

Information Interviews

WHAT IS AN INFORMATION INTERVIEW?

Information interviews offer an accurate look at careers, organizations and industries. You can learn what a typical “day in the life” is like, make contacts and gain insight about whether it’s the right choice for you. It’s a brief meeting where you ask questions to someone in a position, field or company of interest. It is your job to arrange the interview and have questions to ask. Remember, it is not a job interview so do not ask for a job.

BENEFITS:

- Explore careers and clarify your career goals
- Opportunity to ask for career advice
- Discover opportunities that are not advertised
- Expand your network and get referred to others
- Build confidence for your job interviews
- Access the most up-to-date career information

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



RESEARCH:

Determine whom to contact. Consider whether you want to speak to human resources, someone doing the work you are interested in or the decision maker.



REQUEST:

Be clear with any contacts about your reasons for wanting to speak with them. Briefly introduce yourself and be specific about what you want – information, timing (usually ask for 15-20 minutes of their time), location, and your preference for an in-person or virtual meeting.



DURING THE INFORMATION INTERVIEW:

Dress appropriately and be prepared with 5-7 questions, listen and take notes. Bring your resume as you may want to ask the contact for some feedback. By being prepared you will demonstrate your interest, your organizational skills, and make a great first impression.



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QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- "What does a typical day in your job look like?"
- "What do you like most about this company?"
- "Can you suggest some ways a graduate could obtain experience?"
- "How did you get started?"
- "What are the ideal qualifications for someone doing this kind of work?"
- "How well did your college experience prepare you for this job?"
- "Which professional organizations, journals or websites do you recommend?"
- "Are there other people in the field/company you would recommend I speak with?"



LAST STEPS:

Always send a thank you note. This is also an opportunity to send them a resume for their files if they do not already have one. If you were introduced to this contact by someone else, be sure to keep that person abreast of how your meeting went. Add your new contact to LinkedIn to stay in touch.

MORE QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK:

Always talk to several people in your field to gain a balanced view, increase your contact list, and create relationships that can possibly become long-term.

CAREER FIELD

- Which areas are more in demand in this industry?
- What are the typical entry-level job titles and functions?
- What skills or personal characteristics do you feel contribute most to success in this industry?
- What entry-level jobs offer the best opportunities for learning?

THEIR JOB

- What is a typical day/week in your job like?
- What do you like most/least about your position?
- How do you see this occupation changing?
- Which professional organizations, journals or websites do you recommend?

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THE EMPLOYER

- What products or services are in the development stage now?
- In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
- What do you like most about this organization?
- How would you describe the culture at the company?
- What does the organization do to contribute to its employees' professional development?

PREPARATION FOR THE CAREER FIELD

- How did you get started?
- What educational preparation do you recommend?
- Is prior experience necessary and, if so, what kind?
- If you were a college student again, what would you do differently to prepare for this job?
- Can you suggest some ways a graduate could obtain experience?
- How important are grades or GPA in obtaining work in this field?

POTENTIAL CONTACTS

- Are there other people in the field or company you would recommend I speak with?

QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

- Tell me about yourself
- How did you become interested in this career field?
- What do you know about this field or about this organization?
- What have you learned from your work experiences or coursework that can contribute to this field?