



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

An informational interview is an informal conversation and Q&A between you and the employee of a desired company or field of industry. It can help you understand how the field is doing, tips on how to search for a career in the field, learn the daily tasks of the job, and other detailed information about that position or field.

An informational interview is not a direct way to get a job, but a way to network and learn.

BENEFITS

Beyond learning about a career of interest, informational interviewing will allow you to:

- ✓ Establish and increase professional connections and build your network
- ✓ Gain interview practice, becoming comfortable with answering and asking direct and follow-up questions and understanding what interview questions you may encounter in future
- ✓ Identify your strengths and weaknesses within this type of position and field and learning ways to fill in your skills gaps
- ✓ Determine the appropriate next steps in the job search process and for pursuing your career
- ✓ Discover the current information about a career that may not be updated online and find out if a career and/or company is as good on the inside as it appears on the outside.

PROCESS

Reach Out: Discover and reach out to people you can interview through LinkedIn, an Alumni network or by asking family, professors or friends to make the connection. When emailing or direct messaging the person, you should make sure your note is professional and well-written. Let the person you are interviewing dictate the length of the meeting and whether it will be by phone, video chat or in person.

Prepare: Do your homework and research the company, industry and person you are interviewing ahead of time. Prepare your 30-Second Pitch, so you have a succinct introduction ready to go and kick off the meeting. Make a list of the questions you will ask and have some way to take notes ready to go. Be sure it is appropriate for the meeting- if you are interviewing over the phone/computer it can be on your computer, but a notebook for an in-person meeting would be best-suited. Decide on an appropriate outfit to wear and, if the interview is not in person, make sure the device and technology you are using is prepared and ready. For video interviews, choose a quiet and appropriate setting for the event with minimal to no distractions, noises, pets, etc.

Conduct the Interview: Ask your questions, take notes and avoid asking for a job. Keep top of mind that you are here to learn and establish a professional relationship. Remember your “why” for pursuing this career and let that drive you through the informational interview! Be mindful of their time and keep an eye on the clock, sticking to the meeting length your interviewee agrees upon.

Follow Up: Send a follow up thank you email using business letter format within 48 hours of the interview to show genuine appreciation. Include your gratitude and appreciation and mention a few specific items that you found helpful and connected with the most. Be sure to include your contact information and interest.

AREAS TO COVER

DURING THE
INTERVIEW

1. Career Paths Into & Within the Field
2. Required Job Skills, Interests and Experience
3. Job Tasks & Environment
4. Seeking Advice & Professional Development



SAMPLE QUESTIONS

CAREER PATHS INTO & WITHIN THE FIELD

1. How did you become interested in this field and get into this work/begin our career?
2. What are some common career paths in this field?
3. What steps would you recommend I take to prepare to enter this field?
4. What kind of education, training, or background does your job require? How relevant is your undergraduate major to your work?

REQUIRED JOB SKILLS, INTERESTS & EXPERIENCE

1. What technical/hard skills do you recommend I learn in order to be successful in this line of work?
2. What current issues and trends in the field should I know about/be aware of?
3. What kinds of accomplishments tend to be valued and rewarded in this field?
4. What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to success in your job/this field?

JOB TASKS & ENVIRONMENT

1. What are your main responsibilities as a _____?
2. What is a typical day (or week) like for you?
3. What do you like best/least about this work?
4. How does your position fit within the organization/career field/industry?
5. How does your job affect your general lifestyle?

SEEKING ADVICE & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Who would you recommend I talk to next?
2. Are there related fields would you recommend I also look into?
3. Can you recommend trade journals, magazines, articles, books or professional associations which would be helpful for my professional development?
4. What advice would you give someone who is considering this type of job (or field)?