As a graduate student, you must familiarize yourself with current scholarship and debates in your field, interdisciplinary developments, and job market trends. Obviously, the coursework you complete during your first years of graduate school is the starting point for learning the debates, methodologies, and history of your discipline. Beyond this, you need to look outward to the professional activities that define your field worldwide.

**PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS**

- Ask your professors and other graduate students about the major journals in your discipline
- Read these publications, not cover to cover, but selectively, to pick up on key debates shaping your field.
- Check out the major journals in your discipline to learn how scholars converse with each other and what published research looks like in your discipline.
- Identify your discipline’s sub-fields and consider which field appeals most to you and why.

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Your discipline’s professional associations and organizations will help you stay current with developments in your field, so it’s important to identify the appropriate associations and familiarize yourself with their resources.

- Ask other graduate students which organizations they belong to, and find out from your advisors which professional associations and organizations you should join.
- Explore these organizations’ websites, which often feature conference announcements, calls for papers, job listings, and sometimes career resources.

**NETWORKING**

In all careers, people develop groups of contacts with whom they share information and resources in ways that are mutually productive. Such networks don’t just happen; they are built through extended effort. Graduate students need to make a conscious effort to communicate with other scholars at conferences and over email. Doing so is a good way to begin to participate in your discipline’s discourse and to build professional connections that can last for decades.

The rules of networking vary across the professions, so it’s a good idea to familiarize yourself with the norms in academia. Phil Agre’s “A Guide to Professional Skills for PhD Students” includes a useful chapter on networking. You can download the entire guide at [http://vlsicad.ucsd.edu/Research/Advice/network.html](http://vlsicad.ucsd.edu/Research/Advice/network.html). Marie desJardins has advice about exactly how to network at [http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html](http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html).