



From Facebook to LinkedIn

How to protect your 'net-rep' *and*
develop your career online

A free guide for graduates

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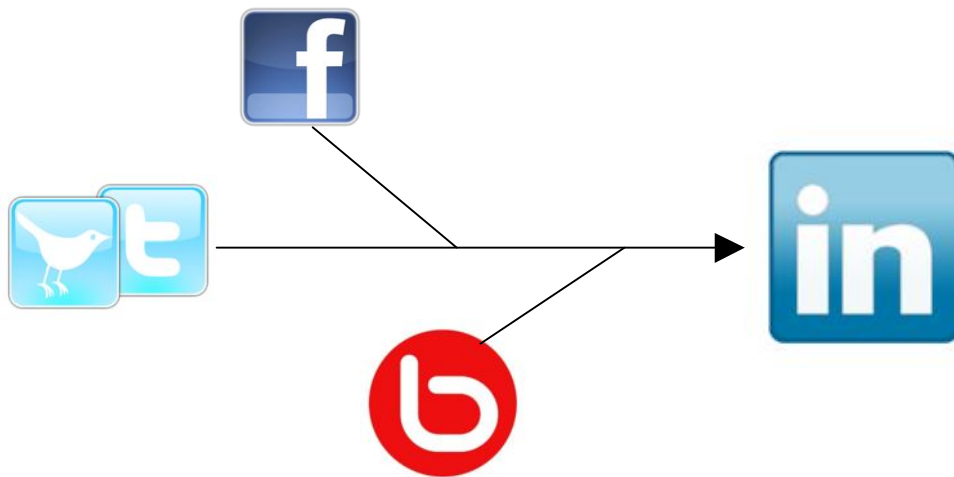
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1: What is professional social networking?

There are hundreds of sites dedicated to social networking, among them some of the heavyweights of the Internet including Twitter, Bebo, Facebook and Photoblog. They're being used not only by millions of individuals, but also the largest firms in the world. Social networking isn't just for kids anymore. Nowadays both organisations and professionals are beginning to discover the advantages of networking and having an effective presence online too.

You've left uni, the number of friend requests on Facebook is lagging and you find your baby cousin has been tagged in more photos than you over the last week. So, what's the next step for you?



From Facebook to LinkedIn

The first challenge for graduates is how to build a personal profile that will get you noticed and taken seriously by employers in order to get your first real job. The second is how to use it on an ongoing basis to develop your career in the longer term by building and sustaining a productive network and a solid track record of achievement.

In this guide we'll cover the basics of online profile management and hopefully give you the pointers that you need to set up the hot graduate profile that will help you to secure the career you really want!

LinkedIn is the social networking website designed for the 'professional' you. It was founded in 2003 and now has over 70 million members - worth tapping into for the scale of the network alone. It's an important steppingstone from your student life into the professional environment of work. It's a hive of information on everything from potential employers, to where these firms recruit their key talent - both graduates and experienced hires. There are also lots of information and discussion groups where people share industry trends, news and expertise.



2: Why you need to protect your ‘net-rep’

What is ‘net-rep’?

At mygraduatecareer.com, we spend a lot of time thinking about ways to help graduates present themselves in the best possible light. Highlighting your talents, looking the part and having a bang tidy qualification are all important parts of the recruitment and interview process if you are to stand a chance in a competitive environment for any job, let alone the best ones. Recently, however, there has been a great deal of discussion about how employers can access information about you, the prospective candidate, from social media sources such as Facebook and use it in their selection processes. This section is full of key tips on how to manage your Internet reputation or ‘net-rep’ and find out what information about YOU is available to prospective employers.

Google yourself! How *famous* or *infamous* are you?

It seems like a pretty obvious thing to do but this is exactly what many recruiters do. You may be pleased to know that your article on charity work or photo receiving a sports award is there for all to see. However, if something about you surfaces on a search that you feel is inappropriate or inaccurate contact that particular website to see if you can have it removed or report it. This process should be repeated on YouTube and the other search engines. You can’t always remove every reference though so be careful what you share in future – more on that later on. Just think; if you can’t find either wildly positive or potentially damaging information about yourself online, future employers won’t be able to find it either!

‘The Big F’ – Facebook fails!

