INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

*An informational interview is a professional, informal conversation between an experienced professional and someone who is looking to learn more about that field or organization. It’s an important step in the career exploration and job search process, and it can even help you get a foot in the door.*

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| ***An informational interview is***   * A chance to learn from an insider’s perspective * A way to enhance the career research you are already doing * A way to build contacts in your field that could lead to opportunities like internships and jobs | ***An informational interview is not***   * A job interview * A lengthy conversation (more than 30 minutes) * A casual, unguided discussion |

**STEP 1 IDENTIFY AN OCCUPATION YOU WISH TO LEARN ABOUT**

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| Review resources like **WHAT CAN I DO WITH THIS MAJOR**? and review possible career areas or job titles that connect with your major or any majors you are considering. Note job titles/areas you have considered pursuing and/or you want to learn more about. Then, complete this sentence: ***I would like to meet with someone who works as a…*** |

**STEP 2 WHAT INFORMATION ARE YOU MISSING?**

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| Jot down a few ideas about topics you’d like to learn about from the person you interview.  *Many career questions can (and should) be answered before you begin formal informational interviews with professionals. So, before you make your first phone or email contact, consult the resources at your fingertips: the* ***Occupational Outlook Handbook*** *and* ***O\*NET*** *online have information about industries, related occupations, educational requirements, skills, salary, and more. Your basic understanding of a field can then be put into context by your interviewee.* |

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| Brainstorm at least three questions you’d like to ask during your informational interview. |

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**STEP 3 WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT?**

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| What people or resources can you tap into? Brainstorm how you can find someone who works in the job you’d like to learn about.  *Begin with people you already know---check with friends, family, fellow students, co-workers, Career Services, and professors to see they know anyone who could speak to your career interests. Also consider searching through the LSU Shreveport Alumni Group directory and tapping into Handshake.* |

**STEP 4 REACH OUT; ARRANGE THE INTERVIEW**

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| Whether with a phone call, email, or LinkedIn/Handshake message, you are composing a professional request. Here’s an example that you can use as a starting point:  *Dear Ms. River,*  *I see that you graduated from LSU Shreveport, and I wonder if you have time for a 20-minute phone call or meeting with a current student. I’m a first-year Marketing major and I’m interested in learning about your experience at the Community Foundation of North Louisiana. I know that you are busy, so I’d prefer to work around your free time; my schedule is flexible. Please let me know if there is a day and time that works well with your schedule so that we can talk.*  *Thank you,*  *Joanne Smith*  *Marketing, class of 2029*  *318-555-5555 • smithj27@lsus.edu* |

**STEP 5 PREPARE**

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| Finalize your list of questions, keeping in mind the conversation will be short–what do you most want to know?  Continue your research–look at your contact’s LinkedIn profile and their company’s website. Use web searches to find professional organizations, industry news, and publications. Does that information elicit any additional questions for you?  Prepare a brief statement about who you are: what you’re doing now, what you are interested in, and future goals. You can use this introduction to start the conversation. | **COMMON INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**   * How did you decide on this career? * What was your career path? What about your major in college? * What type of individual usually succeeds in this role? * What do you wish you would have known prior to entering this field? What would you change about your job if you could? * What steps would you recommend that I take to prepare to enter this field? * Who else do you know that I should be talking to? |

**STEP 6 CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW • FOLLOW-UP**

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| Dress professionally, arrive on time, and be polite and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions. Stay on track but allow for spontaneous discussion. Once you’re done, be sure to send a thank you note!  Have questions or need more guidance? Email career@lsus.edu to get started. |

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