

NETWORKING AND LINKEDIN GUIDE

Networking IS...

- Sharing your knowledge with others
- Listening to others' experiences
- Finding commonalities between two parties
- Lending a helping hand...and asking for help
- A way to build your own personal and professional support system
- Something we use every day without realizing it

Networking IS NOT...

- Asking for favors like getting a job
- Selling an idea or a product
- Pushing your philosophy or politics onto others
- Giving advice or solving someone's problem
- Telling your life story
- One-sided

It is useful to think of networking as a method of applied research, collecting information from individuals who are most likely happy to share their knowledge and experiences, and offer advice. Networking should not be limited to researching career interests by meeting and talking with contacts one time; it is also building from one contact to another (and another) and maintaining relationships when appropriate with them all throughout your career.

Elevator Pitch

You never know when or where you will meet someone interesting, so be prepared with your brief introduction of who you are and what you are looking for. No one can market themselves better than you! Remember to be authentic, establish a connection with the other person and ask open-ended questions.

Elevator Pitch Template

- Name, education and career-related interests
- Involvement on and off campus: classes, internships, volunteering, activities, sports, leadership, other experiences
- Skills, strengths, and/or accomplishments
- What you are seeking and/or your goals

Informational Interviewing

When starting to explore a particular field of interest, or when seeking more in-depth advice and information, informational interviews are the way to learn more about an industry from professionals in that field. View it as research.

Do your research online and make a list of organizations that you would love to work for some day. Identify someone in a department you are interested in and reach out to request a meeting. A great way to begin is with family, friends, friends' parents, professors, and Bryn Mawr alumnae/i.

Making Contact

Now that you have identified potential contacts, it is time to contact them. While there are always exceptions, email is the best first outreach. *(See sample email messages in this guide)*

1. Introduce yourself (err on the side of formality).
2. Say how you got their contact information.

3. Be clear about what you are seeking and state what you'd like to have happen. The art is in how you ask—you want to be concise, direct and considerate of their time and position.
4. Tell them you hope to gain career advice or information about their work environment, etc.—not help finding a job!
5. Meetings are most effective when conducted in person, especially in the contact's workplace, but can happen over phone, Skype or by email.
6. Double-check spelling, grammar and tone.
7. If you get a response, reply within 24-48 hours; if you do not get a reply, (don't get discouraged!) you can send a follow up message a week later.

Sample Email Correspondence

Dear Ms. Lane,

My name is Ann Droid, and I am a Bryn Mawr College student considering a career in journalism. I am reaching out at the suggestion of Tess Mercer '01 whom I met this past weekend at reunion weekend. She thought you might be a good person from whom to seek some ideas and advice about becoming a reporter after graduating with a B.A. in English. I was wondering if you would be willing to meet with me for about 20 to 30 minutes for an informational interview so I can learn more about your position as an investigative journalist.

Sincerely,

Ann Droid '17

Hi Ann,

I'd be delighted to chat! Tuesday and Friday morning are best for me. How about 10 am either day at my office on Pine & 10th. Let me know what works best for you.

Lana '06

Dear Ms. Lane,

Thank you for your prompt reply! Friday would work wonderfully. I so appreciate your time and wanted you to know in advance what I was hoping to learn from you:

- *How did you get started in your career from BMC to your current role?*
- *What did you find was most helpful in terms of preparation for your career academically/on campus?*
- *What is a typical day/week like?*
- *Do you have any advice for me in launching a career in this field?*

Thank you again. I have attached my resume for your reference. I'm looking forward to meeting you on Friday at 10am at your office.

Best,

Ann

Preparation

- Before the informational interview or meeting, thoroughly research the person you are speaking with, as well as their organization.
 - Check Google, scour their LinkedIn profile, look at their work.
- Be prepared with some information about yourself and your interests (elevator pitch modified) and come up with a list of questions you would like to ask. Bring a copy of your resume.
- Dress professionally. Meet the professional standards of the field you are exploring.
- Arrive early. Few things give a worse impression than showing up late. Being on time means arriving 10-15 minutes early.
- Turn off your cell phone!
- Greet your contact with a firm handshake, warm smile and direct eye contact.

Informational Interview Questions

Ask questions and build the relationship. Let them be the expert. With these core questions in mind, you should prepare a few additional questions that feel authentic and interesting to you.

- What was your career path?
- What do you do in your current role?
- If you weren't doing this, is there something else you would have chosen?
- What advice can you offer me as I prepare and seek to enter this field?
- Is there someone else you recommend I speak with?

