

INTERVIEWING FOR INFORMATION

What is an interview for information? It is a meeting you request with a professional who has a job or works for a company that interest you. You want to find out what that person does on the job and to gather information for further exploration of that career. It is not a job interview, but puts you in touch with a role model who can provide you with significant information.

As a student, you have access to virtually any individual, no matter what their position, and you will be surprised at how gracious most people will be to your inquiry.

A possible phone request might go like this: "I'm interested in knowing more about a career like yours. I'd like to set up a time when we could meet and talk about what you do. I'm not seeking a job at this time, but I am interviewing for information. Would you be able to meet with me for a half-hour or so?"

Informational interviewing is an invaluable tool that students rarely take full advantage of. It may be an intimidating experience at first, but it is well worth the effort. Most of us do not know what people actually do day to day, though we may think we do. This simple activity will clarify your perceptions, give a feel for an occupation, and provide you with important networking contacts for the future.

Some guidelines:

1. Avoid a phone interview if at all possible; there is no substitute for face to face contact.
2. If you ask for a half-hour, keep on schedule unless it is clear the individual wants to go longer.
3. Don't put the person on the spot by asking for a job; that shows a lack of integrity.
4. Dress and carry yourself as if you were going on a job interview; though that is not the goal, it may end up being just that.
5. Be sure and send a thank you note the day after the interview.

INFORMATION INTERVIEWING: QUESTIONS TO ASK

Name _____ Official Title _____

Date Interviewed _____ Employer _____

Years in Present Position _____

1. How did you decide to enter this field?
2. What steps did you take to enter this field?
3. What are your activities and responsibilities? What is a typical day like?
4. What do you like best about your job?
5. What is challenging about your job or industry?
6. How and by whom are work decisions made that affect you?
7. How much influence do you have over decisions affecting you?
8. If you could try any other job for a day what would it be?
9. Is there any specific advice you would give to someone entering this field?
10. Are there academic programs that you would recommend that would be good preparation for entering this field?
11. Can you suggest the names of other people I might speak with?