

Informational Interview

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BIO
SCI

UC San Diego
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Informational Interview

What is it?

- An informational interview is a conversation that is had between you and an industry professional so that you can:
 1. Build your network and learn about the industry professional
 2. Learn about their position and field to explore if it is something you're interested in
 3. Learn about the company to see if you'd be interested in applying
- You can ask questions about the industry professional's career path, the company they work at and the culture, the expectations and responsibilities of their role and field, and more.

Who do you interview?

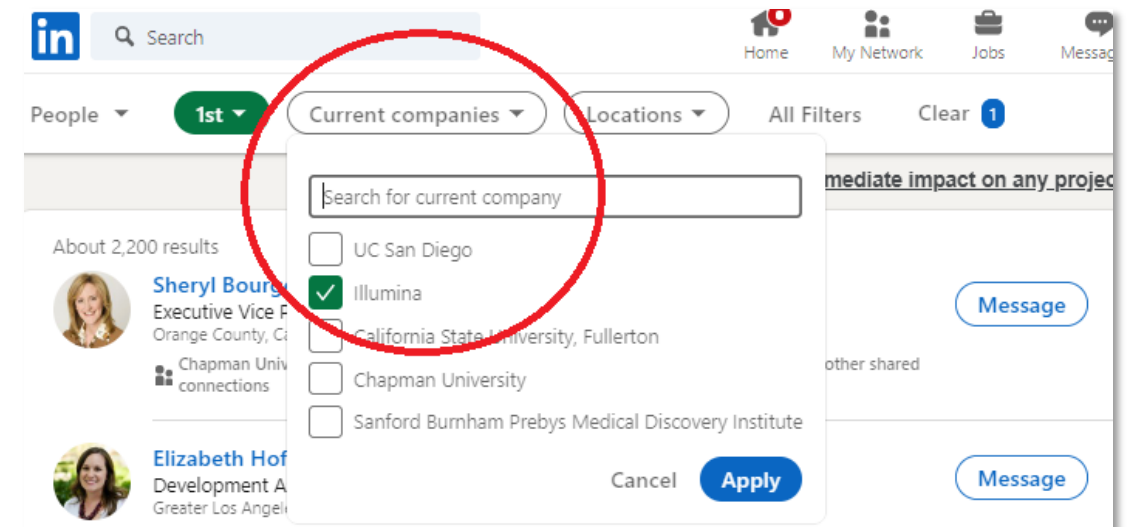
- Interview an industry professional who you are interested learning from. They can be:
 1. **An early career professional:** You can learn about how they got to where they are since it wasn't too long ago that they were a job-seeking student like yourself.
 2. **A mid-to-senior management professional:** You can learn how they advanced their career and make early plans to advance your career. This is a great opportunity to connect with a hiring manager who might hire you someday.

How to Find Professionals to Interview

- You can reach out to people who you already know to interview, such as family friends and faculty.
- Additionally, you can use LinkedIn to find industry professionals in the following ways:
 1. Go to [Melissa Hoon's LinkedIn page](#) (you must be her connection) and search her connections (many are life sciences industry professionals)
 2. Go to [UC San Diego's LinkedIn page](#) and search its alumni
 3. Go to the [LinkedIn page of a company](#) you're interested in working at and search the people who work there

