

How to Set-up an Informational Interview

Determine which career field or position you would like to learn more about.

Compile a list of employers in your area for the occupation you are researching. You can use the phone book, chamber of commerce directory, local business directories, etc.

Use your network! You can ask your advisor, faculty, family, friends, co-workers, classmates, employer or others that you know for contacts.

If you have identified a particular business or employer, you will need to call them to find out who can give you the information you need. For example, if you want to learn more about being a radiologist, as a first step, you might want to call the local hospital and ask to speak with the radiology department which can connect you to an actual radiologist.

Clearly explain your needs and why you are requesting an interview. You might say, "Hello, I am a student at the Community College of Vermont and considering a career in _____. As a part of my career exploration and research, I would like to arrange an informational interview with you so that I can learn more about the field."

If you have been given a contact person, when you call, make sure that you let them know who referred you and explain exactly why you are calling. You will find that most people are open to talking about their work and experience.

If you have to leave a voice message, make sure to leave your phone number and good days/times to reach you. Review your current voice message to ensure that it provides your name and is professional.

Schedule your informational interview in or close to the person's actual place of work so that you can get a sense of the environment and workplace. It does not have to be a long interview, 20-30 minutes.

If you have never done an informational interview or are nervous, practice beforehand with a friend, classmate or relative.

Prepare your questions and make sure that you are familiar with them so that the interview is natural, relaxed and allows for spontaneous conversation.

Reconfirm your interview by phone the day before the scheduled time. Make sure that you know where you are supposed to go so that you do not get lost or arrive late.

On the day of your interview, dress appropriately and plan to arrive 5-10 minutes early. Bring your questions and a notepad and pen so that you can take notes.

At the end of your interview, thank the person for taking time to meet with you and ask for other contacts/referrals.

Immediately after the interview, summarize your experience and evaluate the information that you received. What new questions come up? Does this career fit you? (refer to career research form). Is this someone you might want to job shadow?

Always send a thank you note!!