

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES

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An informational interview provides you an opportunity to connect with professionals currently working in your career field to gain valuable industry information, identify your professional strengths and weaknesses, build self-confidence and build a network of contacts. Informational interviews may take place face to face at the interviewee's place of work or over the phone.

Informational Interview Steps

Before the Interview:

- Identify career opportunities or companies that you would like to explore.
- Identify potential people to interview.
 - Start with people you already know: friends, family, faculty, co-workers, etc. Ask them if they know anyone in your career field of interest.
 - The Career Development Office may be able to assist with CCS alumni working in your career field of interest.
 - Leverage LinkedIn to find people working at the companies on your list.
 - Attend professional events and guest lectures to build your network and potential people to interview.
- When sending an email to request an informational interview: have a clear message and ask specifically for what you want. Demonstrate why you want to meet with them and be considerate of their time.
- Below are some tips for your email introduction when requesting an informational interview.
 - Introduce yourself.
 - Start by asking for help. "I hope you'll be able to help me out..."
 - Ask for something very specific. "I'd love to know more about what you do and how you got your start"
 - Tell them why you are reaching out to them. A shared connection, you admire them etc.
 - Be considerate. Ask for only a short amount of their time. (15-30 minutes)
- Research the company /person further prior to the informational interview. This way you will be able to ask more relevant and intelligent questions.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask during the informational interview.
- Bring copies of your resume if you are meeting in person.

During the Interview:

- Initiate the conversation. You requested the meeting.
- Remember, this is an information and advice seeking interview. **Do not ask for a job!**
- Refer to your list of prepared questions, but also be flexible and allow the conversation to flow. Listen carefully and ask new questions based on the interviewee's responses.
- Take notes.
- Abide to the 15-30 minute time limit that you requested.
- If meeting in person and requested, leave your resume.
- Ask for a business card before you leave or contact information before ending the call.

After the Interview:

- Send a thank you note within 48 hours. If you had a phone informational interview, you may include your resume at this time.
- Keep a list of all the people that you interviewed.
- Record the information that you learned.
- Evaluate the information: What did you learn? What do you still need to know? What are your next steps? Etc.

Informational Interview Questions

At the beginning of your informational interview, thank your contact for their time and willingness to meet with you and reiterate that you are there to gather information and learn about a particular career. Below is a sample list of questions:

- How did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?
- What is your typical day?
- What are the rewards and challenges of your job?
- What are the various jobs in this field or organization?
- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- What do you like most about this company? Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field/job? Are there any written materials you suggest I read? Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?