

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

**Assignment:** Interview at least one person who has a career that you are interested in. Write a brief summary of the interview, including the interviewee's name and company, and what you learned.

### **What is informational interviewing?**

Informational interviewing is a series of in-person interviews you conduct in order to learn about your career field from people doing that job. An informational interview is more informal and less stressful than a typical job interview. You can ask questions that would not be appropriate during a job interview. It is appropriate to bring a list of questions and take a few notes during the interview.

### **Why should I do an informational interview?**

- To explore careers and clarify your career goals
- To expand your professional network
- To build confidence for your future job interviews
- To access the most up-to-date career information
- To identify future courses that you should take

### **Who should I contact?**

Identify people to interview who are in jobs you would like. Start with people you already know- friends, relatives, fellow students, present or former co-workers and supervisors, neighbors. To find people outside your personal contacts try using professional organizations, organizational directories, names from news articles. A research librarian can help you.

### **How do I set up and conduct the interviews?**

Contact the interviewee by phone or email to set up the appointment. You should request 20 or 30 minutes of their time, clearly stating that you want to interview for **information not a job**. Before the meeting research the organization and develop questions that are not already answered in the company's literature. If you visit a person you should wear regular business attire appropriate for that industry. Arrive on time or early, be polite and professional. Keep an eye on the time so you don't take up more than you originally requested. Make sure you get a business card from the interviewee before you leave. Ask for suggestions of any other contacts that might be helpful. Remember to start with a firm handshake, and conclude with a genuine thank you.

### **Is there anything I need to do after the interview?**

Immediately after the interview, take a couple of minutes to record the information you gathered. Within two days of the interview, send a thank you note.

Good site to access thousands of informational interviews conducted by others:

<http://foothillglobalaccess.org/faculty/surabe/links/hotsites.html>

Name:

Instructor:

You may use this form to help you choose questions to ask

Name of person being interviewed:

Job title:

Name and address of company: (ask for a business card)

What are the responsibilities of this person? What area is s/he in charge of?

How long has s/he been doing this job? In this career area?

Where else have they been employed, doing this kind of work?

What is a typical day like on their job? (i.e. What do they do with their hands, brains, time?)

What skills are the most important for you to learn to be successful in this career?

What activities does s/he enjoy doing the most?

What is the greatest challenge of this job? Is it for the career field in general or specific to this organization?

What professional organization would s/he recommend that you join to learn more about this career? (if you have found some yourself, ask for their opinion for the organizations)

What is the typical salary scale or wage rate?

What career path did they follow to get to where they are?