

How to Prepare for an Informational Interview

STEP 1: KNOW YOUR GOAL

Conduct a thorough self-evaluation in order to describe, who you are, what you're looking to learn, and most importantly, to know your goal!

- Are you looking to explore what various careers are like?
- Do you already know an industry, but want to learn what different jobs do in that area?
- Do you already know what you want to do and where, but want specific information from someone in that role and/or at that specific company?

STEP 2: CONNECT

Find the person you want to connect with and craft your ask. How you ask will depend on your relationship with the connection and what your goal with the conversation is.

- Explain who you are, how you got their name, why you are interested in learning more about the field/job or industry
- Request a 20- to 30-minute meeting.
- **Do not ask for a job or send a resume unless requested.**

An example for how to reach out to an alumni is:

"Good Afternoon (name),

Thank you for accepting my connection request I really appreciate it. I'm currently in the process of learning more about Corporate Finance as I am excited to eventually pursue a career in that area. I saw that you have had an interesting career path and excellent experience at XYZ company, and I was hoping you might have 20 minutes free in the next week or two to connect? It would be great to hear about your experiences and more about the day in the life of a (insert their job title here). If you are willing to connect via phone or Skype I would really appreciate it! Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you in advance.

*Take Care,
Your Name"*

STEP 3: PREPARE QUESTIONS

Create a specific agenda and prioritize your questions. Your contact is giving you valuable time; don't waste it. You requested the meeting, so you are in charge of running it. Develop questions to fit the organization, the industry you have explored, and your particular situation and experience level. Some suggested questions:

- *What are your major responsibilities?*
- *What is a typical day like?*
- *How did you get started and how did that help you reach your current position?*
- *What experiences and skills made you most competitive for jobs in this field?*
- *What are typical entry-level jobs in your field?*
- *What do you enjoy most about your position and what are challenges you face?*
- *What courses or work experience would you recommend pursuing to prepare for this role?*
- *Any suggestions for how to conduct my job search?*
- *Can you recommend anyone that I contact for additional information? May I use your name?*

For more sample questions view our guide [here!](#)

STEP 4: PREAPRE FOR THE MEETING

Depending on how you are meeting, there are various things to prepare for and remember.

In Person:

- Confirm meeting location and time.
- Determine best transportation method or route. If driving, find nearby parking options and costs. If taking the T or a bus, leave extra time for delays.
- Don't arrive more than 15 minutes early
- Dress professionally

Skype:

- Determine who will reach out to whom and that you have each other's skype names
- Have a quiet place to talk without distracting backdrops
- Dress professionally

Phone Call:

- Call at the time you agreed upon
- Be prepared with an intro or to leave a voicemail if they are unable to answer
- Find a quiet area so you aren't competing with background noise
- Have a charged phone and call from an area with good reception

STEP 5: CONDUCT THE MEETING

Regardless of how or where the meeting is being conducted, you want to present your most professional and engaged self. Here's a few tips on how to do that!

- Actively listen and engage. Make proper eye contact.
- Ask if you may take notes.
- Keep track of time. It is okay to call attention to the fact you are running out of time and ask if you can continue or determine what best next steps are.
- Be mindful of their time and information. It can be easy to get carried away asked a multitude of questions, ask the most important questions first so if you run out of time you have at least answered the most significant of your inquiries.

STEP 6: FOLLOW UP

Within 24 hours after meeting for an informational interview, you should always send a "thank you" note. A few quick rules to the thank you note are:

- Keep them short and show appreciation. On an email, the recipient should not have to scroll down to view the entire letter.
- Reference specific things you learned from your conversation. If they indicated next steps during your conversation, be sure to complete those and mention such in your note.

For more information about thank you correspondences and how to follow up after, please click [here](#).