

An informational interview is a meeting with someone, preferably face-to-face, to ask for career advice and/or learn about his/her role, organization and industry. The purpose is *not* about asking for a job or internship; but about *building* a relationship.

HOW DO I FIND SOMEONE?

- Ask your personal contacts if they know someone working in your chosen career field (i.e. friends, professors, family and their network, neighbors, and community affiliations)
- Utilize social media (i.e. LinkedIn) and Career Center tools (i.e. CareerShift) to find contact information

HOW DO I CONTACT THE PERSON FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

- Determine what you want to learn before you contact the person
- Send an e-mail introducing yourself and explaining your reason for reaching out (*See sample below*)
- Mention in your e-mail if you were referred by someone to contact them
- Once you receive a reply, follow up within 24 hours to arrange a telephone or in-person meeting

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Doe,

I am a sophomore at Seton Hall University majoring in [*identify your major*]. While searching in LinkedIn, I came across your profile and noticed you have a background in [*i.e. politics*]. (Or--if you were referred to this person, state: "Recently, I met with [*name*] who suggested I contact you to learn more about the field"). I would like to learn more [*i.e. about typical careers with this major, about your background, about how to gain experience in the field*]. Would you be willing to meet with me or talk over the phone? Please let me know if you can spare 20 minutes to speak with me. I can be reached at [*phone*] or [*e-mail*]. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Your name

BEFORE THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

- Prepare questions and write them down. Bring a copy of your resume with you
- Find out the location for the meeting and be sure you know the route and building before you go (don't rely only on your GPS)
- Dress professionally. Arrive 15 minutes early and do not go beyond allocated meeting time
- Always shake hands, make eye contact, smile, and address the person in a respectful and formal manner

DURING THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

- Introduce yourself and restate your reason for meeting (*i.e. Thank you for meeting with me. I am exploring different career paths and [*referral's name*] suggested I speak with you*)
- State your goals for the meeting (*i.e. I would like to tell you about my career goals and ask you a few questions about your career path and any advice you have for me*)
- Ask your prepared questions. Request feedback on your resume and seek advice for getting into that industry or organization
- Inquire if the person you are speaking with has any questions about your background or skills
- Thank the person at the end of the meeting; and if applicable, ask about next steps, referrals, or future meetings

Sample questions to ask:

- What was your major and how does it apply to your current work?
- If you completed an internship in college, how do you believe this experience benefitted you?
- What has been your career path in this field? What do you like most/least about your work?
- If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?
- What type of experiences or skills would you recommend to someone starting out in this field?
- What are the typical types of entry-level positions in this career field?
- What is the outlook for this industry? What are future predictions for growth and change?
- Is there anyone else that you suggest I meet with to learn more about the careers we have discussed today?

AFTER THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

- Send a thank you e-mail within 24 hours. Sample below:

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Doe,

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with me. Your comments about your career were insightful and have helped me clarify my career goals and next steps. [NOTE: If the person gave you information that you need to follow up on, add a sentence about it—"I will follow up with the person you suggested I talk with".] Thanks again!

Sincerely,
Your name

Your e-mail address and phone number