

## Professional Associations

Professional associations are organizations composed of members who share a common interest in a given career field. Members include students, entry-level professionals, and seasoned professionals, creating an excellent opportunity for students to network and access insider information.

The structures of associations vary but often incorporate a national or international presence. To better serve members, some associations have regional, state, and local chapters. Others may have student chapters, some even specific to individual institutions. Additionally, some associations may be further divided into subgroups, called special interest groups, which concentrate on a specific area in a career field.

Most associations require members to pay dues; students are often provided a special, discounted rate.

In addition to valuable networking, professional associations also provide members with information, services, and products to encourage exploration, awareness, and development of the career field. Such benefits may include:

- Conferences and professional development seminars
- Membership meetings and online forums
- Published journals, articles, and newsletters
- Comprehensive information about the field, market trends, salary surveys, etc.
- Job and internship postings
- Special affiliations with employers

Joining a professional association as a student is an excellent way to gain a competitive edge, demonstrating commitment to expanding one’s breadth of knowledge in a desired career field.

## Finding Professional Associations

Check out the links below to help identify professional associations and other academic organizations:

Weddle’s Association Dictionary	<a href="http://www.weddles.com/associations">www.weddles.com/associations</a>
The Center for Association Leadership	<a href="http://www.asaecenter.org/Community/Directories/associationsearch.cfm">www.asaecenter.org/Community/Directories/associationsearch.cfm</a>
Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Outlook Handbook	<a href="http://www.bls.gov/OCO">www.bls.gov/OCO</a>
Utica College Academic, Major, and Career Related Clubs	<a href="http://www.utica.edu/student/activities/organizations">www.utica.edu/student/activities/organizations</a>