

## Informational Interviews

Informational Interviews are the foundation for a strong network. They allow students to investigate potential careers, companies and jobs, all while building a network of support.

### Before you conduct an information interview, consider this:

1. Informational interviews are not opportunities for you to ask for a job or internship.
2. Do your research before you conduct one.
3. These interviews take time. In your conversations, be prepared to honor your time and the interviewee's time.

Once you've done your research and discovered people who you would like to network with and learn from, consider these important steps:

1. **Send an introductory email.** Be professional, mention how you found their contact information and ask if they would be willing to spend 30 minutes talking with you about their work. Suggest coffee if they are in the same city, but a telephone interview is always a good option and is respectful of their time.
2. **Prepare for the interview. Have your questions ready.** While these conversations aren't scripted, being prepared is a sign of competence, and asking good questions will help you grow a solid network. The questions should be things you want to know, not what you think the interviewee wants you to ask. Here are a few examples of good questions:
  - a. What was your path to this (job/company)?
  - b. What do you like most about this work/company?
  - c. What surprised you most — both in positive and challenging ways — when you came to this work/company?
  - d. What is a typical day like for you?
  - e. What skills do you think are most important in the workplace in general?
  - f. What types of skills/competencies fit well at this company?
3. You should also be prepared to talk about yourself. Make sure you can respond to the question "Tell me a little about yourself?" Also be able to articulate why you are interested in learning more about this person/job/company.
4. Make sure you keep to the agreed-upon time. At the end of the interview, ask if there is anyone else the person would suggest you talk? If they give you suggestions, it is appropriate to ask if they will connect you or if they mind if you use their name.
5. **ALWAYS** write a thank you note after the conversation. Handwritten thank you notes go a long way.

Remember, the staff in the Career Center is a great resource, and we're happy to be a part of your network. Make an appointment today!