

EXPLORE YOUR CAREER WITH INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

What is an Informational Interview?

The informational interview is an opportunity to learn about a career which interests you by meeting or talking with someone who is working professionally or who has completed an internship in that field. Speaking with industry professionals provides a glimpse of the real-life experiences, challenges, and opportunities that exist in a particular profession.

Arranging an Informational Interview

- Brainstorm potential people to interview: Friends, parents, friends' parents, and parents' friends are potential sources of locating people who might be willing to participate in an informational interview with you.
- Use LinkedIn to find UTEP alumni to network with or to set up informational interviews. The Career Center staff can show you how to use LinkedIn.
- Prioritize your list based on areas of greatest interest to you and convenience of arrangements. Select two or three prospective professionals to interview. When you contact them, identify yourself as a UTEP student, state you are interested in learning about the career or internships they have chosen, and ask if they mind meeting or speaking with you for 20–30 minutes to discuss their career and answer some questions.
- See Informational Interview Request sample email (right).

Preparing for an Informational Interview

- Consider what you want to learn during the interview and select questions accordingly.
- Utilize Informational Interview Questions ([see back page](#)) to help you select your questions.
- If meeting in-person, dress for the job you are investigating and arrive 10–15 minutes early.
- If speaking over the phone, be sure to have good reception and are in a quiet place.
- Bring or email a copy of your résumé in case it is requested. However, **don't approach the interview as if you are looking for a job**—your purpose is to gather information.

Evaluation and Follow Up

- Evaluate your experience. What did you learn from it? Do you have new questions? Did the interview reinforce interest in this career? How does this career match for you? Talk with your Peer Career Advisor or Career Center Staff Member about it.
- Keep names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your contacts for future reference.
- Send a brief thank you note to each person you interviewed thanking them for their time.

Sample Email

From:	Imminer@miners.utep.edu
To:	xyz@company.com
Subject:	Informational Interview Request

Dear Mr/Ms. XYZ,

Allow me to introduce myself. I am a UTEP Miner at The University of Texas at El Paso focusing on both creative writing and American studies, I found your name on LinkedIn via the alumni page and want to contact you about information pertaining to careers in writing and editing. Your experience would be insightful to me as I choose my own career.

Schedule permitting, I am hoping that I could conduct a brief informational interview with you during the week of February 20th to learn more about your career path. I would really appreciate any insight you could provide to me about careers in freelance writing.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Ima Miner
The University of Texas at El Paso
The Prospector Undergraduate Assistant
imminer@miners.utep.edu

RESOURCES

Tracking Your Connections

Keep track of your network and all your interactions by using this FREE Networking Tracker. Be sure to add dates for upcoming informational interviews and follow-up items.



Information Interview Sample Questions

Position Related Questions

- What is your job like?
- How does a typical day look like?
- What are the duties/functions/responsibilities?
- What kind of challenges do you deal with?
- What kind of decisions do you make?
- Why did you decide to work for this organization?
- What is the starting salary range for this position?
- What do you like most about this organization/position?
- What would you like to change about your position?
- What abilities or personal qualities do you believe contribute most to success in this job?
- Is the salary for this position competitive?

College Involvement Questions

- Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college?
- How well did your college experience prepare you for this job?
- What courses have proved valuable to you in your work? What would you recommend for me?
- How important are grades/GPA for obtaining a job in this field?
- Are there any written materials you suggest I read? Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- What are the educational requirements for this job? What other types of credentials or licenses are required?
- What type of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
- Is graduate school recommended? Does the company encourage and pay for employees to pursue graduate degrees?

Industry, Field, or Career Path Questions

- What are the various jobs in this field or organization?
- How does your organization differ from its competitors?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your occupation?
- How does a person progress in your field? What is a typical career path in this field or organization?
- What were the keys to your career advancement?
- How did you get where you are and what are your long-range goals?
- If you could do things over again, would you choose the same path? Why? What would you change?
- How much travel and/or geographic relocation is required in your field?

Advice Questions

- What kind of experience, paid or unpaid, would you recommend for persons pursuing a career in this field?
- What special advice do you have for someone seeking to qualify for this type of position?
- Can you suggest other people I might be able to speak with who have similar career interests?
- Would you mind taking a look at my résumé and give me feedback?
- What professional associations or conferences do you recommend for me?
- What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field? How did you learn these skills? How can I evaluate whether or not I have the necessary skills for a position such as yours?
- Why did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- How did you find your job?
- What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
- Does your organization offer full-time employment to interns following their internship?