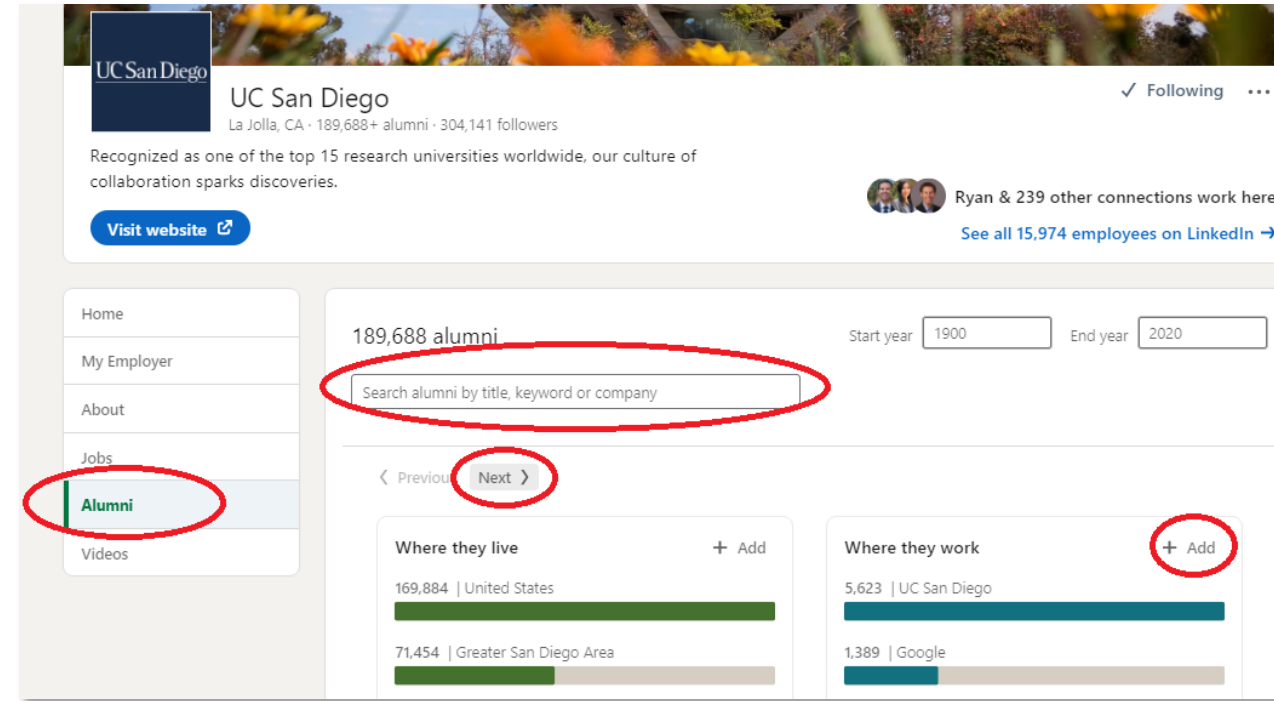
How to Search Someone's LinkedIn Connections

- Depending on how many LinkedIn connections you have, LinkedIn might only allow you to send connection requests to people you are already connected with. Therefore, you might need to find industry professionals to interview by searching Melissa Hoon's connections.
- Once you are connected with her on LinkedIn, follow these steps:
 1. Go to Melissa's page: [linkedin.com/in/melissahoon](https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissahoon)
 2. Click on "[500+ connections](#)" under her name
 3. You can scroll through her connections or filter by selecting or typing in a company under "Current companies"



How to Search UC San Diego Alumni

- Nearly 200,000 UC San Diego alumni are on LinkedIn. Follow these steps for how to search who you'd like to connect with:
 - Go to UC San Diego's LinkedIn page:
[linkedin.com/school/ucsandiego/mycompany](https://www.linkedin.com/school/ucsandiego/mycompany)
 - Click "Alumni" on the left
 - Filter your search by selecting the following:
 - Where they live: Greater San Diego Area
 - Where they work: A company you're interested in
 - What they do: A field you're interested in
 - What they study: Your major
- Keep this in mind when narrowing your search:
 - You don't need to select "Greater San Diego Area," but if you do, you could follow up and have coffee in person with them post-pandemic
 - You don't need to select anything for "Where they work," "What they do" or "What they studied"; if you don't see something you're interested in in these areas, you can click "+Add" and type what you'd like
 - You can type anything you'd like into the search bar that says "Search alumni by title..." For example, type a position title you're interested in, or type job titles to find early career professionals (type "assistant") or mid-to-senior professionals (type "director")
 - Click "Next" to see more criteria to narrow your search
 - Alumni will appear below your search criteria



How to Search UC San Diego Alumni

Alumni will appear below your search criteria

The screenshot shows the UC San Diego LinkedIn Alumni page. A red oval highlights the search filters: "33 alumni", "Search alumni by title, keyword or company", and filters for "Biology, General", "Research", "Illumina", and "Greater San Diego Area". Below the filters, there are two bar charts: "Where they live" (35 | United States, 33 | Greater San Diego Area, 1 | Canada) and "Where they work" (148 | UC San Diego, 38 | UC San Diego Health, 33 | Illumina). At the bottom, a list of alumni is shown, including Carlo Randise, Amina Bisevac, Beena Murthy, and Lisa Watson, each with their profile picture, name, title, and a "Connect" or "Message" button.

