

## WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is developing relationships with individuals or organizations to further your professional development. Good networking involves an **exchange of information** where both sides benefit.

Anyone can have information to share about the job search and career paths. Consider who you already know as well as people you would like to add to your network.

## RESOURCES TO GROW YOUR NETWORK

### GW Career Connect

[careerconnect.gwu.edu](https://careerconnect.gwu.edu)

An online platform to connect GW students and alumni. Find alumni who are willing to provide career advice, mentorship, and industry knowledge.

### LinkedIn

[linkedin.com](https://linkedin.com)

Use the alumni tool to see the profiles of thousands of people with similar career interests.

- Go to the [The George Washington University](https://www.gwu.edu) page or [The George Washington University - School of Engineering & Applied Science](https://www.gwu.edu/~seas) page
- Click on 'Alumni' from the left menu
- Use the graph bars and search box to filter profiles by location, industry, company, education, and skills

### GW Career Fairs, Information Sessions, and Other Employer Events

[gwu.joinhandshake.com](https://gwu.joinhandshake.com)

Log-in to Handshake to see a full schedule of upcoming career events. RSVP and add events to your schedule.

### Alumni Industry Networks and Events

<https://www.alumni.gwu.edu/networking>

The GW Alumni Association provides opportunities to connect with fellow alumni through virtual and in-person networking programs.

### Professional Events & Conferences

- Find a list of professional groups for your program on [careers.seas.gwu.edu](https://careers.seas.gwu.edu).
- Look for in-person or virtual events hosted by professional groups on sites such as [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com).

## HOW TO MAKE CONTACT

Keep your initial correspondence brief and professional in tone. Personalize the message by including the prospect's name and referencing their work. Use these elements to help structure your networking messages:

1. **Make a connection between yourself and the recipient.** Mention a shared interest, a mutual contact or referral, or some other information you may have in common.
2. **State your purpose.** Clearly say why you are reaching out and why they should consider your request.

3. **Remove the pressure.** Many times people do not respond to networking requests because they feel pressured by a request they cannot fulfill. Give your prospect a “way out” so that they can politely decline.
4. **Close with an action statement.** Indicate a next step for you or the prospect in order to keep the possibility of networking open. This also provides a clear timeline for follow up.

### Sample Message

<b>Make a connection</b>	<i>Dear Ms. Jones,</i>  <i>I found your contact information via the Science &amp; Technology Industry group on GW Career Connect. I am a current Computer Science student and I want to connect with alumni who also worked with Prof. X.</i>
<b>State the purpose</b>	<i>I am pursuing internships related to machine learning, and given your experience in this field I believe you could provide insight about the work. Would you be available to speak with me about your experience at COMPANY Z?</i>
<b>Remove pressure</b>	<i>I realize that this may be a busy time for you and I appreciate your consideration.</i>
<b>Action statement</b>	<i>I will follow up in a week to see if we can arrange a meeting.</i>  <i>Sincerely,</i> <i>Sally A. Student</i>

### INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is a brief meeting where you can ask questions to industry professional to learn more about their career path and experience. While these types of meetings may lead to a job opportunity, the purpose is to learn information that will benefit your career development. Prepare 5 – 10 questions to ask and be sure to send a thank you note after the interview.

### Sample Questions

<b>Career Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you choose this career?</li> <li>• What types of experience are essential?</li> <li>• What types of employment or internships would you recommend?</li> <li>• What kinds of entry-level opportunities exist in the field?</li> <li>• What specific aspects of my background should I highlight the most?</li> </ul>
<b>Job Search</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do people learn about jobs in this industry?</li> <li>• What organizations would you recommend I pursue?</li> <li>• Is there a certain person within this organization whom I should contact first?</li> <li>• What is a typical salary range for this type of position? <i>DO NOT ASK FOR PERSONAL SALARY INFO</i></li> </ul>
<b>About the Job</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe a typical work week and a typical day.</li> <li>• What skills or talents are most essential for effective job performance?</li> <li>• What are the toughest problems you must deal with?</li> <li>• What is the most rewarding part of your job?</li> </ul>
<b>About the Company</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the organizational structure?</li> <li>• What is the average length of time employees work here?</li> <li>• What type of training does the organization provide?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What new product lines and/or services are being developed?</li> <li>• How does this organization differ from its competitors?</li> <li>• How would you describe the office culture in a few words?</li> </ul>
<b>Final Question</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anyone else that you recommend I contact to learn more?</li> </ul>

**PROFESSIONAL INTRODUCTION**

Sometimes called an “elevator pitch”, this is a brief introduction that can be adapted for a variety of networking events. You should customize your introduction based on the audience, and end with a question or statement that encourages dialogue.

**Elevator Pitch Outline**

<p><b>Who are you?</b> Provide a title or brief description of your background.  <i>Examples: I am an engineering student; recent graduate; IT technician; independent app developer</i></p>
<p><b>What are you currently doing?</b> Give a short description of your job or studies.  <i>Examples: I work at Company X on the quality assurance team; I’m studying healthcare tech policy</i></p>
<p><b>What makes you different?</b> Think about your strengths or how you approach work – your mindset or style.  <i>Examples: I have 3 years of Python coding experience; I take time to listen to customers and understand their needs</i></p>
<p><b>What are you looking for?</b> Share your career goal or next step.  <i>Examples: I’m looking for software development internships; I’m ready for a supervisor role</i></p>
<p><b>BONUS: Ask a question.</b> Ask an open ended question to keep the conversation going.  <i>Examples: Could you tell me more about your experience at Company A? What is the best way to follow up with you?</i></p>