

Career Informational Interview

Interviewing a person who is working in an occupation or profession you would like to learn about more is a great way to discover if it is the right career choice for you. The people you interview can provide insights available nowhere else. In addition, you gain valuable up-to-date career information, and improve your verbal skills by communicating with professionals.

Listed below are steps to guide you through the informational interview process.

1. **Focus** on the occupation that most interests you. It will be important for you to prepare yourself by completing career assessments, occupational research and assessing your strengths and weaknesses PRIOR to setting up the interviews.
2. **Identify** people to interview. Some important resources will be friends, family, phone book, former co-workers and the MJC Career Staff.
3. **Arrange** the interview. Contact the person, letter or email. Mention how you got their name, that you are only seeking information (not a job) and that you will only take 20-30 minutes of their time. A sample script for you is located below for your convenience.

Hello. My name is Susie Smith and I am a freshman majoring in Liberal Studies at Modesto Junior College. You were recommended to me by Jerry Jones, the principal of Downey High School, as a great educator and a good person to talk to concerning the field of education. Although I am no currently looking for a job, I have become very interested in education and would like to find out as much as I can about the field. Would it be possible to schedule 20 to 30 minutes with you at your convenience to ask you a few questions and get your advice on how best to prepare to enter this field?

4. **Conduct** the informational interview. Dress neatly and appropriately, arrive on time and be polite and professional. Have a list of potential questions to ask and paper to jot down brief notes to refer to later. A list of potential questions is located on the back for your convenience. Respect the person's time by keeping the appointment length within the time span you requested. Before leaving, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful with your career research.
5. **Follow-up.** Immediately following the interview, record the information and send a thank you note. This is the step many people leave out, yet it is so valuable in demonstrating follow-through and professionalism.
6. **Evaluate.** Try to schedule more than one interview for each career or occupation to receive a more complete overview. Personalities, opinion and position titles may differ in each person interviewed and organization researched.

Name of the Person Interviewed: _____

Job Title: _____

1. Help me understand a little more about what your job entails?
2. How did you happen to get involved in this kind of work? Or: Why did you decide to go into this particular profession?
3. How long have you been in this profession?
4. What kind of formal education and college majors are most useful in preparation for this kind of work?
5. What skills do you need for this type of work?
6. Describe a typical day at your work?
7. What are your working conditions?
8. What is your work schedule, salary and benefits like?
9. What training and education did you need for this career?
10. What do you like most/least about your job? Why do some people leave this field?
11. What seems to be on the “cutting edge” in this profession? Or How is the field changing? Is the field expanding or taking any new directions?
12. How is your work evaluated?
13. What the opportunities for advancement?
14. What is the salary range for someone in this field?
15. What advice would you give to a person thinking about this career?

At the end of the interview you may have other questions that you would like to ask or are curious about, include those on your list. Take the opportunity you have and explore the career.