

Quick Tip Sheet

Informational Interview & Job Shadow

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Informational Interview

Informational interviewing allows you to talk with professionals in your career field of choice to learn what it is like. No one is better able to describe the challenges and opportunities than someone who has already experienced them. Informational interviews allow you to:

- Explore career options, obtain answers to questions you may have about your career choices, and gain feedback and advice about how to be successful.
- Build your network by making connections in your field(s) of interest.
- Develop communication skills and confidence as you interact with professionals.
- Potentially identify internships, jobs, or other opportunities that aren't advertised.

Job Shadow

Shadowing is an opportunity for you to look further into the future as you develop your career path. This networking experience will help you to prepare for your future profession and even help you decide if your major is the right fit. You will be able to observe the typical routine of someone in this profession, obtain knowledge on a potential future career, and create connections with professionals.

Setting up an Informational Interview and/or Job Shadow

Determine a career field you are interested in pursuing after graduation. Research potential professionals to interview or shadow by searching for alumni on LinkedIn or networking with your own contacts.

Contact potential professionals to interview and/or shadow.

- Be sure to mention you are not seeking a job, but instead are seeking information about their career field or industry.
- Mention if you are referred by someone, so they know who sent you.

Sample Email Request

Dear Title. Last Name:

My name is [your name] and I am currently a [year] at the University of Rhode Island, considering [field] as a future career path. I received your contact information through [referral or LinkedIn] and I am hoping to spend time [interviewing/shadowing] you in your career so I can learn more about [field].

I am curious to learn more about [what you want to learn]. I would be extremely grateful if you allowed me to [interview/shadow] you during the week of [date]. Please let me know which date and time works best for you.

I look forward to hearing back from you to confirm a date and time to [interview/shadow] you.

Sincerely,

Name

Tips to Plan and Prepare

- Research the company where your contact works and as much as possible about the occupation as well, so that you can engage your contact in conversation.
- Write out 8-10 questions to take with you so that you are sure to learn as much as possible from the meeting.
- At least 3-4 days before your interview/shadow experience, contact the professional to confirm your meeting. Ask any other questions you may have about the visit (ex. Appropriate dress? Should you bring a lunch? Where to park? etc.).
- Check out the Networking Module on the CCEE website for more tips on how to prepare!

Sample Interview Questions

1. How did you get into this career field?
2. Why did you choose this profession?
3. What are the opportunities for growth in your position? In the industry overall?
4. Describe a typical day on the job.
5. What do you like most about your job?
6. What do you like least about your job?
7. What are some opportunities and challenges in your field or industry?
8. What skills and abilities are most important in your field?
9. What advice would you give someone starting out in this career?
10. Can you suggest any reading, classes, or opportunities I should pursue?
11. Could you suggest colleagues that would be a good source of information about the field?
Could I use your name when I contact them?

Potential Activities during Job Shadow (List interested potential activities in e-mail request)

- Tour the facility
- Discuss your career goals
- Sit in on staff meetings
- Observe customer/client interactions
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals
- Learn about the company mission and procedures
- Meet with recruiters
- Learn about industry specific tools and/or software

Concluding Your Experience

At the end of your experience, if you don't already have it, be sure to get contact information to add this person/others you met to your professional network. Send request(s) to connect on **LinkedIn**.

Send a **thank you note** 24-48 hours following your informational interview or shadow experience. Mention specific advice that was helpful and any steps you will take as a result of your meeting.