

## Informational Interviewing

One of the best ways to find out what a particular career is like is to talk to someone who is working in that field. This is called an *informational interview*. An informational interview is an interview that *you* initiate. *You* ask the questions. The purpose is to get more information, not to get a job.

### **REASONS TO CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:**

- To explore careers and clarify your career goal
- To expand your professional network
- To access the most up-to-date career information
- To find out what education or training you may need

### **HOW TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:**

1. *Identify the career you want to learn more about*  
Make a list of careers that you find interesting. Try to rank them, starting with the occupation you are most curious about. Select one to want to explore first.
2. *Prepare for the interview*  
Read about the career prior to the interview. Decide what information you would like to obtain about the occupation. Prepare a list of the questions you would like to ask. (See page 2 for ideas.)
3. *Identify people to interview*  
Start with lists of people you already know: friends, relatives, classmates, current or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, etc. If needed, use Handshake, LinkedIn, or an online search to discover companies that employ people in that career field.
4. *Arrange the interview*  
Contact the person (or the company) to ask for an interview. Identify yourself as someone who is interested in learning about that career. We recommend asking for about 20 minutes of their time to ask some questions about what that career is like.
5. *Conduct the interview*  
Dress appropriately, arrive on time, be polite and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions. Stay on track, but allow for spontaneous discussion. Before leaving, you may ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful to you and ask permission to use your contact's name when contacting these new contacts.
6. *Follow up*  
Immediately following the interview, record the information gathered. Be sure to send a thank you note or email to your contact within 2-3 days of the interview.

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*For questions, or help with the Informational Interview process, reach out to Career Services:*

[careerservices@westerntc.edu](mailto:careerservices@westerntc.edu)

608-785-9440

[www.westerntc.edu/career-services](http://www.westerntc.edu/career-services)

## 20 QUESTIONS

*Prepare a list of your own questions for your informational interview. Here are some samples:*

1. On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
2. What training or education is required for this type of work?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
5. Are there any negatives to this job?
6. How did you get your job?
7. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
8. What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
9. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
10. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
11. Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
12. What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
13. What types of training do companies offer person entering this field?
14. What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in this field?
15. What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?
16. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why?  
What would you change?
17. 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 final decision?
18. What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
19. Is there anything else that you think I need to know?
20. Who do you know that I should talk to next? When I call him/her, may I use your name?