EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

There are many ways to explore career opportunities during your time as a Friedman School student. Throughout your time in your graduate program, we encourage you to build connections and learn from a variety of individuals so as to maximize your success.

THE POWER OF NETWORKING

What is Networking?

It's the single most effective way to explore careers and find work. In fact, according to multiple sources, as many as 85% of all jobs are filled via networking! Networking is a great way to turn contacts into connections and develop professional relationships.

Networking = Research

You're collecting useful info on industries, career paths, job roles, skills needed, future trends, and how to break into an industry. Speaking to people — alumni, family, friends, colleagues — helps you learn more about the world of work where you best fit. Networking can be serendipitous (e.g., chatting in line at a coffee shop or on an airplane) or strategic (e.g., attending a conference reception or meeting with someone 1-on-1 for an informational interview).

Networking is Mutually Beneficial

Networking is more about the relationships you develop rather than the things others can do for you. The goal is to build sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships. As a graduate student, you may wonder how much you have to offer in a networking situation. Grad school trains you to be an expert in your field, which puts you at the cutting edge of new ideas. By networking, you also have personal experiences that interest others, such as international travel, tech expertise or shared hobbies.

Questions to Ask in a Networking Situation

**Questions about their experience and the job**

Tell me about your typical day at work. • Which skills or experiences are most valuable to have in your field? • Which qualifications are required for someone to work in this position? • What do you like most about your job? • What are some challenges of your work? • Tell me about your career path and how you got your current position. • What do you think has made you successful throughout your career?

**Questions about the industry, future, trends**

Where do you see your career/position within this organization going from here? • What is your impression of how your industry or organization will grow or change in 5 years? • What are some of the challenges your industry is currently facing? • What are some of the long-term trends in your organization?

**Questions about breaking into field, advice, additional contacts**

What experience would be valuable to have before getting a job in this industry? • Which skills did you gain from your (graduate) education that helped you in your career? • What advice do you have for someone with my background who wants to enter this field? • Can you suggest additional contacts who might be willing to share their experiences?

Grad school is a great time to start networking

- Discounted member rates for professional organizations
- Student rates at conferences and other social events
- Access to free networking events with alumni and talks hosted at Tufts
- Good rule of thumb: Attend a couple of conferences or alumni events per year with unique attendees whose career interests overlap with yours. Create goals before attending so you'll be sure to meet new people in addition to reconnecting with familiar faces.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

It's never too early to begin to explore interests, careers and job possibilities. A lot depends on the field and job to which you'll be applying and your fit for that position. Know if you have the skills needed to be a competitive candidate and, if needed, where you can strengthen your skills/experiences.

Explore Your Options

- Engage in self-assessment by taking stock of your interests, competencies, goals & values. Use Imagine PhD and myIDP to assist you
- Identify your transferable skills (see page 5)
- Reach out to Tufts alumni and others to learn about their career paths and the cultures of the companies/organizations in which they're employed
- Schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor at the Tufts Career Center
- Attend career preparation and job search programs (speakers, Career Fairs, networking events, workshops)
- Participate in the Graduate School's professional development offerings
- Reach out to career-knowledgeable individuals about your next steps (Tufts alumni, colleagues in your field, professors, connections through professional associations, others in your network) and set goals for expanding your network

Build Your Brand

- Gather feedback on your professional documents and presentation skills through the Career Center (and faculty if seeking teaching positions)
- Build your LinkedIn profile, ask people to be in your network and join relevant groups, e.g., the Tufts University Career Network;
- Get a free professional LinkedIn photo taken at one of the Tufts Career Fairs
- Develop an elevator pitch (see page 6) to use at conferences, networking events and to answer “Tell me about yourself”
- Complete your profile in Handshake (Tufts’ online jobs database) and upload a resume/cover letters, add relevant skills, and set up Search Alerts to be notified when jobs of interest are posted
- Finalize your job application materials. Tailor cover letters and resumes to specific position requirements and the goals of a company/organization/department

