

Professional Brand



Connecting, networking, relationships and building your professional brand.

The following resource aims to support students to gain the most from Work integrated Learning (WIL) experiences including placement, project and other work related learning experiences. The focus of this resource is in supporting students to develop professional relationships through their WIL experience, allowing them to further develop their professional brand and increase employability.

This resource is best used alongside the [WIL to Work Credentials](#), and may provide prompts, as part of a reflective journal, for students who are engaged in a WIL experience.

What is your 'professional brand'?

A professional brand is the ways in which you are viewed by other people. It may be that people see you as friendly, a good leader, or a consistent worker. Your brand is a way of establishing and consistently reinforcing who you are and what you stand for in your career and life. Everything you do either strengthens or dilutes the personal brand you're trying to create.

It is important to make sure your personal brand reflects who are as a person. Your brand is supported by a visible, accessible and consistent online presence, but is reinforced by your professional networks and relationships.

Mapping your professional network and relationships?

You may already have a strong and diverse professional network before you commence a WIL experience. However, often as a person in a new setting (e.g. country, university or workplace) you need to regrow your network and connect with new people who may be able to support you in your career and learning.

A good starting point is mapping out the different working relationships within your role, which may include relationships with:

- your direct supervisor or manager
- supervisors or managers of other teams
- colleagues in your core working team
- colleagues from other sections of the organisation
- colleagues who may become your friends
- mentors
- clients, customers and suppliers

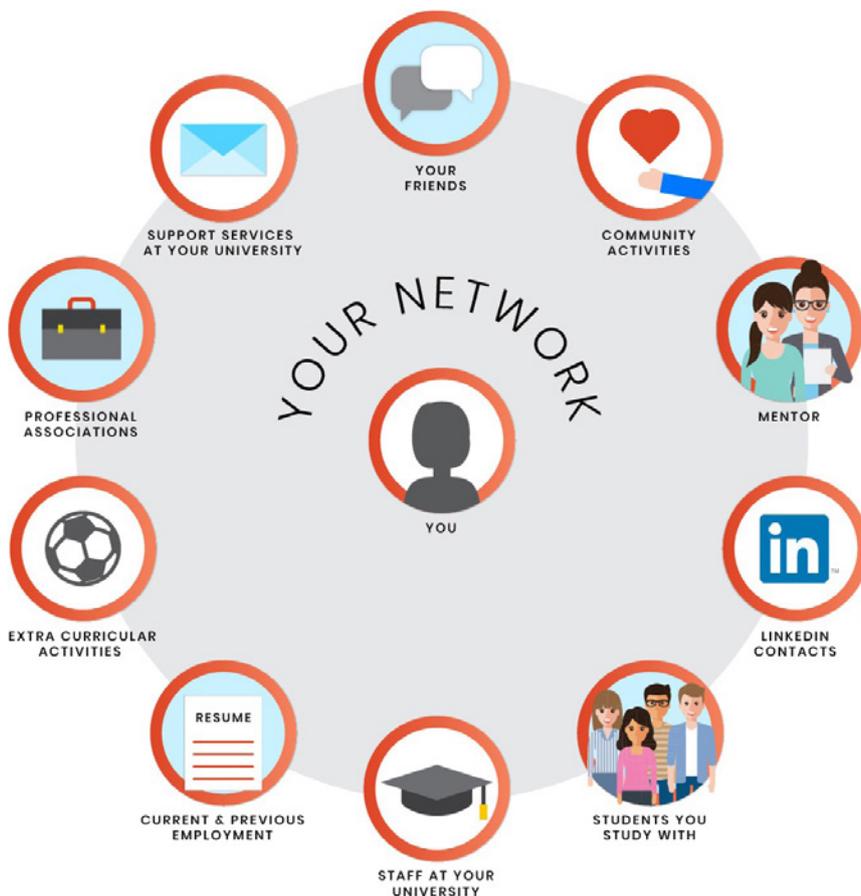


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Use the following diagram to think about those people already in your network, and where you may have some gaps.



Now, using the table below think about how your current network can help you reach your goals, or where you have a gap and may need to consider adding another person. Use the table to map four key goals to start with. You can always add more later.

In thinking about your networking goals you may like to have a look at: <https://www.employeeedia.com/manage/setting-goals/8159-networking-15-examples-for-setting-performance-goals>

What are your networking goals?	Who could help me with this?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about what you want to achieve in your career and what steps you may need to take 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how you can be of benefit to those in your network Think about how accessible, experienced or supportive a particular person may be

Tools to building positive professional relationships.

To be successful in your WIL experience and to develop your professional networks, you need to build good working relationships. Building relationships in the workplace is similar to making new friends, except that the boundaries of the relationship are quite different. So how can you build positive relationships in the workplace?

Using the following framing, consider how you currently manage each skill / practice, and then identify one goal or an improvement you can make in each area to enhance your ability to build positive professional relationships.

Skill	What do I do well?	A goal for improvement
<p>Be polite: It is easy to say to 'be polite' but this action requires a good understanding of the acceptable behaviour and cultures of a workplace.</p>		
<p>Be positive: Being positive means looking for those opportunities to encourage others around you, acknowledge their contribution and support and always look for the learning opportunities in what you are doing.</p>		
<p>Have empathy: Empathy is your ability to understand how someone else may be feeling in a situation. Consider how your behaviours or requests may be interpreted (or misunderstood) by others.</p>		
<p>Think before you ask: As learners, you should have many questions. Asking questions is not a bad thing. However, if the question is something you should be able to figure out, others may feel you are wasting their time.</p>		
<p>Communicate effectively: The care that you take to ensure spelling and grammar are correct in written communication such as emails conveys your interest in the task. If communicating face-to-face your body language, eye contact and tone of voice all convey messages to the recipient.</p>		
<p>Care with social media: What you post and the comments you make on social media can have an impact on your real world relationships.</p>		
<p>Don't expect results overnight: Like any relationship, building relationships with your colleagues doesn't happen overnight. It takes work.</p>		