



# Handshake Profile Guide

Handshake is the **No. 1 career site where college students are finding internships and jobs.** Your Handshake profile allows you to add important details about you and your career interests, thereby making it easier for employers to find you and for Handshake to recommend jobs, internships or events based on your career interests.



## The Value of Using Handshake

- Handshake is specifically geared toward college students and recent graduates without much experience who are looking to land their first internships or jobs. In other words, Handshake is great because none of the jobs posted need 10 years of experience!
- Handshake has more than 5 million active student users, 900 college and university partners (including Northwestern College), and 500,000 employers, including 100% of the Fortune 500 companies.

## How to Access Handshake

There are three ways to get to Handshake:

- Go to [joinhandshake.com](https://joinhandshake.com).
- Go to [my.nwciowa.edu](https://my.nwciowa.edu) and click on the yellow Handshake button.
- Click on the Handshake icon on the Compass Center website: <https://www.nwciowa.edu/compass-center>

Then, activate your profile using your NWC email and password.



Employers are conducting **25,000** searches per month to fill open positions. If you have a complete profile, a recruiter is **5X** more likely to contact you. Your goal is to provide as much information as possible about yourself so that you are visible in company searches.

25,000



# How to Create a Handshake Profile

## THE BASICS

- Include a **professional headshot**. Your professional headshot should be **up-to-date and high quality with good lighting and a neutral background**. Do not use a picture where you have cropped someone out, you are holding your pet, or you are on summer vacation. Show your professional self!
- Follow the advice at the top of your profile page to “Build Your Profile Faster” by **uploading your resume**. Handshake will auto-populate much of your experience.
- Write a profile statement under “My Journey” that succinctly tells employers who you are, what you are interested in, and your top skills and abilities. Consider highlighting your experience, your mission, your accomplishments or your personality; the important thing is to make it short and powerful!
  - o **Example 1:** “I am a detail-oriented and enthusiastic Northwestern College student with experience supporting students in international, creative and justice-focused programs. I desire to apply my administrative and communication skills in a full-time opportunity in higher education.”
  - o **Example 2:** “As a child, itemizing my brother’s Halloween candy was my favorite project. As president of my college’s Student Government Association, fighting for new campus policies captured my time and attention. Today my volunteer role with Best Buddies has become a labor of love. I have always been driven to build structures that help people and organizations thrive.”
  - o **Example 3:** “I’m a young professional hoping to leverage my retail banking experience to move into a career in finance. I love working with teams and diverse cultures, and I take a special joy in helping my friends and colleagues in the West understand people and events in the Middle East. I also love outdoor activities and sports of any kind.”

## EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- List relevant **educational details**, including degree, graduation date, minor and GPA (if a 3.0 or higher).
- Highlight your **work and volunteer experience**.
  - o Use strong action verbs, be specific and quantify experiences whenever possible, and focus on the skills you learned in each role.
  - o Do not shy away from listing past volunteer experiences; even if you were not paid, volunteer roles help you gain valuable experience and skills.
- Include any **organizations and extra-curricular activities** in which you have been involved. Student organizations, clubs, athletic teams, service trips and musical ensembles can play a role in helping you develop transferable skills like leadership, organization and teamwork.
- List **relevant courses** you have taken to prove you have the educational background employers are seeking.
- In the **projects** section, include any work you have done that showcases your skills, including a portfolio, writing samples, websites you created, publications, presentations or class projects. If you are especially proud of your senior thesis or a work project from an internship, include that here.

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# How to Create a Handshake Profile (continued)

## RELEVANT TO RECRUITERS

- Select personalized **skills** to include in your profile. Recruiters may be searching for students on Handshake with keywords related to the skills they seek, so select the most relevant skills for your desired field. But always be honest; if you do not possess a desired skill yet, then do not list it.
- Under **“Your Interests,”** which is only visible to employers, be as specific as possible. Indicate that you are currently looking for a job or internship, and list the types you would consider (i.e. part-time, full-time, on-campus). Also, add specific information about **location, roles and industries** if you are limiting your job search to certain cities, positions or fields.
- Make your **profile public** (select “community” under the privacy settings in your account information).
- Under **personal information**, your Northwestern email is automatically populated. You may also choose to include a permanent email address. Consider adding links to your LinkedIn page or a professional portfolio—and maybe your Instagram site if you have a photography gig or to Vimeo if you are building your video business—but do not include links to personal social media sites.
- If you are actively applying to jobs within a specific field, **consider uploading your updated resume** in the documents section. Do not upload cover letters or other documents that you should tailor to each application.

# How to Connect with Others on Handshake

## 1 Look into job roles and industries that might be a good fit for you.

- To explore job roles of interest, click on “Career Paths” from the main Handshake page.
- Explore roles and mark as “Interested.”

## 2 Get to know employers.

- Read student reviews of employers.
- “Follow” employers of interest.
- Keep track of employers who have viewed your profile and “favorite” them to let them know you are interested.
- Attend a virtual event.

## 3 Seek the expertise of other students.

- Message other students with questions, especially if they have worked in the field you are interested in or have experience at a company you would like to learn more about.
- Explore the Q&A library.

## 4 Search by “Jobs” and apply! Also, look for personalized job recommendations in your inbox.



## Connect with the Compass Center via Handshake

- Make an appointment via Handshake with a staff member in the Compass Center for help with all your career-related needs.
- Register for career-related events.
- Apply for jobs on campus and internships for academic credit.