



A person's network accounts for nearly 70% of all successful job searches. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The best way to explore potential career choices is by speaking and networking with individuals who work in the field. Networking will help you to learn first-hand about your chosen profession by asking questions about tasks, business environment and educational background. Networking can be done anywhere: a job fair, listening to a classroom speaker or at a family picnic. This is a guide to help you get started!

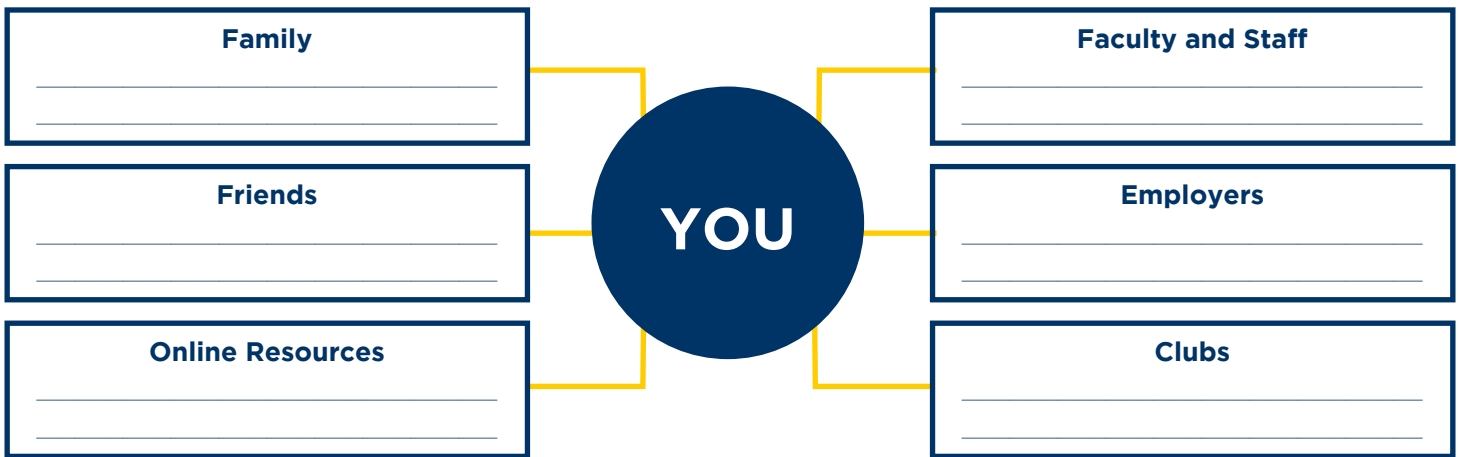
WHAT IS AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

An informational interview is a conversation designed to give you information and insight into a particular position, company or career path in your field of interest. While contacts may be developed by participating in this process, the focus is on the information gathered. It is not about getting a job, but rather gathering information on the day-to-day duties of the person you've chosen to interview and learning about the history of their personal career path. Use it as part of a connections - building exercise, as it is a chance to make a new contact in a career field you're interested in and an opportunity to get referrals for future meetings. Ultimately, the information gathered will help clarify whether this is a field you want to pursue. It is also an opportunity to ask for feedback on your resume and job search strategies.

FINDING A PROFESSIONAL

Finding someone to interview or shadow is not difficult. People like to talk about themselves and are typically flattered that you are interested in their career. Consider all of the people you know who may have contacts with someone in the field. Fill out your individual networking map below. This is very helpful in brainstorming people that you may want to ask for assistance.

NETWORKING MAP



MERRIMACK CAN HELP

MEET INDIVIDUALLY WITH A CAREER ADVISOR TO CREATE A NETWORKING STRATEGY

- Make an appointment on Handshake | www.merrimack.joinhandshake.com

ATTEND INDUSTRY SPECIFIC EVENTS

- www.career.merrimack.edu/events

JOIN THE MERRIMACK ALUMNI GROUP

- Search "Merrimack College Alumni" group on *LinkedIn*, request access



GUIDELINES FOR ARRANGING INTERVIEWS

Sample Script: (This can also be modified for email)

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

"Hello, my name is Kate Smith. Our mutual friend Ryan Jones suggested that you would be a good person for me to, talk to about public relations. I am graduating this year from Merrimack College with a degree in Communication. I am interested in learning more about issues and trends in the field, how you got to where you are today and what advice you would have for a new graduate trying to break into the field."

REQUESTING THE INTERVIEW

"I was hoping to briefly meet or speak with you over the phone or in person to ask a few questions. Would there be a convenient time to meet with me in the next two weeks?"

LOGISTICS

SETTING UP THE INTERVIEW

Confirm the date and time of your meeting. Obtain directions and information on parking/transportation.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Do your research on the individual and field through *LinkedIn* and *Glassdoor*. This research will help you create better questions as well as see what similarities and connection you already share.

THE INTERVIEW

Treat this like a job interview. Arrive early, be prepared with questions, and dress professionally. If you meet for coffee or lunch make sure you buy .

POST-INTERVIEW

Send a thank you note or email within 24 hours of your meeting. Connect with them on *LinkedIn*. Ask if there are other people they may suggest you speak with and stay in touch. Share your success as you make career decisions that land that professional job

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Develop a list of questions in order of importance to help keep you on track during the interview.

- How did you enter this field? What preparation did you have (classes, activities, experience)?
- What skills, abilities and personal qualities do you find most important in your work?
- My research indicates that (name the trend or concern) is an issue in this field. How is this issue affecting the work in this organization?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What do you see as disadvantages to working in your type of job?
- What kinds of related work do people in your field sometimes change into?
- Describe your major activities during a typical work week.
- What advice do you have for someone entering this field?
- Would you recommend any specific professional associations in this field?
- How well does my resume work for this field? How could I improve it?
- For what positions should I realistically apply to? How might I improve my qualifications?
- What advice do you have for applying at this organization?
- Are there other organizations you would suggest I research?
- Could you suggest the names of other persons in this career field with whom I might talk to?

