Using LinkedIn in Your Job Search

If you would like more information or have questions about this document, feel free to speak with a Career Advancement counselor. You can make an appointment by calling 773-702-7040.

What is LinkedIn?
LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is a social media site focused on professional networking. It’s different from Facebook and other social media sites in that the focus is squarely on presenting yourself as a professional, rather than socializing with your friends. It provides an opportunity for you to showcase your skills and qualifications, researching job fields and industries, researching companies and organizations, finding alumni, and searching for jobs. A basic LinkedIn account is free of charge.

How to Use LinkedIn
In addition to highlighting your skills and qualifications, you can use LinkedIn as a search engine to find information on industries and fields that interest you and companies and organizations you might apply to for employment.

Create a Profile
Your LinkedIn profile acts as a kind of billboard advertising you and your skills and abilities. Therefore, take great care in creating your profile and be sure to get some feedback on it from a Career Advancement counselor. (To schedule an appointment, call 773-702-7040.)

Before creating a profile, think about the kind of job you’re aiming for in your job search. What are the core competencies you must have in order to do that job? Which prior experiences (academic, professional, volunteer, etc.) have prepared you to do this kind of job well? You will need a clear idea of how to talk about your experiences and education in a way that conveys you are qualified for the field/industry in which you are seeking employment. A Career Advancement counselor can help you with this process.

Once you’re ready to create a profile, review the LinkedIn New User Starter Guide (http://learn.linkedin.com/new-users/). This guide takes you through the process step-by-step.

Build Your Contacts
The nice thing about LinkedIn is that it focuses on professional networking. This means it’s fairly safe to assume that most people on LinkedIn want to be connected to as many people as possible. Therefore, go ahead and connect with every person you know who is on LinkedIn – friends, classmates (current and former), family and family friends, co-workers (current and former), people you know through hobbies and extracurricular activities. Think broadly here. It’s OK to be connected with someone you haven’t talked to in a while or someone you’ve just met (this is not a socializing website, it’s a network building website; being connected to someone on LinkedIn does not mean you have to invite them to your birthday party). More people than you realize will accept your connection request because they want to build their network too.

Join Groups
Being part of a group on LinkedIn allows you to get helpful information and be part of a conversation. There are a variety of groups on LinkedIn – alumni groups, professional groups, organizational groups, etc. Professional-oriented groups can be a great way of staying up-to-date on the latest issues in that industry/field. To learn more about LinkedIn groups, see http://learn.linkedin.com/groups/.
Research Industries and Fields
LinkedIn is very helpful as a search engine, so even if you’re not ready to build a profile yet, you can use LinkedIn to learn about career fields and industries that interest you. Do this by typing keywords into the “people” search box; the results you get are people who have used that term in their profile. Read through those profiles to learn the nature of their job, their job title, and see the path they took to get where they are (all this information is available on a fully filled out and fully public profile). This is a great way to learn about the career options that line up with your interests.

For instance: if you type the term “intercultural” in the “people” search box, you will get a list of people who use that term somewhere in their profile, including individuals who work as intercultural trainers. By reading their profiles, you can learn about what an intercultural trainer does. Now that you have a job title, you can do a more targeted internet search for professional associations and companies/organizations that hire those individuals.

Research Companies and Organizations
Many companies and organizations have their own profiles on LinkedIn. If there is a particular place you would like to work, search for it in the search box under “companies.” You will then be able to see a lot of helpful information such as who works there (and is on LinkedIn); whether any of those people are in your network; most common job titles; where people worked before and where they work after leaving that company; and more.

LinkedIn’s Video Introduction Series
http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-1/.
The LinkedIn site has a 5 part video series (each video is 5 minutes long) explaining how students and recent graduates can use LinkedIn in their job search. These videos cover the following topics: introduction to LinkedIn; how to build a profile; how to build and expand your network; how to use LinkedIn to research possible careers; how to use LinkedIn to prepare for a job interview. View the video series before getting started.

