There are four simple steps to follow in order to grow your online professional network:

**Step one: Make sure your LinkedIn profile is the best it can be**

Not sure how to create a LinkedIn profile or need help improving it? Don’t worry, it’s not difficult, there are a wealth of resources online, such as [this helpful article](#) with practical tips. Just go to [LinkedIn.com](http://www.linkedin.com), sign up and get started.

**Top tip:** Don’t forget to put ‘Royal Holloway, University of London’ in your education field – this will indicate to other alumni and students that you’re part of the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College community.

**Step two: Use the alumni search directory**

Do you want to know where graduates with the same degree as you pursued their careers? Do you have a particular company in mind and want to see if alumni from Royal Holloway already work there? With the LinkedIn alumni search directory, you can filter your searches based on where alumni work geographically, which sector they are employed in, which companies they are employed by and what they studied. You can also then browse the individual LinkedIn profiles returned by your specific search.

To find the search directory, make sure you have Royal Holloway, University of London in your education field on your LinkedIn profile and go to [www.linkedin.com/alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni) or click [here](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni).

Again, there is a range of resources dedicated to helping you use the alumni search directory; [this article](#) is particularly helpful.

**Step three: Reach out to an alumnus/a**

If you’ve found an interesting alumnus/a who you think would be able to answer some important questions for you, then try approaching that person to start a conversation. If you have a 2nd degree or closer connection with a LinkedIn user then you can view their profile, and having your institution in common should make starting a conversation easier.
When you write a message or are sending a connection request to an alumnus/a, they won’t know you but they may be willing to help. You will have a maximum of 300 characters to include a message in your connection request. It’s a good idea to explain who you are and why you are contacting them.

If they accept your connection request, send a follow up message to thank them and go into further detail about who you are and what you’d like to discuss.

Click this link for some practical tips on how to communicate on LinkedIn.

**Step four: Remember to help fellow alumni or current students**
Finally, if you are fortunate enough to receive help, guidance or advice from a fellow alumnus/a, please remember the gesture and consider returning the favour in future. Current students or recent graduates may approach you for advice or information, so please repay the generosity by sharing your time with them. Thank you.