

Informational Interview Guide

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in a field that's interesting to you – someone who can give you information and advice.

Before you meet



- Use LinkedIn, adults in your life, or your academic adviser to identify potential interviewees
- Reach out to a few individuals with a brief and friendly note introducing yourself and requesting 30 minutes of their time (see sample message below)
- Brainstorm questions you want to ask
- Verify the details of your meeting

During the meeting

- Be on time
- Wear appropriate clothing for the setting
- Bring your questions and something to take notes with
- Let the person speak; do more asking and listening than sharing yourself
- When you've reached the time that you set, say thank you and excuse yourself; you want to allow this person to go on with their day



After the meeting



- Write this person a note thanking them for their time and information (see sample thank you note on reverse)
- Follow-through on any leads that they share with you or advice they give you in a timely manner

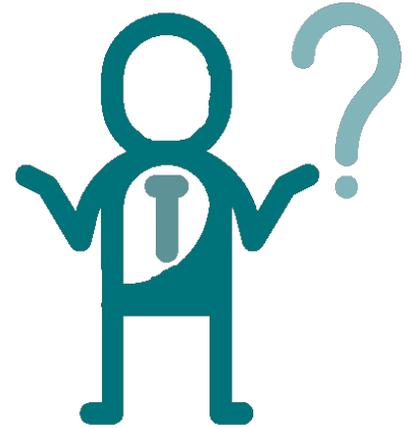
Sample questions to ask

- Tell me your educational background and what jobs you held before this one? What has your career journey been?
- What do you like about your work?
- What challenges you in your work?
- Are there common misconceptions that people have about working in this field?



Informational Interview Guide

- What does a typical day or week look like?
- How would you describe the work environment?
- How can I best prepare for this type of work?
- What skills or qualities are essential for this type of work? Who is a good fit?
- What trends do you anticipate in this field? Will jobs be available when I finish school?
- What suggestions do you have for me as I select courses and explore summer jobs?
- Can you suggest people I can contact for more information or a different perspective? May I use your name when contacting them?



Sample inquiry script

Subject: Informational Interview

Dear Ms. Matthews,

I'm a freshman at UW-Stevens Point getting ready to return home for the summer. I see that you are the county forester where I grew up, in Sheboygan County. I'm interested in working outside and considering Forestry as a major. I wonder if I might sit down with you for 30 minutes while I'm at home this summer to learn more about your day-to-day work and to ask for some advice?

I'll be home in late May. I'll plan to email again then to arrange a particular time.

Thank you for your time,

Suzie Loo

(715)123-4567

Informational Interview Guide

Sample thank you note

Dear Ms. Matthews,

Thank you for spending time with me and answering all of my questions about county forestry work! It was especially helpful for me to hear about all of your work with people – loggers, land owners, and everyone else. I hadn't thought about that aspect of the work. I did what you recommended and found some people at school who had worked out West during the summer doing conservation work and I've been talking with them about their experience. I'm planning to apply for those positions starting in the fall for the following summer so that I can build my resume. It was really kind of you to make time to give me recommendations.

Thanks again,

Suzie Loo

(715)123-4567

Closing thoughts



Most professionals are happy to sit down with students who aspire to work in the same field. Be polite, curious, express gratitude and be respectful of their time.