



## Informational Interview

An informational interview offers you an opportunity to gather information about a career field, job, or employer in which you are interested. The *purpose of an informational interview* is to expand your understanding, not to ask for a job or internship.

---

Conducting an informational interview will help you actively:

- Secure firsthand information about industries, jobs, work responsibilities, career paths, work settings, and organizational cultures
- Build contacts and referrals for your personal network (increasing your chances of securing employment in the future)
- Increase your self-confidence and interviewing skills
- Gather insight for stronger career decisions

Ways to conduct an informational interview:

- In-person (ideal)
- Phone
- Skype

\*Make sure to ask your contact for the most convenient way to conduct the interview. Each interview should take no more than 30 minutes.

---

### Step I: Getting Started – Finding Contacts to Interview

The first step is to find people to interview. The goal is to find someone in a desired industry, organization, job, or career field. Typically, the best place to start is with your personal network. This may include family, friends, past employers, and/or past professors. Ask these contacts for the names of people within occupations or organizations that interest you or even to facilitate a warm introduction on your behalf.

Additional resources to help you secure contact names include:

- Organizational websites/literature
- Professional/trade association chapters
- Chamber of Commerce directories
- Gator CareerLink Employer Directory
- LinkedIn Alumni Feature – Search for UF alumni by organization, major, location, industry, job, and/or skills.
- UF Alumni Association Gator Clubs

After identifying the person to contact, request an appointment via email, telephone, or through the source who helped you secure the contact. If calling or emailing, use professional language, state who you are, and why you are contacting them. Clearly state that you are not seeking a job at this time, but gathering career information, and ask if they are available to talk with you for 20-30 minutes.

---

### Step II: Prepare for the Interview

Always prepare before an informational interview to ensure that you make a professional first-impression. Prepare by:

- Conducting preliminary research on the respective field or organization:
  - Gather facts in order to formulate intelligent questions



- Avoid asking questions easily answered on the company's website or LinkedIn profile
  - Developing a list of open-ended questions, avoiding yes/no answers that often fail to stimulate more response and discussion. Topics to consider include:
    - Career choice and goals
    - Education
    - Work/life balance and their career progression
    - Organizational culture
    - Day-to-day responsibilities
    - Technical skills
    - Making informed career decisions
  - Preparing for:
    - In-person interview: Consider issues related to traffic and parking
    - Interview via Skype: Ensure technology is working adequately, secure a quiet space, and make sure the background behind you is clean and distraction free
- 

### **Step III: Conduct the Interview**

- Start the interview by building rapport. Once rapport has been established, then:
    - Restate your purpose for the interview
    - Share insight as to why you are seeking career information and the general types of questions you will be asking
  - Take notes - If you want to record the conversation, make sure to ask permission first
  - Be prepared to answer questions about yourself:
    - Education, background, and career ambitions
  - Offer to share your resume to help them understand your experiences and qualifications
    - Ask for feedback
  - Additional questions to consider:
    - Ask for a business card (if necessary) to follow up
    - Ask if you can connect with the person on LinkedIn
    - Ask if there are articles, professional associations, websites, or books that might help you learn more
    - Ask who they recommend you talk with next
- 

### **Step IV: After the Interview**

- Send a hand written card or email thanking the contact for their time
  - Refer to some portion of the conversation and why the advice that was given was helpful to you
- Schedule your next one. Conducting several informational interviews will help you gain a broader perspective and identify patterns about the industry, occupation and/or career field