



Informational Interview Questions

Overview

If you are not sure about your career goals or you feel that you lack relevant experience and knowledge to get the position you want, set up an informational interview with someone working in the field. One of the best ways to find out what an industry, company, or position is really like is to talk with current professionals. No one else can give you a better sense of the real life experiences, the challenges and opportunities, the specific and perhaps hidden demands, as well as the drawbacks and limitations of the career field. Remember: an informational interview is about gathering information -- it is NOT appropriate to ask for a job.

Informational Interview Conversation Starters

- What are the entry-level jobs in this field/organization?
- What career paths are generally available?
- What are the major responsibilities of these positions?
- What skills, experience, and education are needed to enter this field?
- What kinds of entry-level jobs or internships do you think are good training ground?
- What do you do as a ...?
- How do you spend a typical day/week?
- Do you spend most of your time at your desk? Moving around? Outside?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What hours do you normally work? Is there much travel involved?
- What is your supervisor's job title? The titles of people who report to you?
- What do you find most/least satisfying about your job?
- Do you work on any projects that you find particularly interesting?
- What are the positive/negative aspects of working in this field?
- What was your career path? Is it typical? What might a beginner expect today?
- What are the "hot issues" in this field?
- What trends and developments do you see affecting career opportunities?
- What is the corporate culture of your company? Is it informal or formal? Do people work autonomously or in teams?
- Can you give me advice on how to break into this field?
- Are you active in any professional organizations? Are students invited to attend? Are student memberships available?

Information taken from <http://career.ucla.edu/students/ExploreCareers/WhatsAnInformationalInterview.aspx>.