



# Networking

Networking skills are important to establish industry and professional connections. Use this guide with helpful tips on how to build relationships, craft elevator pitches, and conduct informational interviews.

## ➤ Find a Mentor on OneHop

OneHop is Johns Hopkins' mentoring platform. It connects students with almost 1,000 hand-picked alumni who are actively offering mentoring opportunities representing every Johns Hopkins school and many industries, locations, and levels of expertise. Through OneHop, each JHU student can develop their own team of advisers, alumni, and peers that provide support and guidance as they explore their potential opportunities. All current JHU students can access [onehop.jhu.edu](https://onehop.jhu.edu) with their JHED id.

- Search for and message alumni based on location, major, industry and what you need help with
- Request web-based “flash mentoring” or quick meetings to learn from their experience
- Start a long-term mentorship
- Use resources to get the most out of your mentor partnership
- Ask and answer discussion questions about careers and life exploration

## ➤ Scout on LinkedIn

LinkedIn can help you build a professional network, identify opportunities and research organizations. Join LinkedIn groups to find JHU alumni who are willing to answer questions, meet with students, and become a mentor. Often, these connections can lead to finding or creating an internship or job that isn't publicly posted.

### In this guide:

1. What is a network?
2. Who is in your network?
3. Reach out
4. Prepare your elevator speech
5. Building relationships
6. Informational interviewing



The primary purpose of networking is to give and receive information, advice, and referrals. Other reasons to network include career choices, job search, career management, and business development. Your emphasis should be on building relationships and making connections in a purposeful, organized way. Networking is the most effective way to find a job or internship. Through networking, you can learn more about career opportunities, specific organizations, industries, and career fields.

## WHAT IS A NETWORK?

A network is that group of people who may be willing to help you in your job search for personal, professional, or purely altruistic reasons. The people in your network are those who can give you advice, insights, and perhaps leads to specific job opportunities.

## WHO IS IN YOUR NETWORK?

Take the time to consider the people you know in all areas of your life. They are your potential personal and professional network, and can lead to the best information and job leads for you. Every person you know knows another person!

Your network includes people from all parts of your life, ranging from personal services to neighbors to colleagues and family. Surprising as it is, the average person has 80-100 immediate contacts. Many of your most effective leads will come through your network.

Try to list 6-10 people in each of the following categories:

1. Personal: Significant Others, Family, Friends, Neighbors, Religious Groups, Services (accountant, lawyer, doctor, dry cleaner, hairdresser), Sports, Gym
2. University: Hopkins Alumni, Students, Faculty, Staff
3. Professional Contacts: Colleagues, Supervisors, Customers, Professional Associations, Trade Shows, Career Events
4. Community: Interest Groups, Hobbies, Community or Volunteer Groups, Charities, Government Representatives (local, state, national)
5. Electronic: LinkedIn, MySpace, FaceBook, Twitter

Once you have a list of contacts, it is important that you strategize your next steps. When reaching out to a contact, prepare an elevator speech and questions to ask in advance.

## REACH OUT

There are several ways to initiate a conversation. It may take multiple tries to get started. Be sure to name the person who referred you.

- By email: An email allows you to carefully compose your thoughts in a professional manner. It may not result in a written response; therefore, you will have to follow up by phone. The advantage of sending an email is that the person you are contacting can learn something about your needs and interests before the conversation. Example:
  - *My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I recently found your information on LinkedIn. As a senior psychology major, I am interested in pursuing a career in public relations in Seattle. I'm in the process of gathering information about public relations in the Pacific Northwest, and would be interested in talking to you. I will call you next week to set up an appointment.*



- By phone: Direct phone calls are often quicker and more productive than emails. Be prepared to explain why you are calling and set up an appointment for a future conversation to discuss your needs and interests.

## PREPARE YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH

One of the most common questions you will get is: Tell me about yourself. Many people struggle with how to answer this question. It is important to prepare your answer to this question in advance. Include things such as your degrees, relevant examples from your experience such as internships, research, volunteer activities, and extracurricular involvement. It is not necessary to include information that would be considered answers to illegal questions such as age, place of birth, marital status, religion, politics, ethnicity, sexual orientation, children, or disabilities. The reason these are illegal questions is because an employer cannot discriminate during the hiring process based on any of these characteristics. Try completing the following information, writing it out in paragraph format, and practicing aloud, to develop a suitable answer to this question.

1. Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am a \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ University majoring in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What are the three most important things I want this person to know about me?
3. Relevant examples to support the most important things I want this person to know about me.
4. Why should this person be interested in me and what separates me from my competition?
5. Why are you interested in this opportunity with this person?
6. End your elevator speech with a question that starts a conversation.

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Networking begins with your elevator speech, but your goal in these conversations is to generate lasting professional relationships that you can continue to leverage throughout your career. When building relationships with other professionals, initially it is important that you ask a lot of questions and listen carefully to responses. Always follow up with a thank you note whenever a person spends time with you or provides you with helpful resources. Be sure to follow up with your contacts and let them know the outcome of your current search. Remember that you become a networking contact for the other person, and they may call on you in the future for assistance. Some find it useful to create a networking log so that they can track conversations they have and any follow up that needs to happen.

Part of building relationships is acting professionally and with integrity. Always respect others and treat them fairly. More than likely, the person with whom you are trying to establish a relationship is a professional with a busy schedule. Respect this by showing up on time for the appointments that you have set up with your contacts. Also, if someone provides you with contact information for one of their colleagues, be sure to follow through with that person and make an effort to reach out to them.

### Tips for Introverts

1. Rely on current supporters.
2. Remember that most people are glad to hear from you.
3. Go with a friend or colleague.
4. Listen – you already do this well.
5. Keep small talk small.
6. Rehearse.
7. Attend events that have a purpose.
8. Be positive.
9. Be comfortable with yourself.



### Tips for Students

1. Get involved.
2. Attend professional conferences.
3. Make classes count.
4. Get to know alumni.
5. Shadow professionals.
6. Participate in an internship or volunteer.
7. Diversify yourself.
8. Have your resume ready.
9. Find role models.
10. Write thank you notes.

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Skillfully used, an informational interview is one of the most valuable of all sources of occupational information. It presents opportunities for an intimate and flexible inspection of the job field or major unmatched by written sources. The great majority of people are very willing to help others learn about their careers; it is important to them and they usually like to talk about it. When you ask for an appointment, make clear your status as a college student and the explicit purpose of your interview. When calling business people, state that you are not looking for a job, but are interested in finding out more about their occupational area.

### Questions to Ask About an Occupation

1. What does a person do in this occupation on a typical day? Is there a set routine?
2. What educational program is recommended as preparation for the job? Distinguish between what is desirable and what is necessary.
3. What degree or certificate do employers look for? In what fields?
4. What skills are particularly important?
5. What kind of work experience would employers look for in a job applicant? How might a student obtain this work experience?
6. What other steps (if any) are necessary to enter this occupation (e.g., test, join a union)?
7. What are the opportunities for advancement? Is an advanced degree needed? If so, in what area?
8. What are the different work settings in which people in this occupation may be employed (e.g., educational institutions, businesses)?
9. What are some related occupations? Are there occupations doing similar work, but at different levels, (e.g., assistant, para professional, or in different areas? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these positions)?

### Prospects of the Career

1. How does a person seek a job in this area?
2. What are current employment prospects in this city? Elsewhere?
3. Do you see any future trends or changes in the direction of the problems and topics considered in your area?
4. How will these changes affect the plans and training of persons interested in a career in your area?
5. What difficulties do you think a person entering this field now can expect to encounter?
6. Are there recent publications, either reprints or references, characteristic of your work?



### Personal Aspects of the Career

1. What are the satisfactions you find in your work? What are the rewards, both tangible and intangible?
2. What are some of the dissatisfactions you find in your work? What are some of the sources of stress and frustration? Did your training prepare you for these?
3. What are some of your joys and challenges about the setting in which you work, its structure, facilities, and the people with whom you work?
4. Does your career permit you to lead the kind of life you would like to live? How does your career affect your style of life – the amount of work required, the amount of time required, your time for leisure, your material needs?
5. Can you suggest others who might be willing to talk with students about their career?

### Questions to Reflect on After the Meeting

1. What aspects of the job would you like?
2. What aspects of the job would you dislike? How long could you put up with them?
3. What is your reaction to the conditions (e.g., stress/anxieties) of this occupation? Could you handle them?
4. What is your reaction to the amount of freedom or leeway the worker has in determining what he/she does on the job?
5. How do you feel about working with the kind of people that you have met in this field?
6. Do you have (or could you acquire) the skills and personal characteristics necessary for this job?
7. How do you feel about the duties described in relation to the kinds of activities you presently enjoy?
8. Can you meet the educational and other requirements?

