



Alumni

How to Conduct an Informational Interview

Last Updated: September 2021

CONDUCTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

An informational interview is an informal conversation you can have with someone working in an area of interest to you. The insights gained from an informational interview will enable you to make informed decisions, whether you are planning your career or looking for a job. It is an effective research tool and is NOT interviewing for a job – it is a way for you to find useful and specific information that you could not find in books or on the Internet!

Finding Contacts

How do you find people who will talk to you? Ask contacts within your network: “Do you know anyone who’s working in my field of interest who might speak with me?” This includes family, friends, teaching assistants, professors, and former employers. This is networking and it will be one of the most important steps of your job search when you get to that stage.

Another powerful tool to help you find connections is called the LinkedIn Alumni Tool. Search for the University of Central Florida’s LinkedIn page and click on the Alumni tab. There you can search for UCF alumni by location, graduation date, industry, company name, and more!

Arranging the Interview

When reaching out to calling your contact, explain that you are preparing to make some career decisions by researching potential occupations.

Ask for 20 mins to chat and manage your time to stick to it! Thank the contact for their time, both verbally and in a thank-you follow up email. While an informational interview is more formal than a regular conversation, it is not as formal as a job interview. Most people enjoy talking about their careers and are eager to help!

Subject Line: Informational Interview Request

Hi [NAME],

I see that you are a UCF alum and so am I! My name is [NAME], and I’m reaching out today because I’ve read up on your career and the work you’ve done with [A SPECIALTY OR PROJECT YOU LEARNED ABOUT IN YOUR RESEARCH], and I was hoping to learn more. Would you be willing to hop on the phone for 20 minutes to discuss your career so far and some insight into your industry?

If you’re open to this idea, I am available to speak by phone at the following times in the next two weeks: [INSERT A BULLETED LIST OF DATES AND TIMES]

Please let me know if one of those dates and times works for you and a good number to reach you.

Thank you for taking the time, and I hope to speak to you soon!

Questions To Ask During an Informational Interview

Select questions that are appropriate for your target career field and stage of decision-making. You can ask about such topics as the nature of a person's work, how to get started in the field, or effective approaches for the job search. Try asking open-ended questions, not questions that will elicit simply a yes or no answer. Keep in mind that some contacts may have a limited amount of free time to speak so be sure to choose only a few questions and stick to the time limit. Use some of the following questions or make up your own.

- How did you become interested in this field?
- How did you begin your career?
- How do most people get into this field? What are common entry-level jobs?
- What steps would you recommend I take to prepare to enter this field?
- How relevant to your work is your undergraduate major?
- What kind of education, training, or background does your job require?
- What are your main responsibilities as a...?
- What is a typical day (or week) like for you?
- What do you like most about your work?
- What do you like least about your work?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- How does your position fit within the organization/career field/industry?
- How does your job affect your general lifestyle?
- What current issues and trends in the field should I know about/be aware of?
- What are some common career paths in this field?
- What kinds of accomplishments tend to be valued and rewarded in this field?
- What related fields do you think I should consider looking into?
- What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to success in your job/this field?
- What are the most effective strategies for seeking a position in this field?
- Can you recommend trade journals, magazines or professional associations which would be helpful for my professional development?
- If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? If not, what would you change?
- I've read that the entry-level salary range for this field is usually in the range of _____? Does this fit with what you've seen? (Don't ask about the person's actual salary.)
- What advice would you give someone who is considering this type of job (or field)?
- Can you suggest anyone else I could contact for additional information?

UCF Alumni Professional Engagement

Whether you're a new graduate about to be launched into the workforce or an experienced professional looking for a career transition, we're here to help. [Visit our website](#) for more information!

UCF Knights Network

[UCF Knights Network](#) is an interactive, global alumni network for mentorship, events, networking and exclusive job leads. Re-connecting with fellow Knights has never been this easy! [Join](#) UCF Knights Network now!