This is the most worrying factor for most university graduates as the photos and posts on their profiles are often to do with parties and drinking and the resultant behaviour which may seem inappropriate when seen from the perspective of a potential employer. Whether we think that it is fair or right for them to do this is not the focus of this guide; your future is too important not to take this potential invasion of your privacy seriously. So, here’s our simple list of things to check for on your profile to ensure that you can use Facebook for your social life without needing to worry about being stalked out of a job!

Change your privacy settings.

This option can be found under the Account drop down box on the top right of your homepage. The recommended settings allow friends of friends and people in your network to see photos and posts depending on who they are to. Choose the ‘friends only’ option and, if you are particularly concerned, untick the box at the bottom allowing friends of people tagged in your photos and posts to see them. Remember to click the ‘apply settings’ button to save your changes!



Sharing on Facebook

	Everyone	Friends of Friends	Friends Only	Other
My status, photos, and posts			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Bio and favorite quotations			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Family and relationships			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Photos and videos I'm tagged in			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Religious and political views			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Birthday			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Can comment on posts			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Email addresses and IM			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Phone numbers and address			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let friends of people tagged in my photos and posts see them.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Customize settings				Apply These Settings

Applications and Websites
Edit your settings for using applications, games and websites.

Block Lists
Edit your lists of blocked people and applications.

Controlling How You Share
Learn more about your privacy on Facebook.


Change your search engine preferences.

This prevents your Facebook profile being brought up when your name is Googled or Binged. It can be done using the 'edit' application and website section of the 'privacy control' page. After clicking 'edit settings', there will be options to edit your 'Info accessible through your friends'. Don't share anything with these applications. It will also give you the option of 'Public search' at the very bottom, which again you should probably turn off.

Choose Your Privacy Settings - Applications, Games and Websites

[Back to Privacy](#)

What you're using
You're using 41 applications, games and websites, including:



[Remove unwanted or spammy applications.](#)
[Turn off all platform applications.](#)

Game and application activity	Who can see your recent activity on their games and applications dashboards.	Friends Only
Info accessible through your friends	Control what information is available to applications and websites when your friends use them.	Edit Settings
Instant personalization	Lets you see relevant information about your friends the moment you arrive on select partner websites.	Edit Settings
Public search	Show a preview of your Facebook profile when people look for you using a search engine.	Edit Settings



Be aware!

When you leave university or school, have a quick flick through your friend list and delete any of those people who are involved in some form of PR or have set up profiles posing as students on behalf of some company or other. It's always useful to keep a tab on who you're friends with, as these are the people who can access your information, plus it's always fun to go on a FB cull! The most classic fails involve previous Facebook rapes, where your mates have joined you up to groups or pages which don't exactly give the best impression about you to prospective employers!

Photos and Groups

Once again, these need to be managed carefully. Groups such as 'The Tom Smith drunken appreciation society' or 'Campaign to get mad Matt off the road!' etc. need to be deleted if possible as these are exactly the kind of things prospective employers can search for and find straightaway. If you can't delete them you can ask the creator to make them a secret group or report them to Facebook. All these options can be found on the main group page. Delete any groups on your profile that may deem you unemployable. Some famous examples are 'last night of drinking on the tube/flashmob' which are illegal events or '20 ways we can get Will Smith kicked out of Uni for being naked'. Photos are harder to manage as they can be connected to many different networks through tagging. The simplest option is to de-tag yourself from anything that may be considered offensive, illegal or in any kind of moral grey area. If you wouldn't want to show it to your mum and dad, you might want to de-tag it!

Fanpages!

Same concept as before, don't publicly associate yourself with anything abusive, offensive or illegal. This is probably the time to stop being a fan of 'Weed'!

Do, however, remember to join the [mygraduatecareer.com Fanpage](#) for all the updates and news live on Facebook!



Twitter, MySpace and blogs – can you share too much?

The rules of the road for these social media pretty much follow the same lines as Facebook; only join groups, post comments or follow people in a way that would not be considered offensive by normal standards. Employers won't be bothered if you're into a wide variety of music or run a blog on what you do from day to day. In fact, a popular, well written blog on music, books, film, food, the arts etc. could be a real advantage if you want to work in the media, journalism and so on. However, they're highly unlikely to consider you to be a suitable candidate for their high profile business if you include a running account of your sex life or join music groups associated with sadomasochism or drugs. Once employed, your reputation and theirs become linked and could reflect well or badly on one another. If you wouldn't want to work for an employer with a dodgy reputation, you can understand why reputable employers wouldn't want dodgy people working for them!

