

An information interview is an exchange of information between two or more people about the field you are interested in researching.

Information vs. Traditional Interviews

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The purpose of an information interview is to learn about a company or an industry by interviewing someone within the organization or industry of interest. The purpose is to gain helpful information and build your network - NOT land you a job.

The purpose of a traditional interview is to determine the “fit” of your skills, experiences and qualities with an organization, with the intent of securing a position with that organization.

Information Interview

- You are the interviewer
- You are looking to gain information

Traditional/Job Interview

- You are the interviewee
- You are looking to gain employment

Benefits

Information interviews are a successful networking tool that are under-utilized by many students. They are an excellent way to set you apart when trying to develop your network and can add a significant amount of value to your job search. You can gain an insider’s perspective into a specific field or position and connect directly with industry professionals. While the goal of an information interview is to learn more about a potential career path or company, often times these interviews can help you land a job because of the connection you’ve made. If you leave a good impression, it is likely that your name will be passed along to someone else that may be in the position to hire someone.

Although it may seem like a daunting task to set up an information interview, do not be nervous. Be professional, and remember that most people are willing to help others - especially when you’re polite, professional and sincere.

Setting up an Interview

1. Determine what industry and/or occupation to research
2. Use your current network of contacts to find someone in this field - ask if anyone knows someone in your chosen occupation or industry
3. Set up an interview time via email or phone. Ask for 20 minutes of their time to discuss their experience and career path in your chosen field. If you are sending your request through e-mail, ensure that you begin with a formal salutation "Dear Mr. Smith", make sure you explain how you found their contact information, provide them with a brief overview of yourself and your interest, as well as a few options for potential days and times for the meeting.
4. If the individual is unable to meet in person or if location is a barrier, ask for a telephone interview. If they are unable to participate, ask for a referral to someone else in the industry and thank them for their time.

Interview Etiquette

| DO | DO NOT |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrive on time• Ensure that you send a thank you note (or email) within 24 hours of the interview• Be gracious and courteous before, during and after the interview• Be professional, enthusiastic, and yourself!• Listen carefully, and take notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take up more time than you had originally scheduled• Cut them off or jump in as they are answering your questions• Ask for a job• Talk about your skills and accomplishments - you are there to learn• Bring a resume - if they ask for it, thank them for the opportunity to share your skills and send at a later date |

Questions to Ask

Ensure that you have done in depth research into the organization, industry, individual and their position. Prepare open ended and valuable questions that you genuinely want answered! 5 questions should be sufficient although you may want to prepare additional questions should time allow.

Here are some examples to get you started:

1. How do people break into the field?
2. How did you get into this line of work?
3. What is the culture like in your organization or industry as a whole?
4. What are some of the tasks and projects you are working on?
5. What are the biggest challenges?
6. What makes this job/career rewarding?
7. What does a typical day look like?
8. What would an entry level position in this field involve?
9. Is there anyone else you would recommend I speak with? (If so, may I use your name?)

After the Information Interview

Always send the interviewee a thank you note indicating your appreciation for their time. You may include a brief notation about something that you learned during your conversation. Sending an e-mail or a thank-you card are both appropriate options. Send within 1-2 business days.

Need More Info? Contact the BCDO

<https://portal.bus.brocku.ca>