

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

What is it?

Informational interviewing is a means of gaining firsthand insight into a career field or position that interests you. It also provides an opportunity to build your professional network and gain contacts within your future field.

Informational interviews are not intended as a request for employment. The purpose of the meeting is to gather information from someone who is working in a career area that interests you.

Possible Questions

The following is a sample list of possible questions that you may ask during your interview. The list is neither exhaustive nor appropriate to all occupations and therefore should only be used as a guide. Ask only those questions that are appropriate and important to you. Take the time to formulate your own questions so the experience is meaningful to you.

QUALIFICATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, AND EXPERIENCE

- How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?
- What are the typical entry level job titles and functions? What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
- Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college? How well did your college experience prepare you for this job? What courses have proved to be the most valuable to you in your work? What would you recommend for me?
- If you were entering this career today, would you change your preparation in any way to facilitate entry?
- What are the educational requirements for this job? What other types of credentials or licenses are required? What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field? Is graduate school recommended? Does the company encourage and pay for employees to pursue graduate degrees?

WORK ENVIRONMENT, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- What is your job like?
 - A typical day?
 - What do you do? What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
 - What kinds of problems do you deal with?

- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- What percentage of your time is spent doing what?
- How does the time use vary? Are there busy and slow times or is the work activity fairly constant?
- Who are the individuals you are most likely to interact with on regular basis—clients, co-workers, vendors?
- How much “outside” or overtime work is required on your job? (e.g. weekends, nights, etc.) What does this work involve?
- Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your occupation?

BENEFITS AND FRUSTATIONS

- Which aspects of your job do you find most satisfying?
- Are there aspects of your job that you find more challenging? How do you deal with these frustrations?
- What fringe benefits are offered on your job? What is the average entry level salary for someone in this industry?
- Could you describe a typical career path for someone who starts out in this industry?

PERSONAL VIEWS

- How did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- How has your undergraduate training prepared you for your job?
- Did you have any practical experience or training, other than college, prior to graduation?

OUTLOOK

- What are the opportunities for advancement in this field?
- What is the current demand for people in this occupation?
- Do you foresee any changes in this demand in the future? If so, what or how?
- How is this field likely to be affected by technological changes?
- What is the economic outlook for this industry?

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?