Just remember that the new world of social media has challenged and changed many of the old norms regarding what people believe is 'private information'. A lot of recruiters and employers are the product of an older generation who did not grow up exposed to the same kind of 'open-information' society that we have been. Being restrained with how much you share, and who you share it with, is an important part of growing as a person. It's always a good idea to maintain a bit of mystery and not overexpose yourself because it could backfire and end up embarrassing you or the company you work for.

Identity theft

Another very good reason for not sharing too much information online such as National Insurance numbers, your date of birth, bank account details and so on is to prevent the complex world and very real threat of identity theft. When, as a student, you've been used to being broke and having nothing worth stealing, you might get a bit of shock once you're on a good salary if your hard earned cash and credit cards are hijacked because of earlier indiscretions online.



3: How to set up a great LinkedIn career profile

Now we're definitely not saying give up on Facebook and other social networking sites, we love them as much as anyone here at mygraduatecareer.com. There is no need for any FB murders to occur on account of drunken photos. You can even join our FB page and like us if you want, we would be happy to hear from you. However, LinkedIn provides a completely different type of network orientated around key skills and experience, which can provide any aspiring graduate with the connections and information they need to get the jobs they want. So, here is our step-by-step guide to creating your brand spanking new LinkedIn account.

Why have a LinkedIn account? What the LinkedIn people say!

- ❖ Reconnect
- ❖ Get answers
- ❖ Power your career

Your step-by-step guide

Step one - your email address

Setting up your account doesn't require much effort, however, it does require care and integrity. Thinking carefully about what impression people get at first glance is vital in making the page presentable and productive for you. In the case of emails, always use something like a gmail or work account with a suitable name e.g. tomsmith88@gmail.com. Some inappropriate email address examples include mcspanky@hotmail.com, kinkytom@gmail.com etc. Hotmail addresses look a little less professional so change to a gmail account if possible - it's free and has lots of cool features too. Use this email to set up and confirm your LinkedIn profile and then you're ready to get started.

Step two - education and experience

This is pretty straightforward as there is already a list of universities provided by the website in the 'edit profile' education section. Remember to include your degree type; this isn't your grade but BA, BEng, BSc, MSc, JH etc. It is important to include any courses or additional projects that add value too. Experience should be relevant i.e. if you want to go into banking you don't need to mention the paper round you did when you were 12. Include dates and a concise summary about the experience and skills you gained along the way. Experiences can be backed up with recommendations - we'll come on to that later. As your career progresses, you can refine your profile so that it becomes like a living or 'real-time' CV.



Step three - personal summary and specialties

These are very important as they become like your 'google adwords' in effect for prospective employers. The summary doesn't have to be too long (3 or lines) and definitely does not need to include every aspect of your life or ambitions. The important thing as always is relevance; if you want to go into brand management it is important to mention that in your summary and highlight it in your specialties. The next step after this is to back it up with some experience.

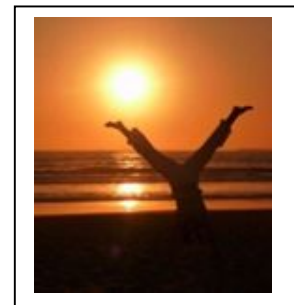
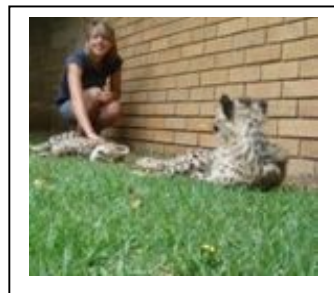
Step four - your profile photo

THIS IS NOT FACEBOOK! If you wouldn't send a business card out with your chosen photo on, it shouldn't be on LinkedIn. For our own amusement here in the office (and yours!), we've chosen some of our favourite LinkedIn photo fails!

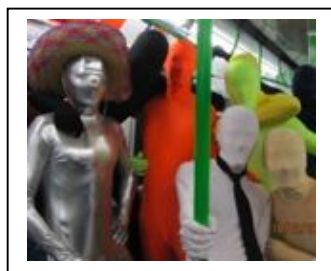
Section 1 – Classic drunks



Section 2 – Random scenery



Section 3 – Family, friends and pets



Step five - interests

It is important to remember that interests aren't necessarily the same as achievements. If you're a member of a hockey or rugby club then sport is an interest but you should list any specific awards and clubs under education if the activity took place at uni or school. This is a place to express your incredible 'rounded personality' and should include examples such as film, cricket, climbing, conservation, travel etc. If your interests underpin your interest in a particular career choice, so much the better!

