CONNECTING WITH ALUMNI MENTORS
NETWORKING FOR CAREERS SUCCESS

www.glasgow.ac.uk/thenetwork
#UofGTheNetwork
WHAT A MENTOR CAN DO FOR YOU?

You will have mentors throughout your life: lecturers, colleagues, inspirational people you connect with on social media. Developing these relationships before you graduate can influence your career choices and help towards your dream job – whether or not you know what that is yet!

A mentor can help by:

- Providing insight to a particular sector or job to help you understand if this is an area suitable for you after graduation
- Improving your communications skills by providing guidance into business behaviours
- Giving confidence by preparing you for job applications and interview
- Helping to develop your knowledge of the attributes that are important in the company they work
- Providing guidance through times of transition – when you graduate you will make one of the biggest transitions in your life!
- Building your networks and develop your networking skills
- Finding out new things about yourself by realising the skills you’ve developed during your degree and elsewhere

WHY ALUMNI?

University of Glasgow alumni (or graduates) can be found in nearly every country in the world and represent every sector. That is quite a network!

You have a lot in common so you shouldn’t be short of things to talk about to establish a rapport. They were taught in the same lecture theatres, joined the same clubs, slept in the same halls and graduated with similar skills as you.

I am more than happy to share my experiences. Students need to reach out to us graduates – we have been in their shoes!

Martin Patience, BBC China Correspondent
Alumni are willing to help but before approaching them it is important to have a clear idea of where you are in your career decision making so that you can present this. Everyone is unique but here are some common issues that students often want to work through:

I know what job I want/sector I want to work in but I just don’t know how to get there. Further study? Networking? Experience?

Help! I don’t know what to do after I graduate!

How can I sell what I’ve already done and what more do I need to do?

I’m about to take up a new job/internship and I want to make sure that I make the right impression and how to make the most of the opportunity.

**ACTION:**
Reflect on where you are in your career planning.
Do any of the speech bubbles above ring true?
Having an understanding of your own strengths and what jobs are available to you is a great starting point.

Look through our webpages on **Making Decisions**.
Working through the resources will help you to identify the stage you are at and flag up questions for alumni mentors.
NEED INSPIRATION? IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION TOPICS

SHARING EXPERIENCE
Remember they have been in your shoes!

- Is there any advice you could give me?
- Is this where you thought you would end up?
- What makes you good at what you do?
- Did you have a mentor? How did they influence you?

HELPING WITH JOB SEARCH
Where do you start?!

- Are there any job search websites or agencies that are good for jobs in your sector?
- Can you recommend any resources on how to get jobs?
- How important is a LinkedIn profile in your sector?

INDUSTRY INSIGHT
Knowing the hot topics affecting an industry will give you confidence and help you stand out.

- Are there any discussion boards or websites that I could access to find out what industry professionals are talking about?
- What could help me stand out?
- What are the current issues you face in your job?

EMPLOYER VALUES
What employers look for in a candidate can vary from organisation to organisation. Establishing this will help you to get a foot in the door.

- What does your organisation care about?
- What is it really like to work in your organisation/what is the culture?
- What are the benefits and challenges of working in your organisation?

When I graduated I knew what environment I wanted to work in but didn’t know the options out there. I wish I’d known to speak with alumni sooner.

Mairi Hamilton, recent graduate
FINDING A MENTOR

Now it’s time to set up your profile on The Network: our exclusive networking platform for students and alumni. Your profile should be professional and complete so that when you contact alumni, they know how they can help you.

ACTION:
Create your online profile
Sign up to The Network using your GUID. You will be promoted to sync with LinkedIn. If you don’t have an account, you will be taken through the profile wizard. It’s surprisingly easy to showcase your skills, experience and career aspirations in less than 10 minutes. Click here for more information on creating your online profile.

ACTION:
Search The Network for alumni mentors
There are a number of ways that you can search The Network:

Expertise: Click on the ‘show’ search function, select ‘mentors’ and highlight the areas of expertise you need help with.

Try to keep your search as broad as possible as you never know where inspiration will come from! If you do want to be more specific in your alumni search, why not filter on additional skills, who they work for how long they have worked there.

Groups: There are a number of different interest Groups set up on The Network to help you easily identify alumni by degree grouping.

APPROACHING A MENTOR

Alumni have signed up to The Network for you to contact so don’t be shy.

ACTION:
Prepare your elevator pitch
Write down your opener to introduce yourself and why you are getting in touch. For example, ‘I’m a 4th year History student and thinking about my options. I’d really love to hear more about your career in fundraising. Could I ask you a few questions?’

The Network has helped me to speak to alumni who were friendly and helpful and they have given me good advice on what my next steps might be.

Rachelle Gallagher, current student
DEVELOPING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

If a graduate has helped **it is important to say ‘thank you’** but also to maintain that relationship. You may have more questions or need to contact them again in the future. They might even be sitting across from you on an interview panel!

**ACTION:**
**Build your network**

Ask the graduate if you could stay in touch and connect with them through other networks, for example [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com). You could also ask if there are networks especially for their profession or if there is anyone else you could speak to.

The reason that I’m happy to mentor is that there are many people who have helped me in my life and I want to pay forward that engagement and generosity. Knowing that I have helped someone make good decisions and then hearing how they are progressing is extremely rewarding. Mentoring is not a single conversation, it’s about making connections that last over time.

Alan McIntyre, Partner, Oliver Wyman
TOP TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

• Have a strong profile
• Know where you are in your career decision making
• Prepare your elevator pitch to introduce yourself
• Keep your search broad and your options open
• Be honest – alumni are there to help and not judge you
• Start to become an industry expert by asking questions to build your knowledge
• Put in some time. Worthwhile relationships don’t happen overnight
• Build your networks using relevant formats that are available to you, eg, The Network, LinkedIn
• Say ‘thank you’ and follow up to tell the graduate if their advice has helped you