UC San Diego

La Jolla, CA · 189,688+ alumni · 304,141 followers

Recognized as one of the top 15 research universities worldwide, our culture of collaboration sparks discoveries.

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33 alumni

Start year 1900 End year 2020

Search alumni by title, keyword or company

Biology, General × Research × Illumina × Greater San Diego Area × Clear all

Where they live

35 | United States

33 | Greater San Diego Area

1 | Canada

Where they work

148 | UC San Diego

38 | UC San Diego Health

33 | Illumina

Show more

Carlo Randise-... · 2nd Senior Scientist - R&D Assay Development at Illumina '10 B.S., double major: Biolo... 2 shared connections Connect

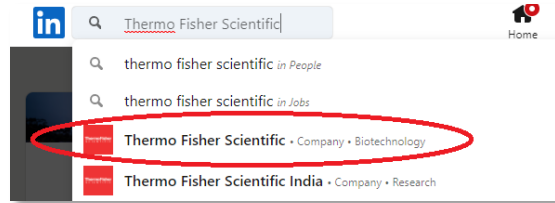
Amina Bisevac · 2nd Associate Director, Process Development and Transfer a... '99 Biology 18 shared connections Connect

Beena Murthy · 2nd Associate Scientist 1 at Illumina '14 Cognitive Science w/ Ne... 3 shared connections Connect

Lisa Watson · 1st Staff Scientist at Illumina '04 Biochemistry and Cell Bi... 11 shared connections Message