Launch Your Plan

- Inform people in your network, those with whom you have a genuine connection, that you are entering the job market. Talk about the types of opportunities you're seeking and how your skills and experience match those positions
- Develop action plans for 2-3 career paths, outlining target employers, jobs of interest, job search approaches you will use, search timelines for jobs of interest, action items, weekly/monthly next steps with target completion dates
- Educate yourself about the styles of interviews you might encounter and develop strategies for interview success (pages 16-18)
- Schedule a practice interview with the Career Center (If embarking on an academic job search, practice your job talk with people both familiar and unfamiliar with your work and field of study)
- Maximize your job networking at any conferences you attend

Research the typical hiring timelines for your industry (e.g., Finance, Consulting, Engineering and Tech are often considered early hiring fields — the bulk of candidates coming directly from school are hired in the fall semester). Determine the amount of time you have to commit to your job search. The process will likely take months, not weeks. For academic jobs, begin a minimum of two years out before the time you seek to be hired.

Tufts Career Center | Graduate Career Services | Dowling Hall, Suite 740 | 617-627-3299 | go.tufts.edu/careercenter
Top Five Negotiation Tips

1. Have a minimum acceptable salary in mind. Research salaries for the job/industry/part of the country you would work in (see Salary.com and Glassdoor.com for various data points).
2. If you plan to negotiate, know what about the offer is not "delighting" you and why (in the actual negotiation, don’t use personal issues like rent or cost of living as a reason to ask for more, as these will be true for all candidates).
3. Ask if there is “wiggle room” around the item in the offer you are trying to change. If the answer is no, move on to something else.
4. Don’t threaten, don’t push too hard, but be willing to walk away.
5. See a career advisor for help and to practice!

1. SCHEDULE THE MEETING

Most people are not only happy to talk about their experiences, they’re willing to meet with you to share that information. Start the search within your own network and branch out from there. Often, having a common connection with someone who you’re interested in speaking with can make this process feel more personal.

2. PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Prepare for an informational interview as you would a job interview by gathering as much info as you can about the person you’ll be speaking with and the organization they work for. This will be a lot like using the research skills you have developed during your graduate degree. Visit the organization’s website and check out their LinkedIn profiles of people who work there. Not only will this help you engage in more meaningful and informed conversation, but it can also give you ideas about the questions you might want to ask.

3. CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

There may be many questions you want to ask. When invited to do a job interview, ask: What information am I looking for? Write down your questions so you don’t forget them. You may only have 15-20 minutes with this individual, so try to limit yourself to five or six questions. Although it’s called an interview, this should feel more like a conversation. Express enthusiasm and interest by asking follow-up questions and engaging with the other person.

4. FOLLOW UP

After the informational interview, it’s customary to send the person a note to thank them for taking the time to meet with you. (Email is the easiest and quickest way to do this.) The sooner you reach out, the better. Experts recommend doing this immediately following your meeting so the information is fresh in your mind.

Sample Thank You

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for speaking with me this afternoon. It was fascinating to hear about your personal career path in addition to learning about the internal structure of [name of organization]. It was both informative and encouraging to hear about your success in this field.

I greatly appreciate your advice on seeking out an internship opportunity with your organization. At your suggestion, I have contacted Teresa Field about the matter and will be meeting with her next week. I truly appreciate your willingness to speak with me and look forward to staying in touch.

Best Regards,

Jonathan

(Your full name and contact information)
YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE CHECKLIST

Maintaining a strong virtual presence is one way to add value to your personal network. Through LinkedIn you have the opportunity to connect with fellow grad students, alumni, potential employers, and others. Use your profile as an additional way to showcase some of your skills, experiences, and achievements. Visit the Tufts Career Center website for LinkedIn tips, including resources to help you increase the strength of your profile and the likelihood that people will contact you in the future.

Headline
Your headline will serve as your online elevator pitch. It should be a short but memorable professional slogan about your areas of interest or expertise and which kinds of opportunities you're looking for via LinkedIn.

Profile Picture
Choose a profile picture where you're alone (i.e., rather than a cropped photo of yourself with others) and in professional dress. Use a current and welcoming photo. Profiles with pictures are 14 times more likely to be viewed!

Summary
Write a short summary that includes information about your qualifications, skills, relevant work or extracurricular activities, and accomplishments. Include a brief statement about your plans and goals for the future. Feel free to use your headline as a template when writing this section.

