
Creating Your Professional Profile

What is a Professional Profile?

A professional profile is a brief summary of your skills, strengths, and key experiences. It also should convey what you are seeking or what you have to offer the person reading it. The professional profile can be used as your elevator speech—the in-person introduction that serves as a starting-point to networking at job fairs or professional gatherings. Or, it can be used in a LinkedIn profile or other written materials to garner interest in what you have to offer in a professional capacity. Here are some guidelines for creating a compelling professional profile:

Keep it brief and focused

Of course there are plenty of wonderful things you could say about your background and skills. Employers and potential mentors just want to know the most relevant information. Try to stick to 500 characters or less (about three tweets), or a short paragraph.

Consider your audience

Knowing who will be reading your profile will inform the kind of information you include. Feel free to include jargon or technical information if the audience knows what you're talking about, but stick to transferable skills and personal qualities if they don't.

Illustrate with examples

“Strong communication skills” and “leadership qualities” don't mean much to employers without context. Draw from extracurricular activities, research experience, coursework, volunteer or work experience to provide examples of your skills.

Be clear about what you're seeking

Want to secure an internship or full-time position upon graduation? Just looking for information about a career field you're considering? There's a big difference, and people like to know how they will be helping you. Make it easy for them by being open about your expectations.

Lead with eye-catching words and phrases

Statements within professional profiles tend to be sentence fragments that emphasize your transferable skills (see examples below). In addition, work to convey your enthusiasm and personality as much as you can.

Here are some examples of professional profiles for Chemistry majors:

- *LOOKING FOR MY SCIENTIFIC NICHE.* Spending summer at U of M-Twin Cities in environmental materials science research. Intending to go to grad school but also interested to learn about other post-college opportunities or jobs. Would love to find a job in food or environmental science. Have worked as a New Student Mentor to develop my leadership and organization skills. Advice and referrals greatly appreciated.
- *JUNIOR CHEMISTRY MAJOR LOOKING FOR A RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY THIS SUMMER.* Particularly interested in organic, bioorganic, or biochemical research, but open to anything. Excited and enthusiastic about science and would appreciate any opportunity to apply my academic background to a

practical research question. Extensive laboratory experience from Hamline and have mastered most chemical techniques. Thank you so much for any information or contacts you might have.

- *AMBITIOUS* and *DILIGENT* chemistry major seeking a summer internship in *BUSINESS* or *CONSULTING*. Problem-solving, analytical, and communication skills developed through chemistry research projects and leadership experience. Interpersonal skills honed through various extracurricular activities including track team and organizing on-campus events and programs. If no opportunities come to mind I would also love to talk about your career path and experiences with your company. Thank you!

Schedule an appointment with a career counselor for additional assistance on personal branding, networking, or the job and internship search.