



An excellent way to gather information useful to your career development is to meet people who are already working in positions/companies/fields that interest you. These individuals know what it is like in the industry, how to get started, and what you need to know to succeed. Additionally, the potential meaningful relationships you make may help you in your internship/job search in both the short- and long-term.

Remember: the Informational Interview is not a job interview. In fact, you should make it very clear that you are not seeking employment. The worst question to ask during an informational interview is “Do you have a job for me?” Focus on gaining insight into the industry/company and choose the questions that are most important to you. The idea that you are exploring career options, seeking advice, and gathering information about occupations should be emphasized when trying to set up an appointment. Clarity regarding your purpose could determine whether or not you secure an informational interview.

Be sure to conduct thorough position/company/industry research prior to your informational interview. The more prepared and informed you are, the more likely you will have a meaningful and productive conversation with your contact. **Note:** An informational interview should last no more than 20-30 minutes.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

1. How did you get into this occupation?
2. What daily responsibilities and duties do you have? OR What is a typical day like?
3. What do you find most challenging about the work you do? What do you find most rewarding?
4. What do you like best about your position/organization? What do you wish you could change?
5. What preparation, education, training or background is required for entrance in this field?
6. What skills, aptitudes or personal qualifications do people need for this occupation/to work in this organization? How did you acquire those skills?
7. What personal traits, values, and interests are necessary or helpful to succeed in or advance in this occupation/organization?
8. How would you describe the work culture/environment (hours, dress, morale, work style, management style)? OR What is the work/life balance in this role?
9. What are the opportunities for advancement/promotion or job changes in the organization?
10. Where do you see this industry going in the next few years?
11. What advice would you give to someone looking to start out in this career/advance to this job/switch careers into this field?
12. What types of training do companies offer those who enter the field?
13. How is the economy affecting the industry?
14. What is the typical entry-level salary in this field? (DO NOT ASK ABOUT THEIR SALARY)
15. When people leave this career, what are the typical reasons?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW (CONTINUED)

16. What entry-level jobs offer the best opportunities for learning and growth within the industry?
17. What kinds of people experience the greatest success in this field?
18. How much flexibility do you have in determining how you perform your job?
19. Do you ever bring work home with you?
20. What constraints, such as time and money, make your job more difficult?
21. Describe some of the toughest situations you have faced in this job?
22. Do you mostly work individually or in teams/groups?
23. What projects have you worked on that have been particularly interesting?
24. Are there organizations you are expected to join? OR Are there organizations that you recommend I join?
25. If you could change one aspect about your job, what would it be?
26. How many people do you supervise?
27. How did your college experience prepare you for the job?
28. If you were a college student again, what would you do differently to prepare for this job?
29. What aspects of your background have been most helpful?
30. Why did you decide to work for this company/organization?
31. What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
32. Is the atmosphere at the company fairly formal or more casual and informal?
33. How does the company evaluate your job performance?
34. What are the opportunities to be creative/innovative?
35. What is a typical career path in this field/organization?
36. Would you take a brief look at my resume and suggest ways I could tailor it to make myself more marketable?
37. Do you know of other people whom I might contact who have jobs similar to yours?
38. What specific advice do you have for a student seeking to qualify for this position?
39. Would you be willing to answer more questions, by phone or in person, if I need advice in the future?