
INTERVIEWING FOR INFORMATION

What is an informational interview?

An informational interview is a **conversation with someone working in a career, industry, or role you're interested in**. It's a chance to learn about that individual's experience, ask questions, and get advice—not to ask for a job, but to gain insights that can help you plan your career path.

Why conduct an informational interview?

- To **explore** career paths and figure out what roles and work environments may be a good fit for you.
- To **gain firsthand insights** about companies, industries, and job titles you are interested in or won't easily find through online research.
- To **grow your professional network** and build relationships in your field of interest.
- To **make a positive impression** on someone who could connect you to job opportunities in the future.
- To **build confidence** for future job interviews by practicing asking thoughtful questions and talking about your interests, without the pressure of being evaluated.

Who can I interview?

Anyone can be part of your network and it's likely bigger than you think! Start by **reaching out to people you already know**, including:

- Friends, family, neighbors, and acquaintances
- Current or former professors, advisors, and classmates
- Current or past employers, supervisors, and coworkers

Want to expand your network? Try these strategies:

- **Use LinkedIn** to search for professionals in careers or industries you're curious about.
- **Connect with UMass Lowell alumni** through LinkedIn, career center events, or other campus opportunities – they are often eager to support fellow River Hawks.
- **Research companies or organizations** you're interested in. Look for employees in roles you'd like to learn more about.
- **Join professional associations or student organizations** related to your field. Many offer a variety of networking opportunities for students.
- **Ask your current contacts** if they can introduce you to someone on their network who's doing work you'd like to learn about.

How do I set up an informational interview?

You can reach out by email, phone, or LinkedIn message. If someone referred you, be sure to mention their name.

UMass Lowell Career & Co-op Center

Campus Offices: University Crossing, Suite 450 | O'Leary Library, 314 & 318

Website: career.uml.edu | Phone: 978-934-2355 | Email: career_services@uml.edu |

Facebook & Instagram: [@umlcareercoop](https://www.facebook.com/umlcareercoop) | LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/umlcareercoop/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/umlcareercoop/)

When you contact someone, include the following:

- Who you are (name, major, and expected graduation year)
- Why you're reaching out (what you're exploring and why you're interested in them specifically)
- A polite and specific request for a brief conversation (usually 15–20 minutes)
- A suggestion on how to meet (via phone, video call, or in person)

Developing Your Questions

Prepare 8-10 questions to guide your conversation. These questions can help you learn more about the person's role, career path, and industry, and valuable advice for your own journey. Here are some examples:

1. Can you walk me through a typical day or week in your role?
2. How did you get started in this field, and what steps led you to your current position?
3. What do you like most about your job, and what do you find most challenging?
4. What skills, experiences, or education have been most helpful to you in your career?
5. What trends or changes do you see happening in this industry?
6. Are there any professional organizations, events, or resources you recommend?
7. What advice would you give someone trying to break into this field?
8. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to? May I mention that you referred me?

Create additional questions that connect to the person's unique career path and current role, focusing on what genuinely interests you.

Informational Interview Considerations

- Aim to meet at the person's workplace when possible to get a feel for the physical workplace and workplace culture.
- Take notes—treat this as valuable research. If meeting in person, observe the workplace atmosphere and note what you like or don't like.
- Keep track of time; thank them after 20 minutes but continue if invited.
- Bring your resume if meeting in person or have it digitally available if meeting remotely.
- Collect contact info for follow-up: name, title, email, phone, company details.
- Send a thank-you note within 24 hours, including your contact info.

Final Tips for Success

- Relax and enjoy the conversation.
- Be prepared with your documents and find a quiet and well-lit space for virtual interviews.
- Dress professionally for in-person and virtual meetings—first impressions matter!
- Informational interviews can turn into a job interview. Be prepared to talk about your background, educational knowledge, skills, experience, and enthusiasm for the field.

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