How to Search a Company's Employees

1. Type the company's name in the search box and click on the company



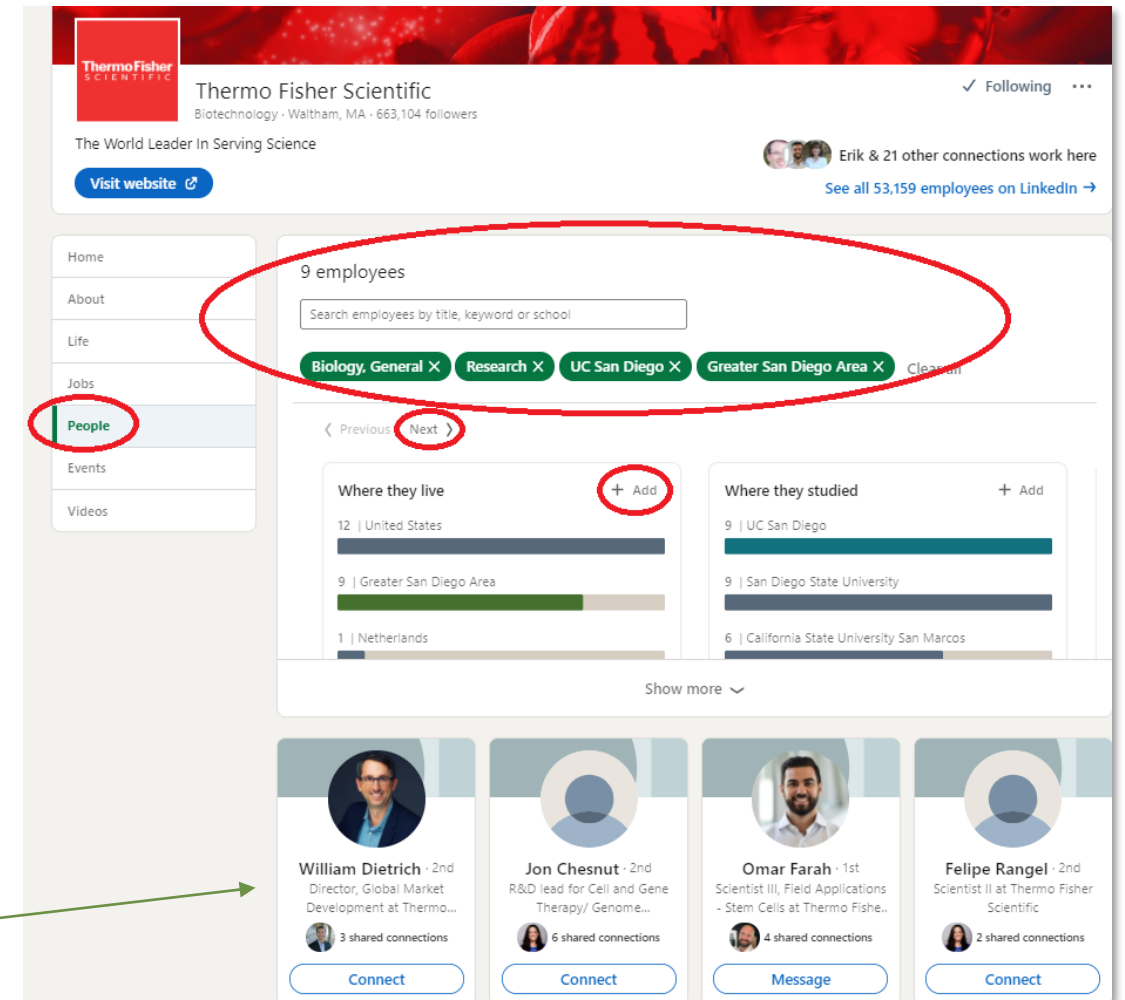
2. Click "People" on the left

3. Filter your search by selecting the following:

- Where they live: Greater San Diego Area
- Where they studied: UC San Diego
- What they do: A field you're interested in
- What they study: Your major

4. Keep this in mind when narrowing your search:

- You don't need to select "Greater San Diego Area," but if you do, you could follow up and have coffee in person with them post-pandemic
- You don't need to select "UC San Diego," but alumni are generally more willing to speak with you
- You don't need to select anything for "Where they live," "What they do" or "What they studied"; if you don't see something you're interested in in these areas, you can click "+Add" and type what you'd like
- You can type anything you'd like into the search bar that says "Search alumni by title..." For example, type a position title you're interested in, or type job titles to find early career professionals (type "assistant") or mid-to-senior professionals (type "director")
- Click "Next" to see more criteria to narrow your search
- Employees will appear below your search criteria



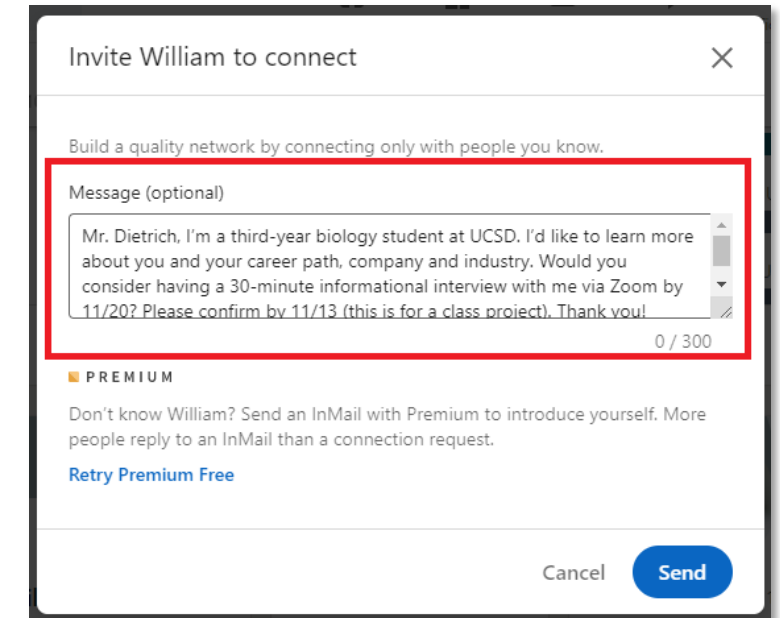
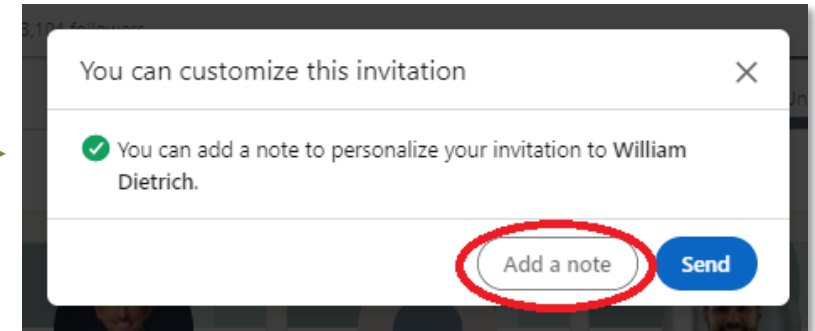
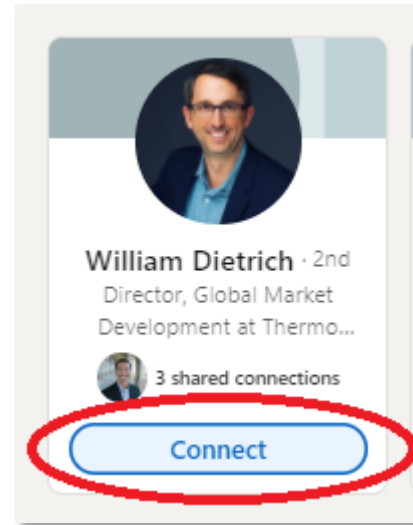
How to Message Industry Professionals

