

# INFORMATIONAL — INTERVIEWS —

## DON'T FORGET:

They've been in your shoes and remember what it's like to be starting out. Agreeing to the interview is proof they want to support you!



# KEY POINTS

**Informational Interview:** A career conversation with someone who is working in a field or job of interest. Informational interviews can happen in-person or via email, or phone.

## BEFORE

**Research** the industry and the organization before you ask for an informational interview. Take a look at the individual's LinkedIn page to learn more about their path.

**Reach out** to the individual and include the following:

- ◆ A brief introduction of yourself
- ◆ How you found their contact information and what interests you about their role/experience
- ◆ A request to schedule an informational interview to learn more about X, Y, and Z

**Prepare** questions ahead of time.

**Bring** copies of your **resume** and a notepad and pen.

## DURING

**Arrive early.** Show up 10 minutes early or hop on the virtual meeting room a few minutes prior to the agreed time.

**Restate the reasons** for your interest in meeting and what you hope to learn from them.

**Ask** open-ended yet pertinent questions. Ask for referrals to other appropriate individuals in the field or in related organizations.

**Remember** that you are here for information and not to ask for a job or internship.

**Take notes** and don't forget to ask for a business card.



**Note:** It's okay to ask for general feedback on your resume, but don't provide it in hopes of landing an opportunity. Instead of asking for a job or internship, build a genuine connection.

### FIRST

"Thank you for taking the time to meet with me."



### THEN

"As I shared previously in my email/message, I'm exploring different career paths and seeking advice about the field of [ \_\_\_\_ ]."

## AFTER

**Send a Thank You** message, note, or email within 24 hours.

**Keep in touch** on occasion to maintain the relationship. People who provide assistance want to celebrate your career success.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### CONFIRMATION MESSAGE

- ◆ Send an email to confirm the date, time, and location of your meeting 24-48 hours in advance.
- ◆ Triple-check spelling and grammar before you send it.

### IN PERSON

- ◆ Smile and breathe. They're taking time to chat with you because they sincerely want to help.
- ◆ Respect their time and stick to your agreed timeframe.

### ONLINE

- ◆ Respond within 24-48 hours to online correspondence.
- ◆ If using virtual platforms to connect, test your technology and internet connection ahead of time.

WHO DO I??  
HOW DO I??

# FAQ

WHERE DO I??  
WHAT DO I??

## WHAT are the benefits?

Build professional relationships while getting the inside scoop on:

- ◆ A typical week and its challenges
- ◆ An organization's culture, structure, and reputation
- ◆ Recommended skill sets, classes, experiences, and resume tips

## WHAT about timing?

Ask what might be a good time for them and fit something in to your schedule.

- ◆ Request to meet for 20-45 minutes
- ◆ Establish your timeframe in advance so that you both know what to expect
- ◆ If applicable, include time zones for video or phone calls

## HOW can I find interviewees?

- ◆ On LinkedIn, use the "Find Alumni" function on the University's LinkedIn page
- ◆ Participate in CES events that feature alumni and recruiters
- ◆ Attend local interest groups and meetups, or regional and national conferences

## WHERE should this take place?

In-person interviews often convene at a cafe or the interviewee's place of employment that both parties agree upon in advance.

- ◆ If applicable, include time zones for video or phone calls

## WHO guides the conversation?

You do!

- ◆ Bring a list of 8-10 questions to ask
- ◆ Don't let your reliance on your questions prevent you from genuinely connecting
- ◆ Find sample questions on CES' *Informational Interview Worksheet*

## CAN I directly ask for a job?

**No.** This conversation is about expanding your network and learning about career paths.

Instead you might ask:

- ◆ What is the best way to find entry-level roles in this industry?
- ◆ Do you know if there are any opportunities to intern at your organization this summer?

## HOW should I invite the person?

Reach out via email, phone, or LinkedIn.

Remember to:

- ◆ Communicate with a more formal tone
- ◆ Triple-check for grammatical errors
- ◆ Thank them for their time and consideration

## WHAT should I wear?

Dress to impress! Business casual is usually a good standard. What type of clothing does business casual entail?

We recommend:

- ◆ Trousers, skirt, or dress
- ◆ Button-down, blouse, or open-collar shirt
- ◆ Make sure clothing is wrinkle-free

## WHY send a Thank You note?

This person has kindly taken their time to share advice and support your career development. Cultivating an appreciative attitude is a vital skill!

WHO DO I??

HOW DO I??



WHERE DO I??

WHAT DO I??

Drafting correspondence can be challenging.  
Here are a few LinkedIn message templates to help get you started!

## INITIAL OUTREACH



Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I came across your profile on the University of Puget Sound alumni page and I'm really interested in your career path. I'm exploring career paths relating to *[industry, job, or major]* and wondered if you'd be interested in meeting to talk about your experience in *[field or organization]*.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you!

Ima Logger

## AFTER INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW



Thank you for meeting with me, \_\_\_\_\_. I really enjoyed talking with you. If you ever come across a role at your organization that might be good for someone like me, I'd love to hear about it. It would be cool to find an opportunity to work together someday.

Thanks again!

Ima Logger

## THE FOLLOW UP



Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you again for talking with me and sharing some great advice a month ago. I just wanted to let you know that I've been *[advice that you used]* and wanted to let you know that it's been really helpful in *[purpose]*. Hope you're doing well!

Best,

Ima Logger

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

## WORKSHEET

INTERVIEWEE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

JOB TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

PUGET SOUND ALUM?  YES  NO CLASS YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- How did you break into your career and what has been your path to this role?
- How has your major helped you in the workplace?
- How has your liberal arts education helped you in your career?
- What previous roles prepared you for your current position?
- What is your favorite part of your role?
- What do you like about working for this organization?
- What are the most challenging and most rewarding aspects of your role?
- What is one thing that surprised you about your career?
- What is a common misconception people have about what you do?
- How is the work/life balance?
- What advice do you have for someone who'd like to enter this field?
- What type of professional development is offered by your employer?
- How did you build skill sets to advance in your career?
- What career advice would you have offered your college self?
- What are your main tasks or responsibilities at work?
- What does a typical week look like?
- What kind of education, training, or other preparation is needed to enter this field?
- What advice do you have for an entry-level graduate who is just starting out?
- What was the importance of networking in your field?
- What advancement opportunities exist beyond an entry-level role?
- For your organization/industry, what social networks are relevant?
- Do you have any recommendations for other professionals in this field to contact?
- I'd like to stay in touch. May I reach out to you again or follow-up via LinkedIn?

### Add Your Own:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# NOTES