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It's Business, Not Social™

Build a Better LinkedIn Profile

Creating a robust and compelling LinkedIn profile is crucial for undergraduate and graduate research students. A well-crafted profile can significantly enhance their professional online presence, facilitate networking opportunities, and open doors to potential career and research collaborations. Incorporate the following recommendations to ensure your LinkedIn profile is optimized, comprehensive and engaging.

Professional Profile Picture
- **Importance:** First impression counts. A professional headshot conveys seriousness and professionalism.
    - Choose a clear, friendly, and appropriately professional image.

Background Cover Photo
- **Importance:** Adds a personalized touch and draws people into your profile.
    - Select an image related to your field of study or research interests.
    - Create an image in Canva.com - see the screenshot at the end of this document.

Headline
- **Importance:** It's not just your job title; it's a chance to highlight your research focus or academic status.
    - Use keywords related to your research field, include your current role or title (e.g., "PhD Candidate in Biochemistry"), and consider mentioning a key achievement or current project.

Summary (About Section)
- **Key Elements:** Your academic background, research interests, key achievements, and what you're looking for on LinkedIn.
- **Importance:** Provides a comprehensive overview of your professional persona.
    - Write in the first person, be concise yet informative, keep your paragraphs short (70% of people will look at your profile on their mobile device) and use bullet points for readability.

Experience Section
- **Key Elements:** Any relevant work experience, including research positions, internships, and part-time roles.
- **Importance:** Demonstrates your practical experience in your field of study.
  - For each position, include a brief description of your responsibilities, achievements, and any relevant technologies or methodologies you used.

Education
- **Key Elements:** Your degrees, certificates, and any relevant courses or projects.
- **Importance:** Highlights your academic credentials and specialized training.
  - List your degrees in reverse chronological order, and don't forget to include honors, awards, or scholarships.

Licenses & Certifications
- **Importance:** Shows additional qualifications and ongoing commitment to your professional development.
  - Include certifications relevant to your field of research or study.

Skills
- **Importance:** Helps you get found for opportunities related to your expertise.
  - Add a mix of skills, including technical skills specific to your research area, analytical skills, and soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork).

Recommendations
- **Importance:** Endorsements from professors, colleagues, or mentors add credibility.
  - Politely ask for recommendations from individuals familiar with your work or academic performance.

Accomplishments
- **Key Elements:** Publications, awards, honors, patents, speaking engagements, and projects.
- **Importance:** Showcases your contributions to your field of study and any recognition you've received.
  - Provide details about your role in each accomplishment and its relevance to your professional goals.

Organizations
- **Importance:** Indicates professional affiliations and memberships.
  - Include any academic societies or professional groups relevant to your research field.
  - **Add CUR!**

Featured Section
- **Importance:** Directly highlights significant achievements, projects, publications, or media coverage.
  - Use this section to feature your research work, including links to published papers, posters, presentation slides, or videos of talks. This visual portfolio can significantly enhance your profile's impact.

Interests
- **Importance:** Shows your broader engagement with the professional community.
  - Follow organizations, influencers, and companies relevant to your research field.

Final Tips for Optimization:
- Keywords: Incorporate relevant keywords throughout your profile to improve visibility in searches.
- Engagement: Actively participate in discussions, share relevant content, and publish posts to demonstrate your expertise and interest in your field.
- Networking: Connect with peers, faculty members, industry professionals, and alumni to expand your professional network.

By following this outline and tailoring each section to reflect your unique academic and research experiences, you can create a LinkedIn profile that stands out to peers, potential employers, and collaborators in your field.