

# 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 working in that field would be like. No one is better able to describe the challenges and opportunities in the field than someone who has already experienced them. Planning and carrying out an informational interview is one of the best ways to explore career options, answer questions you may have about your career choice, and gain feedback and advice about how to succeed in your chosen profession.

### 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 can be invaluable in helping you decide if your major is the right fit for your professional goals. Through a job shadow 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 a professional which may aid in your future success.

### Setting up an Informational Interview and/or Job Shadow

1. Determine a career field you are interested in pursuing after graduation. This will help you to decide what type of professional you want to interview/shadow and what type of experience would be most beneficial for you.
2. Research potential professionals to interview or shadow by searching for alumni on LinkedIn, searching on RhodyNet, or networking with your own contacts.
3. Contact potential professionals to interview and/or shadow. When contacting a professional, be sure to mention that you are not seeking a job, but instead are seeking information about their career field. Also, 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 in school]** at the University of Rhode Island, considering **[field]** as a future career path. I received your contact information through **[include where you found their contact here]** and I am hoping to spend time **[interviewing/shadowing]** you in your career so I can learn more about **[field]**.

I specifically 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

## 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 questions to take with you so that you are sure to learn as much as possible from the meeting. Check out the Networking Module on the CCEE website for tips on how to prepare!
- At least 3-4 days before you interview/shadow experience be sure to contact your sponsor to confirm your meeting. Ask any other questions you may have about the day of (ex. appropriate dress? Should you bring a lunch? Parking? etc.).

## 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?
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 skills and abilities are most important in your work?
8. What advice would you give someone starting out in this career?
9. Can you suggest any reading, classes, or opportunities I should pursue?
10. 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
- Assist with projects or general office tasks
- Receive and overview of company mission and procedures
- Visit the Human Resources Dept. or meet with recruiters
- Learn about industry specific tools and/or software

## Concluding Your Experience

At the end of your job shadow be sure to get their contact information for a future contact in the field, and add your contact to your **LinkedIn** contacts.

Be sure to send a **thank you note** 24-48 hours following your shadow experience. Mention specific advice that was especially helpful as well as any steps you are planning to take as a result of your meeting.