



## Postdoc Networking and LinkedIn

### What PIs and line managers need to know

#### The Benefits of Using LinkedIn

- One of the biggest stressors for postdocs is being unsure of their options should they be unable to remain in, or wish to move beyond, academia.
- An effective way your postdoc can explore different careers is to network with people doing jobs that appeal to your postdoc.
- A postdoc's network maybe limited within academia, making it difficult to explore wider opportunities.
- LinkedIn is a professional networking and career development platform with over 700 million users worldwide.
- Through LinkedIn, postdocs can diversify their network, interact with other professionals and take control of their own career development.
- LinkedIn has many functions including:
  - messaging contacts in your professional network and requesting to connect with those not in your network;
  - joining professional groups for targeted networking opportunities;
  - sharing professional content (e.g. blogs);
  - researching organizations and people within those organizations;
  - exploring and applying for jobs;
  - engaging with skills development opportunities through LinkedIn Learning.
- By engaging with LinkedIn, your postdoc expands their network and increases the opportunities for people to view your research, leading to potential external collaborations or attracting new postdocs/PhD students.
- You may also benefit from having a LinkedIn account by keeping in touch with former postdocs and gaining access to their networks.

#### The Basics of a LinkedIn Profile

- A well curated LinkedIn profile should position a person for their next career move (e.g. the profile of a postdoc targeting medical affairs should reflect this desire, plus any relevant skills and experiences that they have in this area – using LinkedIn can also help to identify these relevant skills).
- A profile has numerous sections, including profile photos, a professional headline, an about summary, experience, education and skills. There is even a section to add awards and publications!
- The professional headline provides a snapshot of who the person is and what they want: it should be engaging, informative with a flavor of their personality.
- The About section allows for expansion of a person's professional identity, what skills and experiences they have and what they are looking for.
- The Skills section allows a person to highlight their relevant skills.
- The Recommendations section allows connections to provide endorsements of what the individual is like to work with.





## What PIs and line managers can do

We've broken this into three tiers, increasing in the level of engagement and input you'd give;

### (1) Basic

- Discuss LinkedIn with your postdoc in career conversations and talk about the basics of a profile. The earlier in their post they start using LinkedIn, the longer they have to build external networks in addition to their academic networks (and the more opportunity there is for it to benefit you both).
- Highlight why LinkedIn is useful and what they can use it for. Questions you could ask include:
  - Are you on LinkedIn?
  - Have you updated your profile recently?
  - Have you thought about using LinkedIn to expand your network and for career exploration?
- Signpost your postdoc towards useful LinkedIn resources, e.g. the website of Sabrina Woods (LinkedIn specialist) - <http://www.sabrina-woods.com/linkedin.html>.

### (2) Intermediate

- Offer to take a look at their LinkedIn profile. Are they articulating the skills that you know they have? What do you think their profile indicates about what they're looking for in their next role? This constructive feedback with positive intentions can give them new insight and help them feel supported.
- Sign up and create your own LinkedIn profile and connect with your former postdocs and PhD students – knowing what your former postdocs have gone on to do means you can provide your current postdoc with examples and starting points to explore their options beyond academia.

### (3) Advanced

- If you're on LinkedIn yourself, could you share or suggest new connections, e.g. former postdocs and PhD students of yours that are now in careers beyond academia – this is a potential way for them to start exploring other areas.
- If you are connected with your postdoc on LinkedIn, you could give them a recommendation (this shows your support and may give them a confidence boost). You could also endorse their skills, lending weight to what they claim on their profile.
- Follow-up with your postdocs in subsequent career conversations: How's it going with LinkedIn? Who have you connected with? Have you thought to ask for any informational interviews with any of your connections?

