

## Ask Questions Based on What You Want to Know

1. What is a typical day like in this position?
2. What training or education is required?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
5. How did you find your job? What was your first job after graduation?
6. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
7. What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
8. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
9. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
10. What challenges does this industry face?
11. What is the demand for people in this occupation?
12. What advice would you give a person entering this field?
13. What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
14. Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
15. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
16. Would you critique my resume?
17. How would you evaluate the experience I've had so far for entering this field?
18. What related or other fields or job titles would you suggest I research further?
19. With whom else should I talk? When I contact him/her, may I use your name?

## Tips for Informational Interview Success

- Do your homework.
- Plan and practice your "opener."
- Call or e-mail again in a week if your contact has not responded.
- Maintain your connections and nurture them. This is relationship building!
- Be patient. Networking takes time. NEVER stop networking!

## Resources for Building Your Network

### Web:

- [careercenter.tamu.edu/guides/networking/](http://careercenter.tamu.edu/guides/networking/)
- [www.asktheheadhunter.com/hanetwork1.htm](http://www.asktheheadhunter.com/hanetwork1.htm)
- [www.asktheheadhunter.com/hanetwork2.htm](http://www.asktheheadhunter.com/hanetwork2.htm)
- [careerplanning.about.com/od/networking/a/networking.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/od/networking/a/networking.htm)
- [www.quintcareers.com/networking\\_guide.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/networking_guide.html)

### UNCW Resources:

- UNCW Alumni
- E-Leads:  
[uncw.edu/stuaff/career/eleads.htm](http://uncw.edu/stuaff/career/eleads.htm)
- Career Search:  
[www.uncw.edu/career/students/careersearch.htm](http://www.uncw.edu/career/students/careersearch.htm)

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# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Career Center  
Division of Student Affairs  
"Creating Experiences for Life"



## An informational interview is...

- One of the best sources for gathering information about an occupation or industry - by talking with people who actually work in your field.
- A means to evaluate your interest in and “fit” for a particular field.
- An interview that YOU initiate.
- NOT an interview for employment.

## Why Conduct Informational Interviews?

- Explore careers and clarify career goals
- Expand your professional network
- Build confidence for actual job interviews
- Access up-to-date career information
- Identify professional strengths and weaknesses.
- Tap into the “Hidden Job Market” (employment opportunities that are never advertised).

## Steps to Conduct an Informational Interview

### Assess Your Interests, Skills, Abilities, & Values.

### Identify Target Occupations/Industries.

Evaluate labor trends to identify fields to research that match your interests.

### Prepare for the Interview.

Research the field prior to meeting with your contacts. Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook ([www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/)), Vault ([www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)), or Wetfeet ([www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)) for valuable industry and occupational information. Prepare questions you would like answered.

### Identify People to Interview.

Start with lists of people you know: family, friends of family, family of your friends, fellow students, present or former supervisors, co-workers, professors, neighbors, doctors, dentists, clergy and so forth. Let everyone know about your career interests.

Search on-line or contact organizations for the name of an appropriate person by job title.

Call an employer in the field – often someone in HR can provide valuable information about professional areas they employ.

Read trade magazines and newspapers and join a professional association or club.

### Arrange the Interview.

Contact your identified person by phone or e-mail. Be sure to indicate who referred you to this person or organization.

Be prepared to state the purpose of your call to whomever answers – to arrange an informational interview only!

Ask for 20-30 minutes at a mutually convenient time.

### Conduct the Interview

- Dress appropriately.
- Arrive promptly.
- Maintain a polite and professional demeanor.
- Refer to your prepared list of questions.
- Stay on track, but allow for spontaneous discussion. Ask for names of others who might be helpful and ask permission to use your contact’s name.
- Take a copy of your resume for review; ask for suggestions to improve it.
- Ask for your contact’s business card.

### Follow Up

- Immediately following the interview, record pertinent information. Maintain good records!
- Send a thank you note within 48 hours. E-mail is acceptable.