

Informational Interviewing

Interested in a profession but don't know exactly what it's about? Wondering what kind of education you need for the career of your choice? Having trouble finding information about your field of interest? Consider doing some informational interviewing!

What is it?

Informational interviewing involves making contact with professionals already established in your field of interest, and arranging a time to meet with them in person or conduct a phone interview. This process allows you to gather information about your career of choice, while also practicing your interviewing skills! An informational interview differs from a job interview in that YOU ask the questions.

How do I go about setting up an informational interview?

First, identify people who employed in professions that interest you. Then, call to schedule a 15-20 minute appointment with each person to learn more about their position. Be direct in your inquiry; explain that you have done some research on their profession, and would like a few minutes of their time to ask questions about what they do.

Example questions

- Who do they serve?
- What products or services are provided?
- Who are the competitors?
- What types of positions are available?
- What are the qualifications for entry-level and experienced positions?
- What duties and responsibilities are performed?
- What are some examples of problems and challenges in the field?
- What is a typical day like?
- How does the compensation compare to education and ability level?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What opportunities exist for advanced training?
- Is there a tuition reimbursement plan?

- What suggestions would they make for an individual wishing to enter this field of employment?
- What other companies might employ individuals to perform this type of work? Can they refer you to someone else for more information?

When you approach professionals in your field of interest from a research point of view and not as if you want a job, they will often be happy to talk with you. If one person does not have time, ask to be referred to another professional in the field. Not only will you come away with information about the profession, but you will also have established some contacts in the field of your choice!