

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW & JOB SHADOW

## SUCCESS STRATEGIES

*Informational interviews and job shadows are opportunities for you to explore and develop a deeper understanding of fields of interest to you, as well as help you build a professional network. An **informational interview** involves a 30-60 minute conversation with a professional about their job, organization, or industry; whereas a **job shadow** is longer (from a half to several days) and may include meetings with key staff at an organization. The following steps outline how to conduct these meetings.*

- 1 Find a professional to interview or shadow**
  - Start with your own personal network, including family, friends, supervisors, advisors, and/or mentors.
  - Consider employers you have interacted with at career fairs, information sessions, or networking events.
  - Utilize [Husky Mentor Network](#) to find UConn alumni interested in connecting with current students.
  - Make use of professional social media, such as [LinkedIn](#), to connect with professionals, companies, or alumni.
  - Call an organization you are interested in directly to connect with someone who could provide career advice.
- 2 Reach out to request the interview or job shadow**
  - Make a request via phone, email, or LinkedIn message.
  - Be respectful of their time – ask for 30-60 minutes to get advice for someone learning about the field.

*Review the CCD's [Résumé, CV, Cover Letter, & Other Written Communication Guide](#) for communication tips.*
- 3 Prepare for your meeting**
  - Search for details about the individual you will interview/shadow using the company website and LinkedIn.
  - Research the organization using their website and social media accounts, making note of any trends.
  - Review any recent publications or articles about the company specifically and related to the industry overall.
  - Prepare questions for your interview. The individual will likely expect you to lead the conversation, as you requested the meeting of them. Recommendations for questions to ask can be found on the back of this page.
  - Select appropriate attire for the interview or shadow - dress as you would for a formal interview.
  - Bring a padfolio for notetaking as well as a current résumé, tailored to the industry.
  - Confirm the location and meeting time at least one day prior. Review directions beforehand and plan to arrive five to ten minutes early.
- 4 Conduct your interview or job shadow**
  - Come prepared both to ask and answer questions in a professional manner.
  - Set your cell phone to silent or turn it off before you arrive.
  - Be enthusiastic – actively engage in all conversations and activities during your interview or job shadow.
  - Ask for business cards and preferred contact methods in order to connect with the professionals you meet.
- 5 Send a thank-you note and follow up regularly**
  - Collect business cards of the individual(s) you meet during the informational interview and/or job shadow.
  - Send a follow-up note or email within 24 to 48 hours. It is important to individually thank everyone you met for taking the time to meet with you, including specific aspects of the conversation that you found beneficial.
  - Reflect upon the information and guidance you received. Keep in mind that each interview highlights one person's experience, so it is important to compare advice across multiple individuals.
  - Check back regularly with professional updates and share relevant news stories, approximately two to four times per year. Remember: networking should be mutually beneficial!

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## Preparing Questions for an Informational Interview or Job Shadow

*Think about your goals for having the meeting – are you exploring a variety of career options, learning about a specific job or career path, evaluating targeted companies, proposing a potential internship, or strategically building your network? Be prepared to lead the conversation for job shadows and informational interviews. Create a customized list with your own questions for your specific goals. Below are some recommendations to get started.*

### Recommended Questions

<b>About a Specific Career Path/Job</b>	Why did you decide to work in this industry? Why did you decide to take a job with this company/organization? What do you like most about your position? What do you like least? What does your job entail on a daily basis (e.g., specific tasks)? Does it vary day-to-day? Do you have busy and/or slow times of year? What makes a person successful at this job or in this industry? What skills do they need? What is the job ladder in this line of work? Can you describe your career trajectory? What are the challenges in your occupation/career? How have you dealt with them? What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were starting out?
<b>About Company Culture</b>	What is the company culture like here? What are the company values? What do you like about working here? How does the company culture here compare to any of your previous companies?
<b>About the Industry (General)</b>	What types of jobs, activities, or classes would you recommend I pursue if I am interested in an entry-level position in this field after graduation? What kind of lifestyle can be expected in this line of work? What changes have you seen occur in this field? What changes are occurring now? How is the economy affecting this industry? What professional associations have you joined or would you recommend joining? Is there anyone else you can recommend for me to speak with to learn more about this field?
<b>When Seeking a Future Internship</b>	Has your company/department previously hired interns? If so, for what types of roles? What needs does your department have that could be supported by an intern? How and when does your department advertise/promote its internships?
<b>When Seeking a Future Job</b>	How does your company/department advertise/promote job openings? Does your organization offer professional development opportunities? What type(s)? Does your company offer opportunities for advancement? What types of positions exist with your organization/within your department that might utilize my experience and skillset?