Finding opportunities through your contacts and networking
Why Network?

Networking is about making connections and building mutually beneficial relationships with people who can help you with your career development, and searching for work experience or employment.

Networking will help you to find out more about an industry sector, specific job role or what it’s really like to work for particular companies, from people working in the field. The more you know about the sector you want to work in and the duties of the specific jobs roles, the better placed you are to make important career decisions.

It can also help you identify opportunities that may not be formally advertised (the hidden job market) and offer insights that will help you when making applications and attending interviews.

Successful networking will:

- Establish contact with others who can provide information and insight into careers and institutions
- Raise awareness of ‘hidden’ opportunities
- Offer support and encouragement from those who have already been through the same experience
- Encourage you to request informational interviews. LinkedIn is a great way to explore this

How to network effectively

Be clear about what you are hoping to gain by making contact with each individual. Do you want to learn more about their experiences in the role or sector that you are interested in? Are you looking for a mentor? Do you want to find out about possible work experience or job opportunities?

An example starter question for networking either face-to-face or over email could be:

‘I’m exploring my options after I leave Manchester Metropolitan University and I am interested in pursuing a career in the financial sector. Would you be able to give me some advice about what skills are essential for this sector and how you gained relevant work experience?’

Remember to be professional in your approach, networking is a two-way process and should be an open discussion. Your contact may not be able to respond to your query right away.
Using your personal and alumni networks

The best people to give you advice about your job search are those who have been through the same experience. Talk to someone who is working in a job or career area that interests you. They can provide you with valuable insight, new contacts and possible work experience opportunities.

Personal Network
Think friends, family, family friends, academic staff and previous employers. Are they working, or have worked, in a role or sector which interests you? Get in touch via email, social media or by arranging a meeting, and start building your connections.

Student and alumni networks
Manchester Metropolitan University has over 280,000 alumni living across the world, with a further 10,000+ new graduates joining the community each year. Visit the Alumni website to read Alumni stories and learn from the Alumni Ambassadors who have volunteered to share their sector knowledge, career advice or academic insight to support students and new graduates: http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/alumni/meet/
You will also widen your network connections through LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/school/manchester-metropolitan-university/alumni/

Other Networking Opportunities

Events
Social and career events are a great opportunity to find and make new connections and build your network. The Careers & Employability Service organises a variety of events each term to give you the opportunity to meet employers from a range of sectors. To find out more about the range of upcoming careers fairs, employer networking events and presentations visit

http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/careers/students/how-we-can-help-you/careers-events-and-meet-employers/

External events can also provide great opportunities to meet people in the industry you want to work in. Prospects.ac.uk provide a detailed list of employer events and insight days taking place across the UK on their website here: www.prospects.ac.uk/events
Careers Fairs

Careers Fairs are a fantastic way to meet with employers, find out more about organisations and discover exciting job opportunities. The following information is designed to ensure that you make the most of the expert help available on the day!

“Remember to ask for business cards so you can follow up with employers after the event! LinkedIn is another great way to connect and network”

Do your research

Check the Fair programme in advance - Find out which organisations will be attending. There may also be presentations, talks, panel forums and workshops throughout the day; pick up an event programme & create a provisional itinerary.

Research the exhibitors you want to approach - Visit employers’ websites to gain an understanding of their background, recruitment process and potential opportunities.

Use your research to prepare a few questions - Tailor them to demonstrate your interest in what the employers do and show that you have researched the company beforehand.

Ensure your CV / LinkedIn profile is up to date - Some employers may accept them on the day. Try to tailor your CV to highlight the education, skills and work experience that are most relevant to your targeted companies. Make use of our daily drop in service where you can have your CV & LinkedIn profile reviewed.

Make Yourself Memorable

Present yourself well - Think about the image you want to project. Try to be confident and look professional. Employers are there to meet you, now is your time to shine!

Ask relevant questions - This is your chance to find out about a job from the people who do them. You might want to ask about company culture or how you could impress them in an interview or application. It is also your chance to find out more about graduate schemes or internship opportunities.

Take notes - Note down the names of the people you speak to and a reminder of the conversation to make future contact easier.

Follow up

Follow up contacts - try to follow up with each employer you spoke to during the event with an email. Remember to refer to the date and location of the fair, include parts of the conversation you had with the employer so that it makes it easier for them to remember you. Finally, include a copy of your CV / LinkedIn profile url within the email.
Top tips for networking via social media

* **Manage your online brand**
  Before you start connecting with employers and organisations you need to ensure you are represented professionally online. **Be aware of your social media footprint.** Social media allows employers to easily access a lot of information about you.
  Review how you are represented on Google and get advice on pro-actively managing your brand online here: [www.onlineidcalculator.com](http://www.onlineidcalculator.com)

* **Connect with your personal network**
  If you are starting to build your network, a good starting point can be to connect with your friends, family members, lecturers and University pages.

* **Find and follow organisations or individuals you are interested in**
  Connecting with potential employers online will allow you to build your knowledge of their upcoming opportunities, news and culture. You can also use the Manchester Met LinkedIn page to find alumni working in your sector of interest: [https://www.linkedin.com/school/manchester-metropolitan-university/alumni/](https://www.linkedin.com/school/manchester-metropolitan-university/alumni/)

* **Be engaged**
  Engaging with individuals or organisations via social media, re-tweeting, starting or joining conversations, can help to get you noticed. You could even share examples of your work, blog posts or videos to improve your online identity.

**Careers & Employability Support**

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of networking support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- **Careers Events:** Meet employers and enhance your employability by attending our workshops, employer events and careers fairs.

- **Jobs Hub drop-In:** Available Monday-Friday 1pm-4pm, our Careers & Employability Assistants are available to offer job seeking, networking and application advice.
MMyou

**Step 1.** Log-in to My Career Hub with your username and password

**Step 2.** Click ‘Launch MMyou Careers Centre’ in the navigation menu

Search for the following titles on the MMyou homepage

* How can networking help my job search (Article)
* How to ask my network for help (Video)
* 5 tips to attract potential employers on LinkedIn (Tips)

For more information visit [http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/careers/](http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/careers/)