During and After the Meeting

- It is not appropriate to ask for a job in an informational interview. The goal is to learn about the contact's job and role in the organization, how they chose their career path or field of work, and their advice for preparation and entry into the field, and to share information about yourself and your career aspirations.
- It is okay to ask for advice on what kinds of organizations are likely to have summer internships or job opportunities so you can conduct a better-informed job search for yourself.
- Close the conversation by thanking them for their time and tell them how valuable this opportunity was for you.
- Send a thank you email within 24 hours
- Maintain contact to continue the relationship. Update them on your status, accomplishments and continue to be a resource to them as well by sharing relevant articles, events, etc.

Sample Thank You Correspondence

Dear Mr. Bailey,

I want to thank you again for the time you took to talk with me yesterday. Having this opportunity to ask you questions about my future career interests was very valuable to me. You've been very generous with your time and learning more about (field) has helped me to better understand the things that will be most helpful toward getting relevant experience to enter the field.

I will stay in touch as I move forward and gain further opportunities to grow professionally. Again, many thanks. *(Don't be afraid to make your note more personal by including things you discussed in your conversation.)*

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Handshake: <https://brynmawr.joinhandshake.com>

Sincerely,
Sarah Dolan
610-526-5174
sdolan@brynmawr.edu

LinkedIn – www.linkedin.com and <https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students>

LinkedIn is a powerful networking tool that allows you to research and connect with alumnae/i, potential employers and other contacts. Get started by creating a professional profile.

- **Photo:** This should be a headshot of you by yourself, dressed professionally and smiling. Contact CPD to see the next opportunity to have your LinkedIn photo taken by a professional or ask a friend to take the picture for you.
*Note: Adding a professional photo to your profile makes you **14 times more likely** to be found*
- **Headline:** Tell people what you're excited about now and the interesting things you want to do in the future
- **Summary:** Describe what motivates you, what you're skilled at, and what's next for you.
- **Experience:** List the jobs you held even if they were part-time, along with what you accomplished at each. You can also include photos and videos from your work.
- **Organizations:** Have you joined any clubs at school or outside? Be sure to describe what you did with each organization.
- **Education:** Starting with college, list all the educational experiences you've had – including summer programs, study abroad, etc.
- **Volunteer Experience and Causes:** Even if you weren't paid for a job, be sure to list it. Admissions officers and employers often see volunteer experience as just as valuable as paid work.
- **Skills & Expertise:** Add at least 5 key skills – and then your connections can endorse you for the things you're best at.
- **Honors & Awards:** If you earned a prize in or out of school, don't be shy. Add it to your profile!
- **Courses:** List the classes that show off the skills and interests you're most excited about.
- **Projects:** Whether you led a team assignment in school or built an app on your own, talk about what you did and how you did it.
- **Recommendations:** Ask managers, professors, or classmates who've worked with you closely to write a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

Sample Student LinkedIn Profile - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/student/sample>

Connecting with Bryn Mawr Alumnae/i on LinkedIn

Join the **Bryn Mawr College Alumnae/i & Students Group** to connect with fellow Mawrters and participate in discussions on LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8553448>. LinkedIn allows you to send customized messages to people who are members of shared groups, which helps you build relationships.

With the Alumni Tool in LinkedIn you can search information about alumnae/i from Bryn Mawr. The search will default to use the college or university in the "Education" section of your profile, and you can "Change university" using the button on the right-hand side of the page to search all alumni information available on LinkedIn. Searches can be done by any keyword or by the predetermined categories on LinkedIn, which include the following:

- Where they live

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- Where they work
- What they do
- What they studied
- Their skills
- How you are connected

If you are interested in learning more about a potential connection found on the page, review the person’s full profile, which may explain more connection points and can provide detail that would be important to strengthen the relationship.

It should be noted that when connecting with others on LinkedIn, a user will be prompted to describe how he or she knows the other person – alumnae/i would be considered “classmates”. There is also the option to include a personalized note along with the connection request, a message that the person will be able to see on the other end. It is essential to customize this message to describe the nature of the intended connection. The message should not be long, and including a brief note about why you are reaching out to the person will go a long way in facilitating the connection. Consider including:

- An introduction
- An explanation of the common ground or shared affiliation
- The “ask”—what you hope to learn or do
- Sincere thanks

Sample LinkedIn Messages to Alumnae/i

Fellow alums are more likely to reply to a networking request than random strangers because you share a common experience.