Step six - groups and contacts

The easiest groups for graduates to join initially are their University alumni and departmental ones. These should already be rammed with people you know but have a quick check through to see who you know already once you've been accepted. You can't always just join groups on LinkedIn, the better quality ones require you to apply and be approved; this may take a few days so don't panic if it's not instant!

Most importantly join the [mygraduatecareer LinkedIn group](#) and tell us how you found our setting up process! Have a search for any previous classmates you know have a profile and start building off their contacts; remember though, this is your professional career site so think very carefully who you want to be connected with. To add a contact, press the 'add to network' hyperlink on the right hand side on the page next to their profile photo. There is a default message but it's better to personalise it, even just a little, so it doesn't just look like you're collecting contacts for the sake of it. As you start your first and subsequent jobs you should start connecting as a matter of course with your work colleagues and business contacts.



Your 'elevator pitch'

When setting up your account it's hard to judge what is or isn't a good summary, or in business jargon - your 'elevator pitch'. This is an increasingly popular American term that reflects the idea that it should be possible to deliver a summary of yourself or a business pitch in the time span of the average elevator ride, or approximately thirty seconds to two minutes.

Explaining how epic you are in the small space provided can be straightforward for some very lucky people, but most find it difficult to highlight their skills without waffling.

On the following pages we've included a few smoking hot profiles for you to have a gander at to see what the 'studs' of LinkedIn are doing!

If you're a bit stuck on how to start, search your chosen industry or sector for previous graduates and have a look at their summaries and keywords; this should help you to come up with some better ideas for your own!

Often you find that this information is unavailable (because their profiles are also terrible!), so if you're really having problems here are a few key things to include:

- ❖ Where you've graduated from, and in what subject.
- ❖ Any previous work experience and a short summary of your role.
- ❖ Any interests that relate to and support your interest in your desired career path.
- ❖ Include keywords related to your summary and previous experience in your specialties.
- ❖ Make sure your profile flows properly – it should tell a coherent story about you, what you're all about and what you've got to offer!



Some best practice examples and some fails!

This is a great profile as it provides all the info needed in a clear and concise way.

The small symbols that look like pieces of paper at the end of each line gives info on the companies he's worked for individually.

A short summary, rammed with key points ensures Chris' profile flows really well without rambling too much.

Christopher Baker-Brian

Partner and Director of Technology and Research at BBOCK Ltd
London, United Kingdom · Electrical/Electronics Manufacturing

Current Partner and Director of Technology and Research at BBOCK Ltd

Past Chief Electrical Engineer at Imperial Racing Group
 Laboratory Technician at Shell Global Solutions Ltd
 Assistant Research Technician at Shell Global Solutions Ltd

Education Imperial College London

Connections 22 connections

Websites 1 website: Project

Public Profile <http://uk.linkedin.com/in/chrisbakerbrian>

Summary

A recent university graduate with over 15 months experience in a highly respected analytical technology company. Founding member of a business that develops innovative electrification solutions for developing countries. Leadership role in several academic and extra-curricular positions at university.

Specialties

Rural electrification, product design, power systems and electronics, other areas of electrical engineering.



My own profile also includes the info tabs for each company. Note the way the current jobs are highlighted in the summary and then keywords in the specialties making the profile flow.

The Specialties keywords are important as they provide the search criteria for your profile, so think about them carefully.

Note also my personalized Public Profile URL – we'll talk about why it's important and what to do about it in the next section.

Emma Bensford (1)

Intern at mygraduatecareer.com
Leamington Spa, United Kingdom · Facilities Services

Current

- Intern at mygraduatecareer.com (1)
- Intern at EcoCoating (1)

Education

- Imperial College London

Connections

27 connections

Websites

- EcoCoating Ltd
- mygraduatecareer.com

Public Profile

<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/emmahbensford/>

Summary

Graduated from Imperial College London with 2H1 degree in Chemistry and Management. Currently involved in building web traffic through social network marketing for mygraduatecareer.com. In addition also starting in sales at EcoCoating while working on new control software to provide the most efficient, environmentally friendly, sustainable solutions for both in industrial water and stainless steel coating.

Specialties

social network marketing, environmentally sustainable solutions in the IT industry.



