

## Guidelines for Using the Professional Network Database

The Professional Network Database has been designed to aid UMaine students and alumni with career information gathering, the development of effective job search strategies, and in some cases, career exploration such as through job shadowing. Participants in the Database are UMaine alumni from Maine, throughout New England, and in other regions of the country who have agreed to provide UMaine students and fellow alumni with information about their respective fields of work. The Professional Network Database is a volunteer network and should be used with discretion and courtesy.

Students can locate professionals and find more information about them by searching the Professional Network Database at [umaine.edu/career/studentsalumni/maine-mentor-program/](http://umaine.edu/career/studentsalumni/maine-mentor-program/). Jotting down the Record Number(s) of the selected professional(s) before your appointment is helpful. After discussing your career interests with a counselor from the Career Center, you will be given the names and contact information of the selected alumni professionals. We ask that you follow the steps listed below when contacting a professional referral.

1. The primary purpose of the Professional Network Database is to provide you with career information. In a few instances, your interviews for career information may lead to employment referrals; however, do not send a resume unless specifically requested to do so by the alumni professional.
2. You may begin by sending a brief typed letter of introduction (usually to the business address unless otherwise specified) or, if you prefer, make your initial contact by phone or e-mail. In either case tell the professional that you were referred to him/her through the Professional Network Database. Explain your purpose and be clear about the type of information you are seeking. If you are sending a letter of introduction, say you will be following up with a phone call in the next week or two to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time. If the initial contact is by phone, inquire about a convenient meeting time and request no more than an hour of the professional's time. If *they* suggest a longer meeting, then it's up to the two of you.
3. For the actual meeting, be prompt and dress professionally. Prepare in advance a list of questions you want to ask or categories of information you hope to cover. You may get off the track but by preparing in advance, you will provide some organization to the meeting in order to maximize your contact's time and your own. A Zoom "meeting" may be possible in lieu of a face-to-face meeting.
4. After your meeting with the alumni contact, follow-up with a brief thank you note. Since the Professional Network Database is a volunteer program, your courtesy and professionalism will help keep the alumni professionals actively interested and involved and will enable the program to continue for future students.
5. One last step - we need to hear about your experience using the Professional Network Database. Please be sure to give us some feedback about your experience, observations, or even suggestions for improving the program. If you wish, you may e-mail your feedback and suggestions to [umainecareercenter@maine.edu](mailto:umainecareercenter@maine.edu).
6. Finally - *the referrals given to you were specifically matched to your career interests. We ask that you do not give out your alumni professional names to other students, friends or alumni.*

For the success of the program, we keep detailed records of who we refer to various alumni professionals. If you know of other UMaine students or alumni who are interested in using the program, please refer them directly to the Career Center. We would be happy to match their career interests to appropriate professionals.