The Informational Interview: A Powerful Career Tool

What are informational interviews?
Informational interviews involve talking to professionals in your field to learn about their roles, organization, and career journey. They help expand your network and foster relationships for career growth.

Research career fields & industries
• Gather information about the career field and organizations you’re interested in.

Prepare for the Interview
• Research the contact’s company, role and prepare sample questions (see page 2)

Do the informational interview
• Give a brief overview of yourself, your education and/or work background.
• Lead the interview with the prepared questions.

Make a contact list
• List people you know or those with connections in your field. Reach out to your professors or professionals listed on company websites.
• Make use of LinkedIn, especially your university’s alumni page.

Initiate Contact
• Contact the person via LinkedIn or email.
• Request if they would be willing to speak with you (see sample invite on page 2).

Follow up
• Send a thank-you message within 1-2 days (see sample note on page 2).
• Stay in touch, let them know you acted on their advice, updating them on the results.

Pro Tips
• Avoid going in unprepared. Research the organization/person thoroughly to build credibility.
• Don’t assume unlimited time. Request meetings of 15 - 30 minutes and end promptly.
• Don’t ask for a job/referral. Instead, ask for advice on how to prepare for the job market.
• Ask for names of other individuals to connect with to gather a range of perspectives.
• After each meeting, note key points, address remaining questions, and plan next steps.
Sample Email Invite

Hello [Title] [Last Name],

I’m a student majoring in [Field of Study] at The University of Texas at Dallas. I came across your profile on LinkedIn and found your career path and work in/at (Company’s name) very interesting. Would you be available for a 30-minute informational interview in the next few weeks? I would like to get some advice on how to launch my career in (field of common interest).

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Best regards,
Your Name
Contact details (Email, LinkedIn URL)

Sample Questions

➢ What functions are performed by the industry you work in? By your company?
➢ What are your main responsibilities as a…?
➢ Describe your typical day or week. How many hours is your work week?
➢ How is your time divided between working with people, data, and other tasks?
➢ What skills, talents, or traits are most useful and likely to generate success and fulfillment in your field?
➢ How did you begin your career? What steps would you recommend I take to prepare to enter this field?
➢ May I contact you if I need more clarification or have further questions?
➢ Who else do you recommend I talk with to gather more information?

Sample Thank you

Hello [Name],

It was great to meet with you today! Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions and talk about what it’s like to work at [Company]–it seems like a fantastic place to work. I especially loved hearing about [something you enjoyed talking about].

I look forward to staying in touch as I continue [figuring out my next step/job search]. I definitely plan on using your advice to [piece of advice that stuck with you].

Best regards,
Your Name
Contact details (Email, LinkedIn URL)