LinkedIn’s Learning Center
To learn more about how to use all the features on LinkedIn, visit their online Learning Center: http://learn.linkedin.com/.
This section of the site provides (1) user guides to help you understand how to use LinkedIn most effectively (whether you’re a new user, a student, a job seeker, etc.); (2) explains how to use LinkedIn’s features, e.g. how to start and manage a group, how to use their search function, how to compose a strong profile.

Career Advancement Services and Resources
See a Career Advancement Counselor
All students are encouraged to see a Career Advancement counselor at some point in their university career. Counselors are able to offer assistance with job application materials, including resumes and cover letters. Staff is also able to help discuss broader plans like graduate or professional school. Students are encouraged to make an appointment and can either call 773-702-7040 or do so online.

Walk-In Appointments
Throughout the year, Career Advancement counselors make themselves available for short, walk-in appointments. The hours vary from quarter to quarter but the website is always up-to-date with current hours. Students looking for brief assistance are encouraged to use these appointments as a way to quickly move forward in their search.

Career Advancement Programs and Resources
Career Advancement offers programs throughout the year designed to educate students about career options in a variety of fields, as well as build crucial job search skills (informational interviewing, networking, etc.). View the Career Advancement event calendar online to learn more. Be sure to browse our Career Resource Library as well as our website for additional resources.

Chicago Career Connection (CCC)
Accessible via the Career Advancement website, this online tool – specifically for University of Chicago students and alumni – lists full- and part-time jobs and internships, in Chicago, nationally, and even internationally. Jobs and internships listed are in business, government and nonprofits.
UChicago Careers In...
These series of University of Chicago programs help undergraduate students learn about and prepare for careers in the arts, business, communications, education, health professions, journalism, law, non-profit/public service, science and technology, and social work. Some programs are selective and others are open to all students. To learn more about this great University of Chicago offering, visit the UChicago Careers In... section of the Career Advancement website.

Email Listhosts
Join the Consulting Career Advancement email list to get regular updates on career-related programs and job postings. You might also join the general business management listhost. Sign up via Chicago Career Connection (accessible via the Career Advancement website) and edit your profile to start receiving these emails.

Employer Information Sessions
Employers looking to hire students in consulting come to campus each year to host information sessions. This is a great way to learn about particular companies and network. View the Career Advancement event calendar online to learn more and see the schedule.

Researching Organizations
Know who the dominant players within the sector are as well as all the companies that are going to participate in on-campus recruiting. You can obtain first-hand accounts of the company’s culture and philosophy by talking to University of Chicago alumni who are working at the firm (see networking and informational interviewing above). A good understanding of the work environment will go a long way in answering “fit” questions during the interview process and will help you differentiate the firms to enable you to pick those that best fit your personality.

Networking and Informational Interviewing
Whether you just want to learn more about a career in consulting or you’re ready to apply for jobs, conducting informational interviews and networking with individuals already working in that field is a crucial part of the process. Career Advancement counselors can show you how to use the online alumni directory to identify University of Chicago alumni in this field; how to set up and prepare for an informational interview; and how to network effectively. Make an appointment by calling 773-702-7040.

Practice Your Interviewing
Practice Interviewers: Career Advancement has practice interviewers on staff to conduct mock behavioral and case interviews. To schedule a practice interview call 773-702-7040.

Career Advancement Super Interview Walk-In Days:
Career Advancement holds “Super Interview Walk-In Days” for undergraduate and graduate students at the beginning of fall and winter quarters. Students interested in participating in a short, walk-in appointment style interview should attend. These days will be listed on the Career Advancement calendar online.

On-Campus Recruiting (OCR)
Every year employers come to campus to recruit University of Chicago students. In order to participate in OCR, you must be activated in Chicago Career Connection, which will allow you to view OCR-specific job postings. To become activated in CCC and to learn more about OCR, speak with a Career Advancement counselor.