



# *Career Services*

## *The world awaits...*

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[www.css.edu/career.xml](http://www.css.edu/career.xml)

## **Informational Interviews**

Part of the career exploration process is gaining an understanding of your interests, skills and values. A second, equally valuable part of the process is gaining information about the world of work. One excellent way to increase knowledge of the field is by conducting informational interviews with people who are currently working in professions you are considering.

### **What are they?**

- Informational interviews provide the chance for you to meet and talk with people who are working in professions you are considering. You are interviewing individuals to gain information about their job.
- This is not a job interview. Your purpose is to gather information and increase your knowledge of a specific occupation, field or company/organization.
- It is also a chance to build a network of contacts and meet potential employers in a low-stress atmosphere.

### **With whom do I meet?**

- Career Services can assist you in finding suitable people and can make the first contact for you when necessary.
- Alumni can be contacted by searching the Alumni Career Network available on the Career Services website: [www.css.edu/career.xml](http://www.css.edu/career.xml).
- You can also meet with friends of the family, relatives, members of your church, previous employers, or colleagues.
- You might also make contacts through professional organizations, conferences you attend or clubs in which you are a member.

### **How do I arrange the meeting?**

- Contact individuals and introduce yourself (name, major, academic year). Explain how or from whom you received their name. Ask if they would be available to meet and share information about their position and the field in which they work.
- Agree on a time to meet and establish the length of time they would be available (30-60 minutes is a reasonable request for the first meeting).
- If this person cannot see you, ask if they can suggest other contacts.

### **How should I prepare?**

- Research the occupation by utilizing on-line resources and printed material in the Career Library.
- Research the particular organization for which the person works.
- Write up a list of questions to ask; suggestions are provided on the second page of this handout.
- Prepare and bring a resume with you if your objective is to make contact with that organization for a future position.
- Dress appropriately for the interview – suits are not necessary but wear nice business attire – khaki pants, dress shirt, closed toed shoes, traditional business casual clothing.
- Be prepared to answer questions about yourself. Although they are not interviewing you, they will still want to hear about your major, interests and activities.
- Be on time, friendly, courteous and professional.

### **How do I follow up?**

- Write a thank-you letter to the individual(s) thanking them for the time given to you.
- Journal about what you learned and how this relates to your interests, skills and values.
- Keep a list of these people for future contacts.
- Contact any individuals they have referred you to for additional interviews.

*(see sample questions on second page)*

# Informational Interviews

## **What questions should I ask?**

What is your position and title?  
How did you get started in this field?  
Why did you choose this field?  
What education or training do you have?  
What is a typical day like for you?  
What do you like most and least about your work?

What types of skills would someone need to be successful in this field?  
What personal characteristics would someone need to be successful in this field?  
Are there specific courses/majors/minors you suggest for someone wanting to enter the field?  
What other activities would you suggest I be involved in to prepare for this field?

What is a typical career path for someone in this occupation?  
What is the employment outlook for people in this field?  
What future do you see for this field/organization?  
What types of opportunities are available for advancement?

How would you characterize the working conditions?  
What is the average number of hours you work per week?  
Do you spend the majority of your time working as part of a team or working independently?  
How much flexibility do you have in your job?  
Do you take work home with you?  
Do you travel in connection with your work?

How do people find out about openings in your field?  
What is the entry level salary range for this kind of position?  
What other benefits are available?

What are some related occupations?  
What books, websites or professional journals might be useful to read?  
What organizations would be helpful for me to contact for more information?

Are there opportunities for part time jobs, summer positions or internships at this organization?  
Is there anyone else with whom you could suggest I speak? May I use your name when contacting them?  
May I contact you in the future should I have additional questions? If so, may I have one of your business cards?  
If interested in the field, ask if it would be possible to do a job shadow.

*Develop and add other questions that are specific to the position and industry.*