

# How to...network

---

Networking can play an important part in choosing and managing your career and is essential for some choices e.g. media, arts and cultural industries. You can use it to:

- Explore your career ideas – talk to someone who is working in a job or career area you are interested in. It is not about asking for work but tapping into their knowledge. They can give you valuable insight into your area of interest. You may be able to negotiate some work shadowing or even work experience.
- Job hunt – MMU graduates often work for small or medium sized employers (SMEs). These businesses recruit in a variety of ways. Not all employers go to the expense of advertising for recruits and use someone who is already known to them – may be through a speculative application, social networking site or short work placement. It's not just your degree they will be interested in but the approach and attitude you put across and whether you will fit into their existing team.

## How to build a network

- Use family contacts, friends, colleagues, previous employers and university tutors.
- Ask for introductions to relevant contacts. Always keep a record of who you have contacted and what they have said and the names of other contacts they may have given to you
- Consider joining professional associations connected to your career interest. Some organisations have student membership or mentoring schemes. Sign up for their 'e-zines' or newsletters. If possible go to meetings and become actively involved.
- Get a career mentor through Mentormatch; MMU's own mentoring scheme. Go to [www.mentormatch.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.mentormatch.mmu.ac.uk) and register to choose a mentor.

Use social networking sites such as Facebook. Employers use these sites as informal ways to tell you about the nature of their work and to promote their vacancies and other graduate opportunities. However, beware; employers also use these sites to learn more about job candidates, what would your site say about you?

# How to...network

---

- Look at work related sites such as [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) which provide professionals with opportunities to build up work contacts.
- Attend events such as careers fairs, trade exhibitions and open days to meet relevant employers and show your interest in them. Think carefully about the questions you want to ask and what you want to say about yourself. Make a careful note of any positive contacts, checking the best method and timing for follow up; it is also worth having a business card or resume of your CV available to leave with firms who indicate they might wish to contact you again after the event.

## Use your network:

- To obtain an information interview. This could be face to face or over the phone. Make sure you have a named contact; explain who you are and why you are asking for 15 minutes of their time and how this will help you. Have your questions ready, make notes and record the results of the interview.
- Ask for work shadowing. This allows you to see a typical day at work for someone doing the job you are interested in. You may be able to ask for this at the end of your information interview. You may not be able to do this in a job area where confidentiality is important
- To gain work experience and spend a few days or longer in the workplace. How will you be useful to the employer? This will help you gain experience which will be useful in future job applications
- To ask for a job. This speculative approach needs to be carefully researched and planned. You need a well prepared and targeted CV. Pick up our 'How to Make Speculative Application' handout or Warwick University's site [www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/applications/speculativeapps](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/applications/speculativeapps)

Finally, ensure you always say thank you to people for giving you their time and that you follow up any leads as advised. If a company asks you for a CV at a fair, it really does mean they are interested in you!

For further information about networking, see:

[www.skillset.org/careers/networking](http://www.skillset.org/careers/networking)

[www.arts.ac.uk/docs/jobsearchforcreativepeople.pdf](http://www.arts.ac.uk/docs/jobsearchforcreativepeople.pdf)