

# Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an information gathering session used to obtain first-hand impressions of work in a specific field. It is an invaluable resource in researching a particular job, career path, company, or industry.

## Setting Up The Interview

For some people, arranging interviews with strangers is uncomfortable. Here are some tips.

When you schedule your interview, remember to:

- Give your name and college.
- Explain the purpose of your visit: to learn about their occupation to help you explore various career options. Specify the kinds of information you are seeking.
- Ask to meet in person.
- Be flexible. (Lunch may be the best time to see someone.)
- Get complete directions to the place of business, and leave your name and number in case they must re-schedule.
- Be sure to get their name and title so you know whom to ask for.
  - If you cannot meet in person, or if you are calling out-of state, try to schedule a 20 to 30 minute *telephone* appointment.

## Interview Suggestions

- Dress professionally, and be on time. Call, if you know you are going to be late.
- Research the occupation before you go so you can develop intelligent questions.
- Write down questions to ask. The following are some questions you may consider.
- Ask for a business card to obtain accurate name, title, and address information.
- After completing the interview, send a brief THANK YOU note.

# Informational Interview Questions

*Preparation:*

- How does one get experience in this field before and/or after college graduation?
- What background, education, and work experiences are necessary or helpful for this position?
- What are the most important skills for this job?
- What are the best ways to enter the field?
- Is the demand for people in your field high or low?
- What personal characteristics are employers looking for in this position?
- How much do employers value internships, volunteer work, summer jobs, etc.?
- What recommendations do you have for someone considering this field?

*Nature of Work:*

- What does your organization do? (You should have a general idea based on your research of the field or organization)
- What are your job responsibilities?
- What do you do on a typical day?
- What do you like best about this job?
- What are some of your least favorite things about it?
- How would you describe the working environment (stressful, flexible, closely supervised, team oriented, independent)?

*Career Future:*

- What are the typical career paths for people in this field?
- What is the occupation outlook (local, nation)?
- What types of employers hire for this line of work?

*Advice to Me:*

- What educational preparation would be best for me to enter this field?
- Are there certain majors, minors or elective classes I can take to improve my chances to enter this field?
- What publications do you recommend me reading to expand my understanding of the field?
- What would you have done differently regarding your career path?

**REMEMBER TO TAKE PAPER AND A PEN TO THE INTERVIEW**