Internet users in general. Regardless of whether it is a private or public group, you must join the group in order to post messages.

Job Listings – You can find jobs that are directly listed and you can apply by simply using your profile. LinkedIn also provides an online job board that you can search.

Company Research - LinkedIn allows users to research companies with which they may be interested in working. When typing the name of a given company in the search box, statistics about the company are provided. These may include the ratio of female to male employees, the percentage of the most common titles/positions held within the company, the location of the company’s headquarters and offices, or a list of present and former employees.

Making Connections

Once you’ve created your profile you’re ready to start connecting with friends, family, alumni, potential employers, and others. Look for people you know who may be on LinkedIn. You can look up people by name, employer, location, University, etc. Select “Search People” and enter a name or click the “advanced” link to the right of the search button to access a more in-depth search screen. In the advanced search you can enter “Gettysburg College” to find alumni.

As you build your connections, you’ll have the opportunity to become connected with even more individuals. Be certain to only connect with people you know as you get started. It is recommended that you send someone a message before adding them to your network.

If you would like to be connected to individuals whom you do not personally know, use your connections to make an introduction. You can ask your first degree connections to introduce you through the LinkedIn message system. When sending a message to someone who you do not personally know, write a professional note stating why you’re interested in being connected with them. DO NOT use the generic LinkedIn message…make a stronger first impression.

The most efficient way to start connecting is to look for groups. By joining groups you can gain access to professionals in the job fields you are looking at, and the opportunity to see what other groups they belong to. You can search for groups by career field or by city specific groups. You should only join groups whose members you are really interested in connecting with. Once you are a member of a group, you are able to connect more easily with other group members and add them to your network. You also have access to job boards and are able to participate in discussion forums and post forum messages.

Once you are a member of a group, you are able to directly contact members of the group. Be sure to write a professional and personalized message to each person you contact. It is important to let them know why you’re interested in connecting with them.

Be sure to join the Gettysburg College Professional Network and any other groups relevant to your professional interests.