

Networking 101

Build connections | Boost opportunities



Networking is a very effective career development and job search strategy. Networking is about building and maintaining professional relationships. Seize all opportunities to meet employers on or off campus, in person, or online. Employers get to know you and you get to hear of opportunities - it's a win-win situation.

Networking opportunities

- **Work, undertake an internship or volunteer in the field that interests you.** Volunteering is a great way to show causes you care about and demonstrate your values in action. It also contributes further evidence about your skills and personal attributes for your resume. Strengthen this further through internships, where you'll get to work on solving real-world issues. Internships will often lead to paid employment opportunities. Internship opportunities are regularly advertised through [JCU Career Hub](#), [Prosple](#), [SEEK Grad](#) and other general job seeking sites.
- **Investigate professional associations relevant to your degree.** Student memberships are often free or significantly discounted and can provide you with networking and professional development opportunities, mentoring and other useful career resources. Take a look at our [Career Snapshots](#) to identify your relevant professional associations.
- **Attend employer/industry events** relevant to your studies to grow your industry contacts and clarify employer requirements and expectations. Engage in guest lectures and panels offered through the university or within the community. Ask questions and connect with speakers afterwards.
- **Join a student club, society or group.** Students you connect with can become part of your professional network when you graduate. Course-based clubs will often have opportunities to engage with industry. Taking on a leadership role in a student association can maximise your engagement with industry and provide valuable experiences for your resume. Visit [JCU Student Association Sport](#) and [Clubs and Societies](#) to see what's on offer.
- **Establish your professional profile on LinkedIn** and connect with people, companies and groups relevant to your future career. Actively participate on LinkedIn by sharing content, contributing to group discussions, and posting updates about your activities and achievements. Get started with building your profile using our [Launch your LinkedIn](#) checklist.
- **Connect with JCU alumni.** Use LinkedIn to reach out to JCU graduates for advice or mentorship. JCU PHD students can also be great connections and could even help you get some experience by supporting their research efforts.



Tips for getting a conversation going

- **Prepare and practise your introduction.** This is a concise, confident summary capturing who you are, what you do and what you're interested in. For example:
 - Hi my name is ... I'm in my ... year studying ... at JCU. I've really enjoyed ... in my studies, so I'm planning to pursue ... when I graduate.
 - Good to meet you. My name is ... I'm in my ... year studying ... at JCU. I was inspired to study... because... When I graduate, I'm planning to ...
- **Do your research.** If attending a networking event and you know ahead of time which organisations will be represented, take a look at their website or social media to find out what they do.

- **Have questions ready to go.** Whether you've had a chance to do research or an unexpected opportunity to network has arisen, the following open-ended questions could be a starting point. Let the conversation flow from there:
 - What's the most interesting or rewarding aspect of your work? What about the most challenging?
 - What advice do you have for university students interested in working in your sector?
 - Does your organisation offer internships, part-time work or volunteering opportunities?
 - What are some of the useful stepping stone or voluntary experiences I should look for?
 - Does your organisation offer a structured graduate program each year? When does recruitment for the program typically start and what does it involve?
- **Confidently close a conversation,** for example:
 - It's been great chatting with you. I really appreciate your time and insights.
 - Well I'm mindful of your time and there are no doubt other people that will want to speak with you also, so I'll move along so that they can have a chance too.
 - I'd like to look into what we've been speaking about a little further. Do you have a business card and I could send you an email next week to continue our conversation?
 - Thank you for your time. I wonder if I could add you on LinkedIn so that we can stay connected?
- **Practise active listening.** Be curious and show a genuine interest. Ask insightful, open-ended questions and listen more than you speak.
- **Look the part.** Boost your confidence by dressing professionally as per the industry protocols, and convey positivity through your body language and gestures. A neat, professional appearance combined with confident posture and eye contact go a long way to making you approachable and memorable.
- **Keep your phone off and away.** Looking at your phone is a quick way to seem disengaged and unapproachable.



Once rapport is established, ask people of interest if they could meet for a coffee or via Zoom for a more detailed chat about their career development and insights into the industry. Our [Informational Interviews](#) information sheet gives ideas for how to go about requesting a meeting and questions you could consider asking to get the most benefit from the time available.

Interested in more networking guidance?

Complete the [Develop your Professional Identity](#) module in JCU Employability Edge to learn more about how to develop your professional networks.