

## Informational Interviews

An informational interview gives you an opportunity to gather information about career paths and employers, and is also very helpful in developing professional relationships.

Focus on interviewing people in the career fields or companies that interest you. Ask friends, families and professors to introduce you to potential contacts. You can also call the company directly and ask to speak to someone with a job title matching your interests. Introduce yourself and tell them why you are interested in talking to them, and then ask if they are willing to spend 15 minutes with you discussing their work. After the interview, follow up by sending a thank you note.

### Questions you ask should be directly related to your goals:

- To investigate specific occupations of interest
- To help create a focused job search
- To learn whether going graduate school immediately after graduation is the right career move for you.

*Informational interviews are not job interviews, so do not ask for a job.  
They also give you an opportunity to build your professional network.*

Some categories of question to ask during your interview are:

### Background and Prior Experience

- What is your educational background?
- How did you get involved in this field?
- What experiences/career path led you to this position?

### Preparation

- What education is essential for the work you do?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?
- What skills are most important in this position?

### Career Exploration

- What are the advancement options in this field?
- What are the major qualifications for success in this field?
- What work related values are strongest in this type of work?
- What are the problems you see working in this field?

### Internship and Job Search

- How do people find out about these positions?
- What are the typical salaries? Are there salary ceilings?

### Lifestyle

- Why did you decide to work at this company?
- What do you like most about this company? Least?
- Are there obligations you have outside of work the influence your success?

### Grad School

- Did you attend graduate school? If yes, how did you determine which program to enter?
- What type of assistance was available to students seeking employment?

### Referrals

- Based on our conversation today, are there any other people you believe I should talk to?
- May I use your name when I contact them?

### Advice to Me

- What advice do you have for someone who wants to enter this field?
- What would you do differently if you started over from college?
- Are there any industry specific resources you recommend to give me greater insight into this profession?
- Are there any professional associations you suggest I join?