

## **Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile**

As more and more recruiters turn to social media sites for their recruiting efforts (studies suggest that approximately 94% of recruiters use these sites), it is clear that graduate students need to spend time creating an effective online profile. In a “before and after” study, researchers at Business Insider (2013) found that “optimized profiles garnered on average five times as many profile views as before” (p.2).

Building an effective LinkedIn Profile includes the following components:

### **Your Professional Photo**

Your LinkedIn profile picture should be a headshot of you in a professional, straight-forward position. Don't include props, scenery, etc. Keep it simple and professional, but also remember to smile and look friendly and approachable. Ask a friend or colleague to take the picture (no selfies!) or come by the UMass COE Career Center and ask one of our staff to help.

### **Your Customized Headline**

Use industry-specific terms to highlight your key skills and competencies to market yourself to recruiters. LinkedIn gives you 120 characters to set yourself apart from the competition!

### **Your Summary Statement**

The Summary serves as an “Opening Statement” to recruiters about why they should hire you. This section should summarize what background, skills, achievements and interests you bring to the table. Remember that skills and competencies included in the Summary Statement should be “fleshed out” in the following “Experience” section. You should be able to back-up any claims you make about yourself in the Summary Statement with evidence from your experiences.

### **Your Experience**

This is the largest section of your LinkedIn profile, and it should show clear and concise examples of professional experiences you have had that demonstrate your technical and professional skills. It is not necessary that every “experience” be a paid one—class projects and research are excellent examples of places where you may have gained technical proficiencies, trouble-shooting, teamwork and presentation skills. Many large companies use a Key Word search when reviewing resumes. Make sure your Experience Section includes the Key Words for any specific position you are applying to.

### **Education**

As a student, you will be looking for a position while you are still completing your degree. Make sure that you have included your “Anticipated Graduation Date” so that employers know when you expect to graduate and when you would be available for work.

## **Recommendations**

One important component of networking is to begin to build credibility in a professional capacity. Consider asking faculty or colleagues who can comment on your technical competencies, work ethic, teamwork, writing or presenting skills to provide a recommendation for you.

## **Joining and Following Groups and Companies**

Joining discipline-specific groups helps you to connect with other like-minded professionals in your field. Make sure that you are joining groups that you can both benefit from and contribute to. LinkedIn is a community, not just a one-sided search site. In addition, “Follow” companies that you might be interested in applying to. Knowing about upcoming recruiting events or recent projects will give you an edge in the recruiting process.

## **Fully “Complete” Your Profile**

- According to LinkedIn, your profile will get significantly more views if you complete the following sections:
- Industry and location
- Current Position (include description)
- Education
- Skills set
- Profile Photo
- Have at least 50 connections