

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a short conversation with a professional to learn about a career, industry or organization. The goal is to learn and build your network, not ask for a job.



Before the Interview

- Research: Learn about the person and their organization.
- Prepare: Have a brief introduction about yourself and three to five questions ready.
- Schedule: Ask for 30 minutes at their convenience. Confirm whether it will be in person or online.

During the Interview

Be on time, dress professionally, listen and take notes. Ask questions such as:

- How did you get started in this career?
- What does a typical day look like?
- What skills are important?
- What advice would you give someone entering this field?
- Who else should I talk with?

After the Interview

- Send a thank-you message within 24 to 48 hours.
- Follow up later to share your progress and stay connected.
- Stay curious. Build the relationship.



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Sample Informational Interview Questions



Understanding the Role

- Could you describe your current position and primary responsibilities?
- What does a typical day or week look like for you?
- What types of problems or issues do you regularly address?
- What kinds of decisions are you responsible for making?
- How is your time generally divided among your main duties?
- What do you find most rewarding about your work? What is most challenging?

Career Path and Preparation

- What initially drew you to this field, and how did you get started?
- What previous roles or experiences prepared you for your current position?
- What were the key factors that contributed to your career advancement?
- If you were starting again, would you choose the same path? Why or why not? What might you do differently?
- What advice would you give a student seeking to gain relevant experience in this field?

Skills, Qualities and Lifestyle

- What skills and personal qualities are most important for success in this field?
- How has your career affected your lifestyle or work-life balance?

Industry Insights

- What current trends are shaping the industry (economic, operational or employment trends)?
- What long-term developments or opportunities do you foresee?
- Are there key industry leaders or organizations I should follow?
- Which professional associations or publications would you recommend for learning more about this field?

Job Search and Professional Development

- Based on my background, what types of employers might value my skills and experience?
- What work environments do you think would align best with my strengths (e.g., large vs. small organizations, startup vs. established companies)?
- If you were hiring for your team today, what qualities or experiences would weigh most heavily in your decision?
- Would you be willing to review my resume and offer feedback?

About Your Organization

- How would you describe the size and structure of your organization?
- Does the organization operate in multiple locations?
- How would you characterize the workplace culture?
- What types of formal or on-the-job training does the organization provide?



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