



Name _____ Date _____

8 Career Research – Informational Interview

Informational interviewing can help you gather the information you need to choose a career. It is a meeting that you arrange with a person who currently does the job you think you might want to pursue, or who has specific knowledge of an occupation or career field that interests you.

To identify someone to contact for an informational interview, look for people who:

- Work in settings you like (i.e. hospitals, politics, big business, telecommunications, etc.)
- Work in careers that interest you (i.e. counseling psychologist, market researcher, criminal lawyer, programming, etc.)
- Work in specific organizations that interest you (Walt Disney World, Bank of America, Legal Aid Office, etc.)

Before you contact anyone to request an informational interview, know exactly what kind of information you want. Don't ask for routine information that is readily available elsewhere.

Informational Interview Tips

- Have a prepared list of questions.
- Keep in mind that the purpose of the meeting is not to ask for a job. Your purpose is to gain information from your contact - not to sell yourself.
- Arrive early and dress professionally.
- Bring a notepad to take notes.
- At the appropriate time, near the end of the interview, ask if the person can suggest someone else you might contact. This could be someone at the same firm or someone at another company. The next person will be more receptive if a colleague has referred you.
- Remain sensitive to your contact's time constraints.
- Get a business card so that you have a name, title, and address for follow-up.

Follow-Up

Send a thank you note reiterating the information that you found particularly interesting or helpful. The thank you note should be sent within 24 hours of the interview.

Suggested Informational Interview Questions:

- What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
- How is your time divided between working with people, data, and other things?
- What kind of problems do you deal with?
- What kind of decisions do you make?
- Are there busy and slow times or is the work activity fairly constant?
- Why does this type of work interest you, and how did you get started?
- How did you get your job?
- What jobs, experiences and/or educational attainments have led you to your present position?
- What skills and talents are especially useful and necessary for this position?
- What type of educational degrees and licenses, if any, are required of someone who presently wishes to enter a position such as your own?
- What would you recommend are the best places for someone to get training for this field?
- Can you suggest ways a student could obtain related experience?
- What things did you do before you entered this occupation?
- What other jobs can you get with the same background?
- What are the various jobs in this field or organization?
- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- What do you like most about this company?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- Why do customers choose this company?
- Are you optimistic about the company's future and your future with the company?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
- How does the company make use of technology for internal communication and outside marketing? (Use of e-mail, Internet, intranets, WWW page, video conferencing, etc.)
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your occupation?
- How does a person progress in your field? What is a typical career path in this field or organization?
- What can you tell me about the corporate culture?
- What is the average length of time for an employee to stay in the job you hold? Are there incentives or disincentives for staying in the same job?
- Is there flexibility related to dress, work hours, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?
- How much work-related travel is generally associated with your type of work? Do the travel obligations diminish or increase as your career progresses?
- How much work, if any, do you bring home each day or week?
- If your job progresses, as you like, what would be the next step in your career?
- How secure is employment in your career field in general?
- If your job were suddenly eliminated, what other kinds of employment do you feel prepared to do?
- In your estimation, what are the skills and personality traits that are most likely to generate success and fulfillment in your field?
- How is the economy affecting this industry?

- In your estimation, how good are future career opportunities within your field? Do you foresee any big changes or developments occurring in the future?
- At present, is there an oversupply or undersupply of people entering your field?
- What obligations does your employer place on you outside of the ordinary workweek? What social obligations go along with a job in your occupation?
- How has your job affected your lifestyle?
- From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
- What are the major frustrations of this job?
- What interests you least about the job or creates the most stress?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
- What courses have proved to be the most valuable to you in your work? What would you recommend for me?
- How important are grades/GPA for obtaining a job in this field?
- How do you think my college/university's reputation is viewed when it comes to hiring?
- What are the typical entry-level job titles and functions? What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
- Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field? Are there any written materials you suggest I read? Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- What kinds of experience, paid or unpaid, would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field?
- Could you give me the names and phone numbers of some other people who you know are working in a field similar to yours?
- May I call you if I have other questions?

After completing this exercise, you may want to contact the faculty or counselor who assigned this activity to discuss the results.



Name _____ Date _____

Career Research – Informational Interview - Results

Date of Informational Interview _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Name of Person Interviewed _____ Title: _____

Phone Number _____ email _____

Website _____

Name or explain two (2) important things you learned: _____

Date of Informational Interview _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Name of Person Interviewed _____ Title: _____

Phone Number _____ email _____

Website _____

Name or explain two (2) important things you learned: _____



Name _____ Date _____

8 Career Research – Informational Interview - Results

Date of Informational Interview _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Name of Person Interviewed _____ Title: _____

Phone Number _____ email _____

Website _____

Name or explain two (2) important things you learned: _____

Date of Informational Interview _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Name of Person Interviewed _____ Title: _____

Phone Number _____ email _____

Website _____

Name or explain two (2) important things you learned: _____

