



80% of the job search market consists of "non-advertised jobs," meaning they are not posted but rather are found through networking.

Informational Interview Guide

What is an informational interview?

If you're unsure about your career goals or feel that you lack knowledge to pursue the career you want, informational interviewing is for you! It is a chance for you to choose or refine your career path by asking a professional to give you the "insider" point of view. No one knows better about a particular career than the people doing the job!

Why do an interview?

- Receive or hear firsthand current information from professionals in the field(s) you're considering.
- Find out about jobs and career paths you may not know existed and the skills they require
- Clarify what jobs and graduate programs you really like before you commit
- Learn about salary ranges, typical career paths, how specific organizations find new people, and which companies are hiring
- Build support for your job search, expand your network with contacts that can help and expose you to "non-advertised" jobs!

Next steps...

- Visit UCSC Alumni LinkedIn group
- Check out our events calendar at careers.ucsc.edu
- Attend *workshops* on resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, networking, and more
- Have your resume ready to share at *career and internship fairs*
- Schedule an appointment with a career adviser!

More Guides from the Career Center:

- Writing a Cover Letter Guide
- References and Recommendations Guide
- Employment Interviewing Skills Guide

Successful Informational Interview Checklist

1 Develop your contact list.

Start with people you know such as immediate and extended family, friends, friends of family, parent's friends and associates, neighbors, faculty, co-workers, supervisors, classmates, and team/club/professional association members. In addition, use UCSC's LinkedIn university page to search an extensive network of thousands of alumni in various industries. Then reach out to the contacts you find. We can show you how!

2 Ask for an interview.

Call or email the professional you would like to interview and briefly introduce yourself, your interest, and why you are reaching out to them. Ask if they have 10-15 minutes to discuss their career and organizations. Be sure to explain that the meeting is only for getting information, not for pursuing a job.

3 Prepare for the interview in advance.

Research the company and the professional and prepare insightful questions in advance. Be prepared to talk about why you're interested in their field of work and your strengths and skills. Bring a resume with you just in case-but don't take it out unless the professional expresses interest in it.

4 Conduct an effective meeting.

Keep to the time limits you requested unless the professional clearly wants to extend the meeting time. Dress professionally if it is an in-person meeting and describe your interest in a clear, concise way. Take notes during the interview.

5 Follow up.

Send a thank you email promptly after your interview. It does not need to be more than a few sentences in length. Thoughtful people tend to be remembered!

6 Create a tracking system.

Keep track of their contact information for future reference. Stay in touch with these professionals and keep them up to date on your career prospects. Your network will be valuable throughout your professional life!

It may seem a little intimidating to ask a stranger for a favor but remember that most people enjoy talking about themselves, ideas/opinions and helping others. That's just human nature!

How to ask for an interview

"Hello, my name is ____ and I am a sophomore at UC Santa Cruz majoring in Global Economics. I received your name through ____ who indicated that you would be a great person to talk to about careers in ____.

Would you be willing to do a brief informational interview with me about your career path? If so, could we set a time, at your convenience, to talk in person or on the phone for 10-15 minutes? This would be very helpful as I seek to explore and develop my career and professional goals."

Informational Interview Sample Questions

About the Individual and Job Functions

- How did you get into this type of work?
- What is a typical day on the job like for you?
- What do you enjoy most/least about your current work?
- How did your education prepare you for your position?
- What qualifications do I need for an entry-level position in your career field?
- What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?

About your Marketability

- How could I improve my marketability in this field?
- Is my resume appropriate for the jobs that I have expressed interest in?
- How would employers view my background and experiences?
- What are the characteristics and skills of successful people in this organization?

About the Organization

- Why did you choose this organization?
- What do you like/dislike about it?
- What is the employment outlook for your organizations at this time?
- What other opportunities in the organization should I look into?
- What are the characteristics and skills of successful people in this organization?

About the Field

- What changes do you see occurring in this field over the next few years?
- Are there conferences or seminars that might be useful for newcomers to attend?
- Do you belong to or know of any professional organization that you recommend I join as a student?
- What other organizations hire people in this field?
- What are good ways to learn more about prospective employers?

ALWAYS ASK...

Could you provide me with the names of 2 or 3 people you know who would be willing to provide me with additional information about this type of work?

May I use your name as an introduction if I contact them?