Work Experience
List any previous and/or current jobs, along with what you accomplished at each. You can also share examples of your work by including media (e.g., photos, videos) or documents (e.g., excerpts of writing that you're particularly proud of).

Education
Start this section with your graduate degree, followed by all of your additional post-secondary training. Include information about your institution, majors and minors, thesis title, courses, and program.

Volunteer Experience
Showcase volunteer experiences and highlight organizations and causes that you care about. According to LinkedIn, 42% of hiring managers view volunteer experience as equal to formal work experience, and in 5 has chosen a candidate based on their previous volunteer work.

Accomplishments
List your accomplishments to optimize your profile for talent seekers. These can include publications (links to peer-reviewed work and other relevant writing); certifications; patents; courses (list by course name, not number); honors and awards; languages; and more.

Projects
Projects can be a particularly important piece of the Accomplishments section for grad students. List anything from course assignments to entrepreneurial activities, as well as your thesis. Include project names and information about what you did and how. If relevant, you can also include a URL that will direct viewers to the project's website.

Recommendations
Ask employers, colleagues, professors, clients, or classmates who have worked with you closely to write brief recommendations on your behalf. This will add credibility to your skills and strengths. Try to get a range of recommendations from people you've collaborated with in unique settings.

Important Profile Tips
1. Customize your URL by changing the default link to one that includes your full name. This will increase the chances that people will easily find your LinkedIn profile when searching for you online.
2. Consider including your contact information (e.g., email address, Twitter handle, link to an ePortfolio) in your profile summary if you would like others beyond your direct connections to have access to the info.
3. Add skills and endorsements to your profile. If you like, you have the option of adding key skills relevant to the careers that appeal to you. Your connections can then endorse you for the things you’re best at and you can do the same for them.
4. Think about making your profile visible to others. Visit your public profile settings to edit the visibility of your profile. This controls how often your info will appear in search engines, e.g., if a potential employer googles your name.

Behavioral Interviewing

Behavioral interviewing is a popular interview framework based on the belief that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Employers want to know how you will function in their organization, and this method of questioning allows them to “see” how you work through challenging situations, collaborate with others, and more.

Answering behavioral interview questions using the STAR method will ensure you give the big picture, get quickly to the point and make a positive impression.

S - Situation  Briefly describe the context to your example; be specific and succinct
T - Task  Identify what you set out to accomplish
A - Action  Describe what you did. Wh ich skills did you use? If you were on a team, what was your role?
R - Result  What did you achieve, learn? What could you do differently to improve upon the outcome?

Use the STAR method to develop stories from a variety of experiences (employment, internships, academic work, civic engagement and other activities). These examples should show your strengths, work style, teamwork, and initiative. Emphasize your achievements and attitude, yet remember to mention some evidence of struggles or turn-arounds. Keep each story to 2 - 4 minutes, and when you conclude, you may want to invite questions from your interviewer to ensure that you accurately interpreted the question and provided helpful information.

Sample Interview Questions

Getting to Know You
Tell me about yourself. • Why/how are you qualified for this position? • What do you know about us? • Why do you want to work here? • What are your strengths? Weaknesses? • Why should we hire you over another candidate? • Why did you choose Tufts and your particular graduate degree program? • Describe your thesis or dissertation and its contribution to the field.

Your Experience and Career Goals
Where do you see yourself in five years? • Describe your ideal job and work environment. • How would a former supervisor describe you and your work? • What other types of positions are you considering? • Which of your past experiences are you most proud of and why?

Behavioral Questions
Describe a project or experience where you worked as part of a team. • Discuss a situation where you resolved a conflict. • Talk about your leadership skills. • Describe a time when you worked under stress and demonstrated your coping skills. • Tell about a time when you solved a problem or improved something for an employer. • Describe the most creative project or presentation you’ve completed. • Tell me about a difficult decision you’ve made in the past year. • Describe a situation or project where you made a mistake and what you learned from it. • Tell about a time when you had to take on something new with little to no guidance. How did you handle it?

Quick Tip
Think about your transferable skills checklist (page 5) when reflecting on which stories to tell.