

Informational Interviews

What is an Informational Interview?

An informational Interview is a brief meeting between a person (you) who wants to investigate a career and a person working in that career. It is a meeting that you initiate, and it usually lasts 20-30 minutes. Your goal is to gather information about a particular career or field and determine whether it is a fit for you. This is not a job interview.

How to arrange an Informational Interview

Make a list of people that you already know: family, friends, professors, alumni, past co-workers. Use LinkedIn and other social media.

Professional Associations or organizations can be a helpful place to make connections.

Contact them and arrange a time and place to meet, either face to face or using technology.

When contacting a person (by phone, email, or social media), introduce yourself, tell them a little bit about why you are contacting them and ask to meet briefly so that you can learn more about the career or field.

Prepare for the Interview

Decide what information you would like to obtain about the career or field.

Write out the questions that you will ask. Don't ask questions that you can learn the answers to from their web site. (Samples questions are on the next page.)

Plan appropriate dress for in person or online meeting.

Conduct the Interview

Arrive on time (5-10 minutes early)

Treats this as you would a job interview. Smile and make good eye contact.

Ask your prepared questions.

Thank the person at the end.

After the Interview

Send a thank you note within 24 hours.

Stay in contact with the person, build the relationship.

Informational Interview – Sample Questions to Ask

- How did you choose this career/field or job?
- Can you tell me about your career path?
- What does a typical day in your job look like?
- What do you like the most/least about your job?
- What does an entry level job look like in this field?
- What skills or experience are important for this job?
- What credentials, degrees, licenses are required for entry into this field?
- What do you find rewarding about this job?
- What aspects of this job are a challenge for you?
- Is there anything that you would have done differently in college based on what you know about the career/field now?
- What tips or strategies would you recommend for breaking into the field?
- Do you belong to any professional organizations?
- What opportunities are there with your organization for professional development and advancement?
- If you hired someone today, what factors would be most important in your hiring decision and why? Education? Experience? Skills? Personality?
- Based in our conversation, what other people do you believe that I should talk to?
- Can you suggest 2 or 3 other people that I might contact for more information? May I use your name when contacting them?