

EXPLORE CENTER

ADVISING SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE: UNDECIDED • PRE-HEALTH • PRE-LAW • EXPLORING MULTIPLE MAJORS

Career Informational Interview Guide

Information interviews involve talking with people currently working in a career field to gain a better understanding of an occupation, organization or industry. The informational interview provides first hand experiences and impressions of someone in the field. It is also an excellent way to build your network of contacts in that field. However, it is not appropriate to ask for a job during an informational interview.

Step 1: Identify Contacts: Start with lists of people you already know including friends, fellow students, co-workers, supervisors, and neighbors. Professional organizations, organizational directories, and public speakers are also good resources. If you need additional assistance finding a person to interview, contact Career Services, City Campus Union, at 402-472-3145.

Step 2: Request the Interview: Contact the person you would like to interview via phone or email. Ask politely. If the person you are contacting agrees to the interview, select a time and location that works for both of you. Be as flexible as possible with your schedule and indicate how much time you are looking for. Thirty minutes is a good starting point.

Be professional. If you plan to ask for an interview over the phone, practice what you plan to say in advance. If you plan to ask for an interview via email it should be a professional introductory letter. Be sure to include information about how you can be reached. If you indicate that you will follow up in some way, be sure to follow through on time. For example:

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Currently, I am strongly considering _____ as my major/career and am hoping to connect with professionals in the industry to learn more about the field. John Doe provided me with your name and contact information. I would love to set up a time to briefly meet in person or by phone to ask you a few questions about the _____ industry in the near future. It shouldn't take up more than 30 minutes of your time. I can be reached via email at herbiehusker@unl.edu or on my cell at 402.402.4022.

*Sincerely,
Herbie Husker*

Step 3: Prepare: Dress professionally and be on time. Research the person and organization as much as possible before the interview.

Step 4: Conduct the Interview: Come prepared with questions ahead of time and listen actively to the answers. Take notes and ask follow-up questions. Keep track of time and don't overstay your welcome. Stick to the amount of time you initially requested for the interview. Be sure to follow up with a thank-you card shortly after the interview. Make sure to indicate that the person was helpful and you appreciate the time they spent with you.

Step 5: Reflect: Take time to think about what you've learned from the experience. Are you more or less excited about the field than you were before? Use this time to determine whether this is still an area of interest or whether you need to gather more information.

Created with the help of Career Services at CBA

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Name of Person Interviewed: _____ Career: _____

1. Why did you choose this career?
2. Describe for me the educational path you chose to get to your current profession. Is this the typical path?
3. What does a typical day at work look like?
4. What are your favorite and least favorite parts about your job?
5. If I were to consider this career, what extra-curricular activities would you recommend?
6. What skills do I need to develop while in college to succeed in this field?
7. What else could I do to explore this career?