Dear Ms. Dae :

I am a sophomore at Bryn Mawr College exploring a career in law. In searching LinkedIn for potential alums who might have some wisdom to share, I discovered that you are an attorney at Schuler & Barnes LLP, and I was inspired by your career path. I would love to hear more about the work you do and any advice you have for someone interested in the field. Are you available for a 20-30-minute informational interview? Thank you in advance for your time.

*Sincerely,
Rys Carpenter*

Hi Sonya,

I’m a fellow Bryn Mawr alum and came across your profile. I graduated in 2015, also with a degree in History, and have been working in the PR industry for the past year. I’m currently job hunting and hoping to make the transition from the agency side into a role at a nonprofit or university. I really admire your career and was wondering if you might be willing to offer some advice or perhaps chat briefly by phone? I would really appreciate your time.

*Thank you,
Taylor Flora ‘15*

Sources:

NACE *Spotlight for Career Services Professionals*
LinkedIn Student Guides and Blog

LinkedIn Profile Rubric

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	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
GENERAL TIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personalize the default LinkedIn URL to include full name ○ Edit Privacy Settings to personal preferences – make as public as possible 		
PHOTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cropped photo from personal life or “selfie” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional-quality photo ○ Friendly / approachable appearance ○ Industry-appropriate professional attire
HEADLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Student at Bryn Mawr College” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanded “Student at BMC” headline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engaging headline (120 characters or less) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflects personal brand ○ Summarizes goals ○ Catches attention ○ Entices reader to read further
SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No or little summary provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited summary ○ Does not express interest or tie in past experience(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summary briefly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describes previous related experience or connects background, skill sets, and interests ○ Conveys direction/ ambition/ passion ○ Spells out goals or accomplishments ○ Uses professional but person “voice” ○ Contains keywords relevant to industry ○ Place at beginning of profile
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No or very little descriptions for positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Descriptions lack detail, are unclear, and/or do not include accomplishments ○ No typos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full and detailed experiences from resume ○ Descriptions encapsulate skills, duties, and accomplishments at each job or activity
RECOMMENDATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1-2 recommendations ○ Recommendations from colleagues and classmates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3+ recommendations listed ○ Recommendation for each job listed ○ Recommendations from former managers or current supervisors, advisors ○ Coach recommenders to share specific skills or projects highlighted
APPLICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No applications used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1-2 applications used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant applications used to showcase work and/or interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant Courses (higher level) ○ Honors & Awards ○ Organizations, Volunteer Experience & Causes ○ Projects (upload relevant images/work/materials) ○ Languages
SKILLS & EXPERTISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No Skills & Expertise listed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5-10 Skills & Expertise listed ○ Skills & Expertise are not endorsed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10+ Skills & Expertise listed (up to 50 are permitted) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be specific; use industry jargon or clinical terms when relevant ○ Skills & Expertise are endorsed by others ○ Endorse others for their Skills & Expertise
EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No information about education is provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School(s) listed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full education history provided including institution(s), dates, degree(s), majors, minors, and any study abroad

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thesis title and description included
ADDITIONAL INFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No interests listed ○ No contact info provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interests are generic ○ Contact info is listed, but no other info is provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several interests are listed and reveal personality ○ Advice for Contacting specifies contact info and circumstances for contact ○ Specific details are provided about interested opportunities and availability
CONNECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Little to no connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approximately 50 connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100+ connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peers, alumnae/i, relatives, friends of your family, teammates, neighbors, professors, present and past supervisors, mentors, current and former colleagues, coaches, clergy, etc.
GROUPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No group membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Member of Bryn Mawr Group – “Bryn Mawr College Alumnae/i & Students” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sent networking messages to 1-3 BMC Alumnae ○ Member of groups relevant to industry and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Member of Bryn Mawr Group – “Bryn Mawr College Alumnae/i & Students” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sent networking messages to 3+ BMC alumnae ○ Member of relevant groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industry related, skills-based, other BMC groups ○ Engages in group discussions, posts content, etc.
COMPANIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not following any companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follows a few companies in industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follows several companies in industry ○ Follows potential employers
OVERALL COMPLETENESS OF PROFILE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Profile has incorrect info, typos, or is out of date and few connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Profile provides some info, but does not provide an accurate portrait of student’s direction, interests, or experience. Some effort has been made to obtain more connections. May or may not have endorsements or recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Profile demonstrates a depth of understanding by providing completeness in all relevant fields. Many connections have been made; these connections provide endorsements for Skills & Expertise and recommendations

Visit the Career & Civic Engagement Center for help developing your LinkedIn profile or conducting outreach to alums and contacts:

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/career-civic/career-planning/appointments>

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/career-civic/networking>