

Informational Interviewing Fact Sheet

What is informational interviewing?

- Gather information about a career, occupation or organization.
- Begin to develop your professional network.
- Verify or uncover career objectives.
- Clarify and specify career plans based on real world input.

Where do I get names of people to interview?

- Approach those you know including family, friends, friends of family, faculty, advisors, coaches, supervisors or anyone in your life who has asked you the question, “So, what do you want to do with your life?”
- Geneseo Career Partners
 - Access the 400+ Career Partner database through the Career Development web site.
 - Click on KnightJobs and log in.
 - Click on the Career Partners button and conduct your search.
- Members of Professional Organizations

How do I make contact or arrange an appointment for my informational interview?

- Explain your objective to your contact and ask to see them, talk to them or write to them.
- You will gain the most from an informational interview that is conducted in person at your contact’s place of work. The second best method is a telephone conversation and the third is e-mail correspondence.

Preparing for and Conducting the Informational Interview

- Know what you want to accomplish and have questions prepared. Twelve to fifteen questions should fill a 30 minute interview. Be flexible and change questions as needed.
- Do some research on the occupation of the person you’re interviewing. Use the internet and the Career Library in Blake A 104. Don’t ask questions that are easy to learn about in another way.
- Listen to the answers you’re given and take notes.
- If interviewing in person, dress appropriately. Business casual or formal are acceptable, but no jeans.

After the Informational Interview

- Follow-up with a thank you note within 48 hours of your interview. A handwritten, typed or e-mailed letter are all acceptable.
- Evaluate the experience and ask yourself:
 - Is this career for me? Why or why not?
 - What did I do well in the interview and what can I change for next time?
 - What additional information do I need to make a decision about this career path?
- Is there someone else that my contact suggested I talk with or another resource I can use for more information and when will I do this work?

Informational Interview Questions

Occupational/organizational interests

- How did you become interested in this occupation/organization?
- What do you like most about this organization?

Getting started in this occupation

- What entry-level job might qualify a person for this occupational field?
- What is the progression of jobs from the beginning to the top?
- What entry-level positions are there in this field that a liberal arts graduate might consider?

Job search techniques

- How did you get into this occupation/organization?
- What steps did you take to get where you are now?
- What are the important 'key words' to include in a resume and cover letter when job hunting in the field?

Preparation and background needed

- How well did your college experience prepare you for this job?
- What degree or certificate do employers look for?
- What kind of work/internship experience would employers look for in a job applicant?
- Are any co-curricular activities recommended?

Values and personal satisfaction

- What is there about this occupation/organization that gives you personal satisfaction?
- What work-related values are strongest in this type of work (security, high income, variety, independence)?
- How has your job affected your lifestyle?
- If you could do things over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why?

Working conditions

- Describe a typical day.
- What do you do? What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- Do you find your job exciting or boring? Why?
- What are the greatest pressures, strains, or anxieties in the work?

Salary ranges

- What are the beginning, average, and top salaries or wages in this occupation?
- How does your organization pay in comparison to other organizations in the same industry?

Advancement opportunities

- What opportunities exist for advancement, promotion, or change of jobs within this field?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
- If your career progresses as you like, what would be the next step in your career?

Future projections

- How secure will employment be in this occupation/organization?
- What sort of changes are occurring in your occupation?
- What are the employment prospects in your geographic area?

Other information or advice

- With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a decision?
- What professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- Can you suggest others who may be valuable sources of information?