- Since you don't know how many people will respond to you, start by sending a message to 10 industry professionals.
- Once one person confirms, you can stop sending messages to people.
- You only need to interview one person for this assignment. If more than one person responds to you, you are welcome to interview more people. The more people, the better, as long as it fits your schedule.

How to Message Industry Professionals

- Send them a “Connect” request along with a “Note”
- Your note must be a maximum of 300 characters
- Write something like this:

THEIR FORMAL NAME [Ms./Mr./Dr. Last Name], I’m a [first, second, third, fourth]-year YOUR MAJOR student at UC San Diego. I’d like to learn more about you and your career path, company and industry. Would you consider having a 30-minute informational interview with me via Zoom by Nov. 20? Please confirm by Nov. 13. Thank you, YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME



How to Schedule Your Interview

- Once someone responds to you, **respond within 24 hours** by offering 5 windows of time you're available during M-F 8 a.m.-7 p.m. PST.
- Once they confirm a time that they are available, **respond within 24 hours** by sending them a Zoom link for that time and thank them for supporting you.

How to Structure the Informational Interview

- 30 minutes will go by VERY quickly. Use your time wisely be preparing.
 - **First 5 minutes or less:** Thank them for taking the time to talk with you and briefly introduce yourself. Let them know you will be taking notes. Definitely take notes!
 - **Next 15-20 minutes:** Ask them questions.
 - **Last 5 minutes:** Thank them again.
- **Do not under any circumstances go over 30 minutes.** It is up to you to keep the time in order to be respectful and professional and make a positive first impression.

How to Introduce Yourself

- This is about them, not you. You only have 30 minutes and that will go by quickly. Don't spend most of the time talking about yourself.
- Instead, briefly introduce yourself: Name, major, year in school, what industry/role you're interested in, a very brief reason why you're interested in this), and a very brief overview of your experience.
Example: "I worked in _____ lab last year."
- While the interview is for you to ask them questions, they might ask a bit about you. Be prepared to answer any questions they might ask you, such as "Why are you interested in pursuing this career path?"

Sample Questions to Ask the Professional

These are only examples of questions. Be sure to come up with 10-15 of your own questions and ask relevant questions that would help you in pursuit of your career interests. You'll probably have time to ask approximately 5-8 questions, but have extra questions prepared in case there is time.

- How has your position, company and industry changed during the pandemic? Do you have advice on how to pursue internships?
- What do you enjoy about your role?
- What inspired you to pursue your career path?
- What are the challenges you have faced to get to where you are and how did you overcome those challenges?
- What is something you would have done differently in your career pursuit?
- What are your career goals and how do you plan to achieve them?

How to Close the Interview

- Thank them again for taking the time to talk with you.
- Cite something interesting you learned and thank them for that.
Example: “I especially appreciated your sharing _____ with me. I think that will really help me with _____.”
- You must send a thank you note within 24 hours of conducting your informational interview.