



WHAT IT IS

Meeting one-on-one. You are able to gather information about careers, skills, advice, and more by talking to a professional.

Short and purposeful. This conversation can be short (15 minutes) to a bit longer (60 minutes). Determine a length of time based on the professional's availability.

Insightful and valuable. You'll gain great awareness and make better career decisions by talking with professionals who are doing what you want to do right now. Those conversations can also help you overcome barriers, make connections and market yourself in the job search process.

Not asking for a job. The purpose is to gain knowledge, not to outright ask for a position.

PREPARATION

- Reflect** on your desired career path and think about your interests, values, abilities, and skills.
- Search for positions/employers** you are considering or are interested in learning more about.
- Develop a system** to keep track of the companies and people you have contacted and/or plan on reaching out to in the future.

CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Who are in **fields that you are considering** or are interested in learning more about?

Who has a **similar background**, or has followed a similar path?

Who is knowledgeable about their organization or industry and/or what the organization or industry is **seeking in applicants**?



SAMPLE INVITATION
(make edits as needed):

Hello _____,

I am a student at the University of Missouri pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Communication. I am interested in the public relations industry, and was wondering if you would have 30 minutes for me to ask you some questions via Zoom or in person to learn more about your profession.

I look forward to your response!

Start with who you know, and branch out from there

Send an email, LinkedIn message, or call and explain your need for information and your desire to arrange a time to talk.

Get referrals from someone you know or have spoken with previously and be sure to mention the mutual contact's name. Consider asking advisors, faculty, peers, or coworkers.

Contact a professional organization in your industry and ask for ideas of professionals to contact.

Go to **MANGO** <https://mangoconnects.com/> for help writing networking emails and other resources.

CONDUCTING THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Be sure to follow a process to get the most out of your time and make a good impression.

- 1 LOGISTICS:** Make sure you are clear that you are seeking information only (not a job) and be flexible in arranging a meeting time and location.
- 2 FOLLOW THROUGH:** In advance of your meeting you may send a copy of your résumé restating your appointment time and sharing your appreciation. Be sure to emphasize that the résumé enclosed is for their information only. Again, you're not looking for a job.
- 3 DO YOUR HOMEWORK:** Informational interviews, like real interviews, require advanced preparation. Research the contact, their profession, and the organization so that you appear prepared, knowledgeable, and professional.
- 4 RESTATE YOUR PURPOSE:** At the beginning of your interview, restate the information you are seeking. Ask prepared questions to get the conversation started but ask questions that are open-ended for the best information.
- 5 BE A GOOD LISTENER:** Ask questions, but also listen to the information given in the answers. You may find that the conversation leads to questions you haven't prepared.
- 6 BE RESPECTFUL OF YOUR CONTACT'S TIME:** Thank the person for their time and willingness to meet. Don't extend your meeting past the agreed upon time, unless invited to do so.
- 7 FOLLOW THROUGH AGAIN:** At the end, ask the person if they know of others who might be able to provide you with more information. *Always* write a thank you note/email.

SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The real value of an informational interview lies in the personal insight that can be gained from the experience. Remember that this is one view of many. Try conducting multiple interviews in order to gain a variety of perspectives. Here are some sample questions to get started:

BACKGROUND OF INTERVIEWEE

- What has been your career path into this profession?
- When did you know this was the career you wanted to pursue?

JOB OUTLOOK

- What types of trends and changes are occurring in your field?
- What kinds of opportunity exist for professional development and/or promotion in this field?

NATURE OF WORK

- What is a typical day in the life like for you?
- What do you like most about your career?
- What areas would you change if you could?

TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- What major(s) and/or degrees lead to jobs in this field?
- What other certifications, licenses, continuing education, or professional development experiences are required or encouraged?
- What would you do the same or differently, knowing what you know now?
- What advice do have for a student like me to gain knowledge and skills toward this field?
- What campus activities or college experiences would be helpful for entering this field?

next steps:

Talk with a Career Specialist for one-on-one assistance: <https://career.missouri.edu/connect>
Check out more resources at <https://career.missouri.edu> > Resources tab