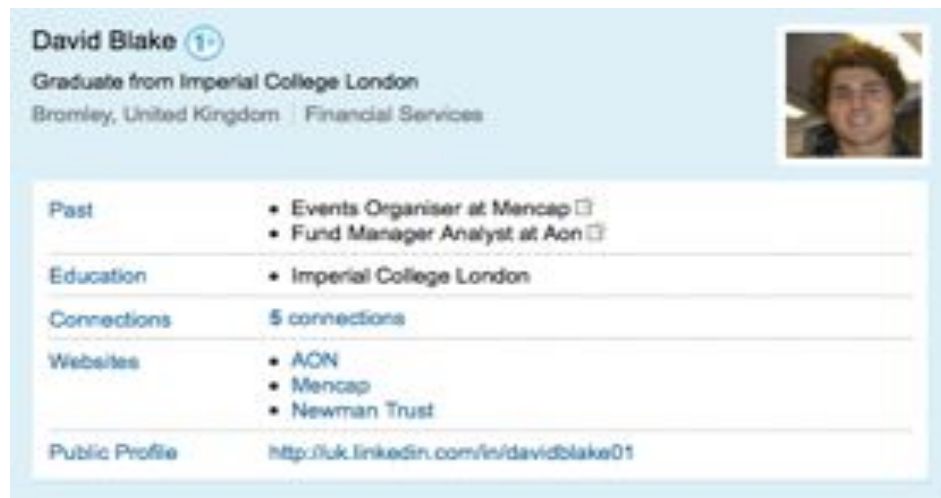
Example of an ineffective profile

This is a classic example of an ineffective graduate LinkedIn profile. David had failed miserably at making an impression on any visitor to his CV/profile. A lack of picture, summary or any information about his interests or achievements left nothing for any recruiter or business contact to discover about him.



After a mygraduatecareer.com makeover!

That's a bit more like it!



Summary

Just graduated from Imperial College with a BSc in Physics. Have previously worked on a team at AON which visited various fund managers on behalf of customers. Assessed whether customers should maintain their current portfolio or switch companies. The role involved interacting with fund managers, watching presentations, followed by compiling a short report of my assessment of their current and future performance. Key skills gained included compiling and proof reading reports. Also spent time working for MENCAP as a member of a team organising fund raising events. Enjoyed working with staff and was involved in the organisation, promotion and creation of events. Specific tasks included creating proposals, organising events and competitor analysis.

Specialties

financial management, fund management analysing, C++, physics and mathematical related materials



The secret to a buff profile!

Grab your name domain: change your public profile setting using the 'edit profile' option when you're logged into your account. It's important to grab your name before anyone else does – a similar concept to a gmail or hotmail address. To avoid having all those horrible messy numbers after your profile create one that simply says your name. If your actual name is not available (if you happen to be called Tom Smith or another popular name) put your middle initial, a 1 or other low number after it.

Company profiles: when you're adding companies you've worked for to your profile, you will see a drop down menu box when you begin typing in the name. Click on the company name if it is available, this will provide you with the tab seen on my profile or Chris' shown in the previous examples. Also join any groups associated with these companies that are relevant.

Connections: work through your alumni network and pick out all your classmates and colleges. It's important to add these people and any valuable contacts that you encounter through work or conferences; this widens your network and builds your reputation.

Comment on relevant groups with good content: this will get you noticed within the groups. If you're particularly knowledgeable on a subject, you may even become a 'top contributor', which can be seen in the statistics at the side of the group page.

Be discriminating: don't add everyone you can as fast as possible, only add contacts you respect and trust on your profile.

Personal brand: always think about how you are presenting yourself and how things you post will reflect on you!

Monitor your popularity: you can check who has been viewing your profile on the statistics panel to the right of your 'view profile'. This is useful to monitor how much interest your profile has provoked by recruiters or others and how effective your specialties keywords are.

Personalise your websites links: when adding websites to your profile always choose the 'other' option in the drop down box. This allows you to type in the company name and website separately to give the hyperlink shown in these profiles. This is a much more effective way of adding websites to your profile.



4: How to get the most out of LinkedIn

Now you've set up your profile, it's important to use it properly. In this section we've put together some tips on what we think might be useful to you when job searching or even deciding what career path you want to take.

