

Cooke Scholar Alumni

Career Pathways Connections

Conversation Guide: The Informational Interview

OBJECTIVE

An informational interview is a terrific tool for a person (the interviewer) in search of more information about an industry. Informational interviews offer the interviewer the opportunity to speak to someone in an industry they are interested in and find out more specific and real-life experiences from professionals working in that career field. Informational interviews are not typically planned around a specific job opening or opportunity, rather they are a chance for a student or jobseeker to learn about an industry, its corporate culture and to get advice on their career from someone who has walked a similar professional path to help them decide if it might be the right fit.

AGENDA

1. Invite an Informational Interviewer

The person you reach out to for an informational interview may have your “dream job”, be in a position where you see yourself in three – five years or have an interesting professional pathway.

2. Hold the Informational Interview

Host the informational interview with the professional/interviewee. Allow room for 1) introductions and 2) the interviewee to ask you questions too. Below are questions you can consider asking your interviewee:

1. Why did this type of work interest you, and how did you get started?
2. What do you do? What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
3. What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
4. What are the positions in your field or organization? How do they differ?
5. Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company? How does your company differ from its competitors?
6. What sorts of changes are occurring in your occupation?
7. What are the major qualifications for success in this occupation?
8. What were the keys to your career advancement? How did you get where you are and what are your long-range goals?
9. How can I evaluate whether or not I have the necessary skills for a position such as yours?
10. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?

This conversation guide is inspired by Dr. Randall S. Hansen and Quintessential Careers. You can find more informational interview questions at <https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/information-interview>