



Informational Interviews Reference Guide

What is an Informational Interview?

An informational interview is a meeting with a contact who can help you find out more about a career or organization and potentially increase your exposure to jobs that are not publicly advertised or yet to be announced.

Informational interviews can help you build confidence, expand your network of contacts, reveal possible new career paths, and find out if a particular career or employer matches your own interests, skills and goals.

How to set-up an Informational Interview.

1. Start by researching people in positions or at employers you are interested in. Make a list of potential people or employers to interview.
2. Review your network to see if you have a connection to them and reach out to your contact as request a warm hand-off. If you don't have a network connection, prepare to reach out to the person or employer via LinkedIn inMail or email.
3. With your request be professional, gracious, and concise.
 - a. Let them know exactly why you are contacting them and personalize your request.
 - b. Make your ask as easy as possible for them to say yes to. For example, "Can I meet with you at your office for 20-30 minutes to hear about your experiences in this industry and what it's like to work at your company? I can work around your schedule."
4. During your informational interview:
 - a. Ask open questions, such as "Tell me about your career path and how you made it to the place you are today."
 - b. Take notes during your meeting and capture contact names, phone numbers, email addresses, titles, company names, and any referrals you received from the person you interview.
 - c. Don't ask for a job, even if that's your end goal. Focus on learning about their career path or employer.
5. Once your informational interview takes place, send a thank you note within 24 hours after the interview. Keep them informed of your future career moves.
6. Reflect on what you've learned and stay in touch with any person or employer you see yourself seriously pursuing in the future.

Sample Informational Interview Questions.

- What skills are needed for success in this occupation?
- What other types of credentials or licenses are required?
- What degree is required or recommended for entry into this occupation?
- What entry-level positions qualify a person for a career in this occupation?
- Are there internships available in your field?
- What type of training does your organization provide new staff?
- What advice would you give someone entering this occupation?
- What is the best way to prepare for a career in this occupation?
- Could you suggest anyone else in your field that I could speak with for additional information? May I mention your name when I contact this person?
- What professional organizations would you recommend joining?





- What other resources should I be aware of? (local and national associations, websites, directories, books/articles)
- What is your typical day like?
- What kinds of challenges do you deal with?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- What aspects of your occupation do you enjoy? Dislike?
- What are the salary ranges for various positions in your field?
- Why did you decide to work for this organization?
- How does your organization differ from its competitors?
- How would you describe your work atmosphere and people you work with?
- Why did this type of work interest you?
- How long have you worked in the field?
- How did you get your first professional position?
- What experiences have led you to your present position?
- What are the current trends in your occupation?
- Is there currently a demand for people in this occupation?
- How is the economy affecting your industry?
- How do you see the responsibilities in your field changing over the next five years? What can I do to prepare myself for these changes?