

What did you do?

We created a School of Psychology LinkedIn group for members of staff, current students and graduates.

Who is involved?

Administration staff and the senior tutor are overseeing the project, accepting new members, sending out invitations to join and posting on the group page.

How do you do it?

We incorporate LinkedIn with our regular careers events and with our graduation party. In November 2014 we held a School of Psychology careers event for students on all three stages of the degree course. Our Careers Service rep Lorna Dargan was present to explain to students the value of LinkedIn in addition to giving careers advice. A photographer was present to take formal photographs and we provided laptops so that students could join LinkedIn and set up their profiles on the day. We also had IT support on hand should they need any assistance.

At the graduation in 2015 we asked graduates to supply us with their email addresses so that we could invite them to join our LinkedIn group if they had not already done so. Invitations are currently being sent out by our administrator.

Our administrators make posts on the group page. These can be general posts to encourage discussion between group members but sometimes will be information regarding opportunities for our graduates.

Why do you do it?

LinkedIn helps us to stay in touch with our graduates to find out what they are doing after graduation and how their careers are developing. We expect that graduates will be more likely to complete the destination survey if they feel that we are involved in their career paths and keeping in touch using LinkedIn will also give us more information when writing references.

We believe that students are more likely to stay in touch if they are already members of the LinkedIn Group when they graduate consequently we promote membership from stage 1 onwards. We encourage all of our students from the very outset to think about their future careers / skills development, and LinkedIn helps us to do so.

Encouraging students to build a profile on LinkedIn is just one of the aspects of skills development that we undertake on the degree course.

We also expect that by having staff, students and graduates in the group, it will further strengthen the sense of a coherent school identity both within the school and beyond. This sense of identity is also promoted through our school Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Does it work?

As we have only recently begun on this venture, we have not collected enough data to carry out a thorough analysis. However, feedback from students who attended the Careers Event in November was positive. The LinkedIn photograph and advice from Lorna our Careers Rep were the most highly rated aspects of the event and the LinkedIn stand was rated as the second most appropriate stand at the event. Although the group is new, we already have over 60 members and we are receiving new requests regularly. Once the invitations to graduates have gone out we expect to see a rapid increase in numbers.

Your title	Using LinkedIn as an aid to student engagement and skills development
a. Coherent Curriculum themes	Skills and employability Student engagement
b. Students' Stage	Undergraduate, stages 1, 2 and 3. Graduates and staff.
c. Students' academic unit	Psychology
d. Learning technologies	Social networking
e. Type of interaction	Individual when setting up the profile, group when interacting on LinkedIn
f. Main trigger for your practice	Poor completion of the destination survey and difficulties in reference writing due to lack of information. Poor engagement with careers sessions in stages 1 and 2.
g. Tags	LinkedIn, social networking, skills development, careers, student engagement
Your name	Dr Val Tuck
Your email address	val.tuck@ncl.ac.uk
Your Academic Unit	School of Psychology
Your subject area	Individual differences