

## Informational Interview

### What is an informational interview?

It is *not* a formal a job interview, but an informal conversation on getting firsthand relevant information about the realities of working in a specific field or position in an area you are interested in.

This will help you better understand the position or field you are interested in and give you an opportunity to learn tips and insider knowledge about how to better prepare and land the position you want.

### Steps:

1. Research Career Field you are interested in
  - a. Conduct initial research on field online, attending job fairs, information sessions, etc.
2. Finding someone to interview
  - a. Research online such as social media sites or LinkedIn. Research and reach out to professionals in your areas of interests.
  - b. What is networking? What are you doing? How do you do it?
    - i. Networking is connecting with people who work in the same field you are interested in.
    - ii. Check to see if your undergraduate institution has an Alumni Association or if your school will be hosting events and speakers that are relevant. Check out any Alumni spotlights that may be featured.
    - iii. Do not be afraid to connect (email, phone). If person you are interested is giving out their info – use it to your advantage!
  - c. Pursue your own contacts, people you already may know (even in different fields)
    - i. Friends, family, co-workers, peers, anybody that you may think will help!
    - ii. Connect with alumni, classmates, professors, and even teachers from your past who could help you.
  - d. Ask the programs you are considering if they can put you in touch with a current student or alumni.
3. Prepare for interview
  - a. Plan open ended questions that need more than a “yes” or “no” response.
    - i. For example, *How do you get into this line of work? What do you enjoy about it? What do you find challenging or difficult? What’s changing in the sector? What are the vital steps someone should take to prepare for a role like yours? What past professional experiences allowed you to excel in your current position? What kinds of people do well in this industry?*
  - b. Prepare an abstract of your background and what you’re looking for from the interaction.
  - c. Be ready to be genuinely curious about the other person and their career/position.

4. Initiate Contact
  - a. Contact by email or phone and emphasize you are looking for **information** NOT a job.
  - b. Set-up a mutually convenient time for 20-30-minute appointment.
  - c. Be ready to ask questions and to write down any notes.
5. Conduct Informational Interview
  - a. Briefly introduce yourself and goals of the meeting. Let the conversation flow naturally. Be ready to listen and respond appropriately with a genuine curiosity.
  - b. Dress as you would to a job interview (if meeting is in-person or on video conferencing).
  - c. Bring a list of questions and take notes.
  - d. Objective is to get information and advice, **NOT** a job!
  - e. Limit meeting to agreed up time (20-30 min).
  - f. Ask person if they can contact them in the future and ask for names of other people to meet as to gain different perspectives.
6. Follow-up
  - a. Be courteous and appreciative of their time.
  - b. Stay connected after the interview, this person is now part of your network!