

When setting up a fact-finding meeting or telephone interview with the employer:

- Explain that you would like to ask some questions about the company, and the career field(s) of interest.
- Avoid using the words *job* and *interview*. Instead, use phrases such as:

"I am currently exploring some different career directions and would like to get more information to help me with my planning." **OR** "I would like to learn more about what is happening in the field, and see which career direction might be useful to me."

- Let them know you will not take up much of their time - 10 minutes at the most.

Tips

Contacting employers who employ people in the position(s) you are interested in is an excellent way of finding out about a specific job. It can also build a network of employer names, and boost your confidence! Meet with people who have jobs that interest you or employers in your areas of interest.

- Complete at least one informational interview for each career area of interest. You may need several to make an informed career choice.
- Informational interviews are good preparation for *real* job interviews, and help develop networks to follow-up with for future job opportunities.
- Record the information from your meetings or telephone interviews.
- Most people like to talk about what they do – so don't be afraid to ask.
- Ask for information about the industry, trends, job qualifications, challenges to meet/overcome.
- Ask for job leads, and names of employers to contact who might be hiring.
- Ask if you can leave or send a résumé for their review, and ask them to offer feedback related to their field – **don't ask** for a job at **this** time.
- Remember to thank the person for the information and their time.

Informational Interviews

Informational Interview Sample Questions

Ask about things that are important to you and then let the conversation flow naturally.

- How did you get into this work? Get started in this job?
- How did you prepare yourself for this job?
- What training or experience do I need for this area of work?
- Based on your experience, would you make the same work choice again?
- What skills and personal qualities are necessary in this field?
- What do you do in a typical day?
- What type of people do you work with?
- What are the specialty areas in this job field? (i.e. job titles)?
- What are the goals or objectives of your organization?
- Would you advise people to enter this work field? Why/why not?
- What is the job outlook in this area? What will affect its growth or decline?
- Where else could I find people involved in this activity? In what other industries or settings do people with your qualifications work?
- Can you recommend any written material dealing with this work/industry?
- What do you feel are the rewarding or challenging aspects of the job?
- Do you know of any employers who are presently hiring people in this field?

Potential Topics for Discussion

During an informational interview, your primary goal is to collect information about your chosen career field. Some employers may want to ask you some questions about you and your career objectives. It helps to be prepared if this occurs. The employer could be taking this networking opportunity to screen you as a potential candidate. Remain professional and answer the questions like you would in a formal interview situation.

Possible topics for discussion could be:

- Your career objectives and jobs you are interested in
- The skills you would like to use in your next job
- The aspects of your previous jobs that you enjoyed
- The people you have met with regarding your job search
- Your non-work-related skills that would be an asset to employers