

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS



An informational interview is a meeting with an individual in a career field in which you are interested. It is one of the best ways to find out about the realities of a job! Informational interviews can provide the following opportunities:

- Discovery of “first hand” information about an occupation. Informational interviews provide a personalized perspective of an occupation, which can be very useful in deciding if a particular career is a good fit for you.
- Access to the “hidden” job market. Only 20% of job openings are advertised! Direct contact and networking is essential to finding out about unadvertised job openings. Informational interviewing is not a job interview, but it can be a helpful first step in discovering information about a prospective employer.
- Improvement of self-confidence and interviewing skills

**“You don’t
have to be great
to start, but you
have to start to
be great.”**

- JOE SABAH

ADAPTED FROM UCF CAREER SERVICES

IDENTIFYING CONTACTS

Ask your parents, relatives, friends, coworkers, classmates, professors and advisors for names of people they know and obtain the person’s full name, title and contact information. If possible, ask your parent, relative, friend, etc. to call or email the contact before you approach him/her.

In addition, the Bellarmine University LinkedIn profile is a great tool for connecting with Bellarmine community members working in your field of interest. Under the Alumni tab, you can search all Bellarmine alumni on LinkedIn by employer, industry, etc. Then, you can send a short message along with an invite to connect.

APPROACH

Before contacting your interviewee, do some basic research about the career field. Clarify what you hope to gain through the informational interview.

When you contact a potential interviewee or referral, you should state who you are and who referred you to him/her, and explain that you are seeking career information and advice. Ask about a convenient time for them to meet in person for about thirty minutes. Be confident and courteous in your communication.

INTERVIEW

Dress and act professionally. Smile, use a firm handshake, and demonstrate your interest in the interviewee's comments. Take the questions that you want to ask (see **Sample Questions**), along with something to record their answers/take notes. If you have not finished the interview within the time period you had requested, thank the person for helping you by saying, "I said I would only take 30 minutes of your time. I know how busy you are." Extend the time only if the person you are interviewing strongly encourages you to do so. Request a business card before leaving.

FOLLOW-UP

Send a short thank you email within 24 hours after your meeting. Keep your interview information for future reference—the person may be an important contact for you in the future. Connect with your contact on LinkedIn.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Will you please describe the main responsibilities of your position?
- What does a typical day look like for you in this job?
- What is most satisfying about your job and why?
- What is least satisfying about your job and why?
- How did you decide to get into this field?
- Tell me about the training and education that you've had? Has this helped you in this field, if not, what has?
- What recommendations do you have for someone wanting to enter or progress in this field?
- What skills and personal qualities are important for success in your field?
- What do you do during a typical work day?
- What are the opportunities for promotion or advancement?
- Is this field expanding and/or developing into new directions? Please explain how.
- What advice would you give a college student researching careers or academic majors?

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