### Opportunities to Network with Hopkins Alumni

- LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com))—be sure to join the JHU Alumni and the Johns Hopkins University groups
- Networking events sponsored by the Life Design Lab
- Check out Handshake's calendar of events: [handshake.jhu.edu](http://handshake.jhu.edu)

### Using LinkedIn

LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) is a professional networking site designed to help you connect with alumni and other professionals in industries and organizations that relate to your career and academic interests. Think of LinkedIn as your professional online persona, whereas Facebook is for your personal life. Different from Facebook, LinkedIn is not about the quantity of connections, but about the quality. Only add contacts into your professional network that build your professional persona. LinkedIn is a place to share interests, ask questions, and network with professionals from a wide range of job titles and industries.



As a college student, you can utilize LinkedIn to:

- Build your professional network
- Connect to Hopkins alumni and other professionals in industries/organizations that interest you
- Learn about current trends and research employers in fields and locations that interest you

### Getting Started with LinkedIn:

#### 1. Join LinkedIn

Create a profile and familiarize yourself with the site. Link to friends, students, co-workers, and others who are already in your professional network. If you still have questions about your profile, or want feedback on it, contact the Life Design Lab or go to office hours.

#### 2. Join Groups

Start by joining Hopkins related groups like the Johns Hopkins University Alumni, with thousands of members. Within this group, there are subgroups for specific career fields including:

- JHU Biomedical Device and Biotechnology Career Network
- JHU Consulting Career Network
- JHU Engineering Career Network
- JHU Finance Career Network
- JHU Marketing, Communication, and Publishing Career Network
- JHU Medicine and Health Care Career Network
- JHU Non-Profit and Education Career Network
- JHU Policy, Development, and Government Career Network

Search for other groups to join by keyword, industry, field, or interest area. Also consider joining groups for other organizations to which you already belong. Be sure to join groups with the most members in order to reach the largest number of potential contacts.

#### 3. Learn More

Visit the LinkedIn Learning Center: <http://learn.linkedin.com>, and check out information designed for students: <http://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students.html>.

### Quick Tips for Contacting Alumni on LinkedIn:

- Ask for information and advice, not for a job
- Always be professional in your communications and follow up
- Always personalize your message rather than using the default
- Advanced People Search: Enter “Hopkins” as the school keyword and either the company name or industry and location where you are trying to make connections. Once you have done that, you should see a list of alumni with designations next to their name that may say 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Group. This is telling you how you are connected to alumni in your search. If the alumni listed are first or second connections to you, you can click on the profiles and



a yellow button that says “connect” will be on your top right. Click this and it allows you to send a message to that contact. If you see 3rd, group, or nothing next to the name, it means you will have to contact that alumnus/a in another way (see step 2, this allows you to keep making connections and use the free account without having to upgrade).

- Send a Message through Groups: If you are unable to send a message through a “connect” button on someone’s profile, you can still reach out to them through the group member search feature. If you share a group with someone, click on the group, click on the members tab and put their name or job title into the member search box. When you see the alumnus/a whom you are trying to contact, mouse over their name and an option pops up to “send a message.” This is just like sending them an email. You can also enter a company name into the member search box to pull up any alumni in the group that work or used to work for a specific company and reach out to multiple alumni at the same time. If you find someone in a search but you do not share a group with them, click on their profile and view the groups they belong to. You can temporarily join a group they belong to in order to send them a message through the member search feature discussed above.

#### Sample Email to Alumni:

*“I found your profile through the Johns Hopkins Alumni Group on LinkedIn. I am a senior history major at Johns Hopkins University. I am very interested in pursuing a career in consulting. Would you have some time to discuss what you do and what recommendations you would have for someone with a social sciences background looking to enter consulting? We can discuss this via email or phone, whichever is more convenient for you. I look forward to hearing from you.”*

#### Sample Questions to Ask Alumni Groups

- How can students find summer internships in your field? Are there other means of gaining experience before graduation?
- What abilities are important for success in your field? What personality traits or characteristics are important? What is the skill set that an employer in your field would look for in a new hire?
- What advice do you have for students who are preparing to enter your field?
- What related occupations and industries might I explore? What other fields could you see yourself moving into?
- Where can someone in an entry-level position expect to be in 2, 5 or 10 years?