



Informational Interviews

How to Find People, Arrange and Conduct the Interview

Where do I find people to interview?


It is best to have some kind of connection to the person you interview. Ask friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, employers/former employers, your friends' parents, GC faculty and staff, people you know through church, your former teachers, lifelong friends of your parents, people you meet through athletic/sporting events, GC alumni, etc. the Office of Career and Personal Development not only has names of many employers, we also have connections with a wide range of alumni who are willing to assist you in exploring your career options.

How do I prepare for an Informational Interview?

Remember, most people enjoy talking about what they do, and how they got into the field, but it is very important that you do not waste their time! Be prepared and know what you want to ask before you arrive. Know your own interests, skills, values, and how they relate to the career field represented by the person with whom you will be talking. Know exactly what kind of information you want. If you need assistance in preparing for an informational interview, please contact the Career and Personal Development office.

How do I arrange the interview?

Generally, the most effective way to arrange an informational interview is to send the person an e-mail explaining what you have in mind and then follow-up with a phone call. If you have a mutual contact who suggested that you call this person, be sure to let them know that up front. For example: "Alice Smith, Director of Marketing at Advanced Home Care, suggested that I contact you." You need to be certain that the person you are contacting knows Alice Smith. Explain that you would like to have a few minutes of their time to ask questions about the career field they work in and that you will be calling within the next few days. Attach a copy of your resume, but be certain that your request is clearly NOT for a job interview. Remember, an informational interview is not the same thing as an actual job interview.





How do you handle the actual interview?

- Plan to visit with the person for 20-30 minutes. Unless the person asks you to stay longer (or unless they are talking your ears off), do not stay longer than 45 minutes. Most people are very busy and have other appointments after you.
- Be sure to take a pen and pad of paper—you will want to write down names and other valuable information.
- Dress as if you were going on an actual job interview. First impressions are important.
- Arrive at your appointment a few minutes early. Be courteous to everyone you meet—the receptionist/secretary, etc.
- Take the initiative in conducting the interview. You asked to meet with the person, so you take the ball and run with it.

How should I follow up after the Interview?

Be sure to get the person's business card so you will have a correct name, title, address, etc. Write a nice hand-written thank-you note (or send an e-mail if that seems more comfortable to you) thanking the person for their time. Send the note as quickly as possible after your meeting (the next day is best).

