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## **Incorporating LinkedIn Preparation in the Classroom for Graduating Students**

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After teaching for more than a decade as educators in higher learning institutions, from pre-diploma level to degree level, preparing students to face the working world is a more challenging task now compared to before. One of the challenges is the use of social media. Many are not aware that before recruitment, many organizations perform preemployment background screenings on job candidates (Cotriss, 2025).

This screening is done on the candidates' activities on social media including what they post, like or comment on various platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, X, or the latest one, Thread. However, this does not mean that students should avoid using social media altogether. Instead, they should leverage on one of the platforms that they can benefit from while searching for jobs, which is LinkedIn.



### **What is LinkedIn?**

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that is designed to connect organizations, employers, or individuals for the purposes of knowledge sharing, recruitment, as well as career development. As opposed to other social media platforms, it focuses on the construction of professional identity and the establishment of career-related connections (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Lately, LinkedIn has obtained stature in higher education and employment contexts. This is because it provides both graduates and students opportunities to magnify their visibility to employers as well as improve their employability prospects. In many cases, human resource practitioners are starting to use LinkedIn increasingly for the purpose of acquiring talent and engaging with candidates proactively (Weatherly, 2024). Therefore, it is essential that students, especially graduates, are taught how to leverage LinkedIn to increase their chances of getting hired.

### **Preparing Students for the Workplace**

As mentioned earlier, approaching graduation, one of the most critical challenges students experience is preparing to transition into the professional world. To bridge this gap, UiTM offers mandatory courses such as *English for Job Interview* and *English for Oral Reporting*. These courses are specifically designed to

develop essential skills for the workplace, such as:

- Preparing and performing effectively in job interviews.
- Mastering oral and written communication in professional settings.
- Developing confidence in both face-to-face and online presentations.
- Learning how to write email cover letters, design e-resumes, and answer job interview questions using structured methods like **STAR** (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

In today's competitive job market, employers often conduct pre-employment background checks, not only through resumes but also through candidates' online presence. This highlights the importance of integrating LinkedIn training into the curriculum alongside traditional job application skills such as resume and cover letter writing. By doing so, students can be equipped with:

- Up-to-date digital skills that reflect current hiring practices.
- A strong professional online presence that complements their academic qualifications.
- The ability to network with industry professionals and discover hidden job opportunities

For example, courses could include assignments where students are required to build a professional LinkedIn profile, engage with industry-related content, and connect with alumni or professionals in their chosen field. This would help students understand how LinkedIn functions not only as a job search platform but also as a lifelong career development tool.

Although traditional resume writing and interview preparation have been incorporated in higher education for a long time, the emergence of professional social networking platforms has reconstructed the way employers and graduates connect. Here, LinkedIn has emerged as the prime tool for career development, professional identity building, as well as networking (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This is why incorporating preparation of LinkedIn into classroom teaching is increasingly vital to ensure graduates are equipped with the necessary digital literacy skills for employability.

### **Benefits of Introducing LinkedIn in Class**

Some of the advantages that graduating students will obtain when they learn to prepare their resume on LinkedIn are:

## 1. Increasing Employability and Career Readiness

LinkedIn is not a normal online resume. It is a digital resume that allows students to accentuate their education, experiences, skills, and recommendations. Before making hiring decisions, employers can screen candidates through LinkedIn which makes it critical for the candidates to have a polished and complete profile. Thus, it is important to integrate LinkedIn training in class to help students learn to craft impactful professional profiles.

## 2. Improving Visibility to Employers

With LinkedIn, graduating students are more visible to recruiters and organizations across industries and geographical boundaries, unlike traditional job search strategies. This visibility is not only for local potential employers, but also for those overseas. This increases these students' chances of being hired both locally and internationally.

## 3. Building Professional Networks

In career advancement, networking plays a crucial role. When students use LinkedIn, they are able to connect with alumni, industry professionals, and potential

mentors, which helps to create opportunities for collaboration and career guidance. Having professional networks not only expands career options but also provides learning opportunities via the exchange of knowledge and digital scholarship. Thus, educators can assist students in understanding the importance of building long-term career success through networking.

## 4. Developing a Professional Presence Online

In this day and age, it is common for employers to evaluate candidates' online presence. A LinkedIn profile that is professional and well-managed indicates credibility and commitment to one's career path. Thus, preparing students to manage their digital footprint decreases the risks of online presentations that are unprofessional and prepares them to strategically present their personal brand.

## 5. Developing Lifelong Career

Last but not least, LinkedIn is not only beneficial for securing a first job after graduation, but it also supports lifelong career growth. By using the platform, students are allowed to continuously learn

through webinars, articles, and professional groups. Teaching them to take advantage of these features inculcates habits of lifelong learning and adaptability. It is essential for graduating students to possess these qualities as they are highly valued in the ever-changing job market.

While traditional resume writing and interview preparation remain vital, the modern job market demands that graduates also excel in their digital presence. A well-prepared graduate is not just someone who can perform well in an interview, but also someone who can showcase their skills, experience, and professionalism on platforms like LinkedIn. Integrating LinkedIn preparation into classroom instruction provides graduating students with countless advantages. The benefits include improved employability, enhanced visibility to recruiters, broader professional networks, and greater digital presence. Considering that employers rely on LinkedIn increasingly for the purposes of recruitment and professional evaluation, educators at higher learning institutions should prioritize training that is LinkedIn-related as part of career preparation. By combining communication-focused courses with LinkedIn integration, universities like UiTM can ensure their graduates enter the workforce with both the confidence and the tools needed to succeed.

## Reference

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