Researching companies you might want to work for

LinkedIn is a great resource for ferreting out information about prospective employers. If you're going to an interview preparation is key and finding out as much about the company as possible will be a distinct advantage to you. Following a company on LinkedIn will give you updates on any new corporate initiatives or tidy little details about what's changing in the dynamics of their specific market or workforce. Following the fortunes of a business doesn't make you a nerd; it's a key resource! Another brilliant thing about LinkedIn is that you can also find out statistics about the age and gender mix of employers, which companies current employees worked for beforehand and who they are most connected to. For example, if my career dream was to work for Microsoft I could look at their company profile:

The screenshot displays the LinkedIn profile for Microsoft. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Profile', 'Contacts', 'Groups', 'Jobs', 'Inbox', and 'More..'. Below this, the Microsoft logo and name are prominent. The 'Overview' tab is selected, showing 102,141 followers. A 'Follow company' button is visible, marked as 'NEW'. The main text area contains a mission statement and a list of specialties including Business Software, Design Tools, and various hardware products. On the right side, a 'Related Companies' section provides a career path analysis, showing that employees of Microsoft often transition from companies like IBM and Hewlett-Packard to Google and Amazon.com. It also lists companies that Microsoft employees are most connected to, such as Design Laboratory Inc., Inviso, ISolve, and BluWater Consulting.

From this you can see all the information LinkedIn has on the company e.g. most employees at **Microsoft** that have LinkedIn accounts have worked at **Google, Amazon or IBM** so it would definitely be worth getting internships at those companies. You can gather hoards of info on a company by just looking at their page. So, give it a go! It also gives you the option to see whether they are hiring and in what departments, check it out!



Making the right connections

This is where LinkedIn really differs from Facebook. It will be to your continued advantage to really monitor the people you are connected to and what they're up to. It isn't a matter of adding everyone you possibly can to build 500+ connections. It's easy to check how you are connected to people but they may well decline to connect if that jerk you know from college is writing moronic things on a certain group's discussion board/wall. Be careful of the company you keep and only add those colleagues and old school/college friends that you are proud to be associated with and vice versa.

Joining LinkedIn Groups productively

The important thing to remember with groups on LinkedIn is that people have to ACCEPT you. It isn't a matter of going round and joining every group possible in an attempt to be seen as a rounded person. Choose your groups carefully; make sure they actually have relevance to your interests or potential career and don't join ones that don't add any value. Joining so many groups, and receiving weekly updates from them that you can't even keep up reading, doesn't make any sense. Understanding and monitoring the discussions will allow you to get a proper idea of whether this is a group you want to be a part of. If not, go ahead and delete it from your profile.

Minding your language – from 'chat' to discussions

Once you've joined a group the next step is to participate in some 'business banter' with other 'rad' professional social networkers. This is a great way to get noticed by businesses or headhunters in related groups but be sensible. Getting really drunk one night and write obscenities on the discussion board started about interns at the bank you're applying for a job at - BAD MOVE! Think carefully about what you're going to say, check it for spelling errors, make sure it reads well and says something valid. Build up confidence by starting a small debate and seeing how people respond. Always remember there's a name behind a comment and your 'netrep' is at stake. Using text talk or emoticons is definitely not advisable - you're responding to questions posed by professionals in a business environment. It's never going to reflect well on you if someone thinks you're not taking the discussions seriously.

Recommendations – the rules of the road

These are the golden tickets of LinkedIn! This is where you need your previous employers/lecturers/project tutors to write their glowing profiles of what a great/responsible/creative/innovative/problem-solving team player you've been and what responsibilities you've had. This is very important and it's well worth asking anyone who you think may give you a good recommendation to do so. Remember, this is not the place for mates or family to leave fake reports, recruiters will see right through these!



About the author



Emma Beresford

Having recently graduated from Imperial College London, the time had come to find myself a job. So, coming to work as an intern to write content for the mygraduatecareer.com site, and help other graduates in the same position as myself, seemed like too good an opportunity to miss. The main topic of conversations with my friends recently all seem to be work orientated and they were looking for somewhere to get unbiased and authoritative career advice. In the current economic climate learning the 'dos and don'ts' of being a graduate job seeker is vitally important for anyone trying to get on the first rung of the career ladder. I hope that you will learn as much from reading our series of guides and web content as I have from researching and writing them. It's a steep learning curve but a fun journey, good luck with your future careers!

Career sites in our portfolio

mygraduatecareer.com | everything students and graduates need to get their careers off to a flying start - all in one convenient place.

myexecutivecareer.com | the ultimate career planning resource for aspiring and established senior executives.

newlifenetwerk.co.uk | the UK's top career advice website – career planning, redundancy help, how to find a new job or start a business.



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