Networking & Informational Interviews
Preparing You For Life After OWU!

Career Connection
Ohio Wesleyan
owu.edu/careers
An informational interview is a discovery meeting you initiate with someone who has a job, employment site, path, or background that interests you.

**The Goal:**
Learn from someone else’s experience to inform you about new options, best practices, resources, opportunities, and connections.

**Informational interviews...**
- Cultivate a professional relationships
- Are a highly effective networking strategy.
- Will make it easier for your contact to keep you in mind when opportunities arise within their organization or another site.

**Networking & Why It’s Important**
Networking includes talking to people, making connections, and developing rapport to grow your circle of influence (whether face-to-face, by phone/ email, or through online sites like OWU Alumni Partners [https://owu.edu/alumnipartners](https://owu.edu/alumnipartners) or LinkedIn).

- **It’s the #1 way to find a job!** Approximately 70-80% of job seekers find jobs through networking.
- **It helps you achieve your personal & professional goals!** Ambassadors will help advocate for you by connecting you with the right people. Strong connections build confidence and demonstrate credibility.

**Quick Networking Tips**

**Nurture relationships** – follow-up is key!
**Establish connections** – get out of your comfort zone and meet people.
**Talk with alums** – they are often eager to help students succeed!
**Write thank you notes** – you will remain positive in people’s minds as a result.
**Offer assistance** – remember it is not about what you “get,” but what you can offer.
**Really be real** – show your interest and be genuinely you!
**Keep at it** – continue to put yourself out there. Perseverance will get you far.

**WHAT IS INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING?**
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**OWU Alumni Partners**
Visit owu.edu/alumnipartners & connect with alumni dedicated to being a resource and support to students. **Reach out to Alumni Partners for:**
- Insight, advice, and mentorship about career path
- 1:1 mentorship
- Shadowing & internship opportunities
- Informational Interviews
- So many other valuable engagements!

**REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW: KEY TIPS**
- Let them know how you got their name/ why you are contacting them. **Make it clear that you are looking for information, not a job!**
- Provide background information about yourself (how you became interested in their company/ industry, any related experience you have, etc.).
- Make a request for 20-60 minutes of their time (you can determine the amount).
- Thank them in advance and tell them how you will follow up.
- Reach out to 5-10 people at a time so you hear back from 1-3.
- If no response after a week, send a brief reminder to ensure the initial request was not overlooked. If you still don't hear back, move on to another individual.
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW LAYOUT

- Begin by thanking the individual for their time. Restate the objective of the discussion, the time allotment, and briefly review your background.
- Informational interviews should be casual and conversational.
- Prepare specific open-ended questions that indicate your knowledge of the industry or career path. Focus on topics that cannot be researched online.
- Listen attentively and take good notes.
- Always follow up with a thank-you note & add your contact on LinkedIn!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

❓ About the Individual

- What is the best path to this career?
- What attracted you to this industry, your company, and your job?
- What aspects of your career are the most and least rewarding/challenging and why? What would you do differently if you were starting over?
- If you were in the job market tomorrow, what would you recommend doing?

❓ About the Job

- What are your primary responsibilities? How do you spend your time?
- What qualities/attributes do you look for when hiring a __________?
- What are the most valuable skills in your job?
- Which experiences enabled you to develop these skills?
- How do you keep your skills current? What do you read?
- What professional associations do you belong to?
- What seminars or continuing education do you find useful?

❓ About the Company/Organization

- What makes your company/organization unique?
- What do you see as the biggest competitive challenge for your company/organization?
- What is the culture like at this company/organization?

❓ About the Industry

- What have been your biggest surprises in this field?
- What are the common misconceptions about working in this field?
- What are the vulnerabilities of this industry? What worries you?
- What do you expect of people starting out in this industry?
- What educational and personal qualities in candidates attract you?
- How do you determine a candidate's compatibility for the field, including education, personality, and cultural considerations?

❓ Feedback on your Career Search

- Are there other positions / career paths to consider based on my background and interests?
- What strengths and weaknesses do you see in my current background?
- Is there anything else that would be helpful as I consider this field?
- Looking at my resume, what advice would you have for me on next steps if I were interested in this industry/company/career?
- Who are other individuals you would recommend I reach out to?
Dear [Insert title and last name or first name],

I enjoyed speaking with you yesterday at the OWU Internship and Summer Job Fair and learning about the opportunities at _______. Given my strong customer service skills, coursework in marketing, and campus involvement, I'm very interested in the ________ summer internship program. As you recommended, I applied online this morning. Attached is a copy of my resume. Please let me know about the next steps. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Jane Bishop

Questions? Stop by Slocum 207 (M - Th from 12- 4:30pm) or make a Handshake appointment!