



# Optimize your LinkedIn profile with this checklist from Duke Alumni

**Pro-tip:** Before you start updating your profile, go to the Visibility section under Settings and Privacy to temporarily hide your profile updates and activity.

## PROFILE PHOTO

- Select a high-quality photo of you alone (does not need to be a professional headshot!).
- Look at the camera and consider smiling — your goal is to look approachable.
- Choose a professional look that is industry appropriate. That can range from a formal headshot in a suit to a smart-casual outfit and an outdoor photo.

## PROFESSIONAL HEADLINE

- Be specific and explain the value you add to your field or organization.
- Use keywords, but avoid buzzwords.
- Don't default to your job title — craft something intriguing that will make people click.
- Include skills, traits and personality.
- Use the Open To feature under your profile pic to tell people you're hiring or looking for work.

## ABOUT

- Write in the first person and provide an overview of who you are, what you've done and what you hope to achieve professionally.
- Use short paragraphs and bulleted lists.
- Looking to attract clients? Show your value, share how you've helped clients and how you can be reached.
- Early-career job seeker? Share your skills and strengths. Discuss what you've done, where you want to be and why.

- Mid-career job seeker? Focus on the impact you are having now, or had recently.
- Looking to brand yourself? Use a narrative to show your personality, share your mission, vision and values.

## EXPERIENCE

- Highlight responsibilities that align with your brand.
- Quantify your experiences and be specific (scale, scope, volume, complexity).
- Showcase your work with images, presentations, video and articles.
- Fill in any gaps with volunteering, service or board work
- Include previous experience, but minimize that which is irrelevant to your goals.
- Early career? Include internships, part-time jobs and T.A. positions.
- Mid-career? Start post-college unless an internship aligns with your goals.

## EDUCATION

- Include education and training credentials, including certifications, training programs and professional development.
- Early career: include college major and minor, extra-curriculars, study abroad, summer programs, awards and honors.

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### SKILLS AND ENDORSEMENTS

- Select 10-15 skills that best reflect your strengths.
- Endorse other individuals' skills as a way to reconnect.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Have 3+ recommendations by people who know your work and value.
- Be selective when asking others to write recommendations for you.
- Be thoughtful, specific and personal when leaving recommendations.
- Early career: ask professors, internship managers, project team members, part-time job supervisors and even high school teachers.

### DISPLAY YOUR WORK

- Add multi-media examples of your work.

### INTERESTS

- Connect with or follow key leaders in your target industries.
- Follow organizations and companies of interest.
- Join professional industry groups.
- Join the Duke Alumni group and follow the Duke Alumni page and the Duke University page.

**Pro-tip:** use the filters on the Duke University page and the Duke Alumni group to find alumni with interesting jobs. Then visit the Duke Alumni Network ([alumni.duke.edu](http://alumni.duke.edu)) to connect with them directly!

**Congratulations! Once you are finished with your changes, go to Settings and Privacy and make your updates and activities visible again.**

*\*A special thank you to Thamina Stoll '17, LinkedIn account director, for sharing many of these tips!*