

Informational interviews give you an opportunity to gather information about careers that interest you and connect with professionals in those fields.

The Benefits of Conducting Informational Interviews

Career Exploration/Research: Talking with a professional who is actually working in the field will give you more in-depth and candid information than just researching online.

Job and/or Internship Search: Talking to professionals in your career field will help you to increase your connections and provide valuable job search information. Informational interviewing is also a great way to receive referrals and learn about job opportunities before anyone else.

How Do I Locate Professionals to Interview?



Use your current network (family, friends, instructors, advisors, and personal connections)

Communicate your career interests to your current contacts and ask if they can refer you to professionals in specific career fields of interest. You will be surprised at how many people your connections will know.



Use LinkedIn as a way to network and locate people in the field

- Search current connections to find relevant 2nd degree contacts and request an introduction.
- Search by college (current students and alumni), industry, job title, or specific company. (Do not connect with people you do not know directly on LinkedIn.)
- For more information, visit: <https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students>



Research Chamber of Commerce business directories in locations you are interested in living

Search by category to find out contact information and the website of the organization

How Do I Ask for an Informational Interview?

Send a customized email or make a phone call

- Introduce yourself, explain why you are calling/writing, and how you got the person's name.
- Express your interest in their career field, and ask if you can meet.

Think about the timing and logistics

- Schedule informational interviews for 20-30 minutes during business hours.
- Meet in person if possible or request a phone meeting if you do not live close.

Dear Mrs. Smith,

My name is Erin Eagle. I'm a Psychology major at Laramie County Community College researching a potential career in family and marriage counseling. My cousin, Jamie Jones, gave me your contact information. If you have the time, I would like to meet with you for 30 minutes to discuss your career. If you cannot meet, maybe you could suggest a colleague I could contact. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erin Eagle

How Do I Prepare?

Do Your Research

- Access the Career Center's Online Resource Library to read specific industry information. Review the career trends, work responsibilities, required education and training, and salary information.
- Research the interviewee by reading their professional biography and/or LinkedIn profile.

How Do I Conduct the Informational Interview?

Be Prepared

- Have your list of questions written out prior to the informational interview.
- Dress appropriately (business casual attire will work for most career fields).
- Be at least 10 minutes early to the meeting.
- Actively listen to what the professional is saying and take detailed notes.
- Be aware of your surroundings. If you are meeting them where they work take note of how the employees interact with each other and what the workspace looks like.
- Ask for a business card and verbally thank them for their time.

How Do I Follow-Up After the Interview?

Keep the Connection

- Send a thoughtful thank you letter or e-mail within 24-48 hours of the interview.
- Create an Excel or Word document to maintain contact information and follow-up correspondence.

Example Questions

- How did you get started in this field? Is that the usual method professionals in this field take?
- What is a typical week like for you? Is this standard for most people in the field?
- What skills and personal qualities are most important for success in this job?
- How would you describe the professional climate in your office? In your industry?
- Do you spend most of your day working alone or as part of a team?
- What are your typical work hours? Does this job require you to travel?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What are some challenges you face in this profession?
- Are there opportunities for advancement in this field? How does that typically happen?
- What kinds of education or training would best prepare me to do this kind of work?
- Are there specific courses or experiences that would help me to be more marketable in this field?
- Can you suggest any professional organizations that would be helpful?
- Where do people in this field typically look for internship and job opportunities?