**INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW TIPS**

**Who should I interview?**

* Identify individuals who:
* Work for a company you would like to work for (Research companies in your area of interest)
* Are doing a job you would like to do
* Whose career path is of interest to you
* Ask former employers, co-workers, family members, and friends if they can suggest someone to interview. Your college alumni may be good resources for interviews or leads for interviews

**What do I say? How do I get started?**

* Starting a conversation to get an informational interview with a stranger is a challenge. You may feel shy, or afraid to impose, or worried that the person may not want to talk to you.
* Write out a "script" that you would be comfortable saying
* Practice your "script" ahead of time. Think of it as a rehearsal and say the "script" until it feels natural
* Make sure you identify yourself and why you're calling
* Let the person know that you need only 10 or 15 minutes of his/her time
* Make sure it's convenient for your interview. If not, ask if you can schedule another time or contact via e-mail instead
* **Start-off suggestions:**

Approach A: "Hello, my name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I understand that you are a (or work as a) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I'm currently exploring this career/occupation as a possibility for the future. I wonder if I could take about 10 minutes of your time to find out more about what you do (your career field)."

Approach B: "Hello, my name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A mutual acquaintance, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, suggested I give you a call. He/she said you would be the right person to talk to about working in your career field (occupation). Would you be able to talk to me now? I only need about 15 minutes of your time."

Approach C: "Hello, my name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I understand that you are a (or work as a) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I'm looking for advice about entering your career field (occupation). Could I take a few minutes of your time to find out what you would say to someone who wanted to get into your line of work?"

* **If you get a negative response:**

Chances are, not everyone will be willing to help you, but that doesn't mean it's time to quit. Try these responses:

Worker: "I'm too busy right now to talk to you."  
You: "Thank you for your time. Could you recommend anyone else to speak to?"

Worker: "I'd like to help you, but I have too much work to do right now."  
You: "I really appreciate your interest and I understand you're busy. Is there a more convenient time that we could talk?"

Remember – Most people are more than happy to talk about their work to someone who is genuinely interested in what they do.

**What questions should I ask?**

* When the interview begins, tell the person briefly about your interests, skills, and strengths so that he/she can provide relevant information
* Take notes and ask follow up questions

**Consider the following questions that that might suit your needs:**

* **Occupation-specific questions:**
  + On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
  + What training or education is required for this type of work?
  + What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
  + What are the ideal qualifications for someone in this job?
  + What kind of education/training is needed for this position?
  + What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
  + How did you get your job?
  + How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
  + Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
  + With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
* **Career questions:**
  + What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
  + What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
  + What are the basic education/training/experience prerequisites for jobs in this field?
  + What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
  + What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
  + Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
  + What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?
  + From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
  + If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why?

**\*Once you conclude an interview with one person, ask for names of other people you could contact.**