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Guide to Informational Interviewing

What is an Informational Interview?

- A meeting with someone who is working in a career field that you would like to learn about.
- A chance to find out as much as possible about a specific occupation or career.
- A way to research career options to help you make informed choices about an occupation or career that is right for you.

The below table provides examples of key differences between an Informational Interview and a Job Interview.

Informational Interview	Job Interview
You: No minimum qualifications required for initiating contact	Employer: initiates contact if you meet minimum qualifications for a job interview
You: ask questions to meet your goals	Employer: asks questions to meet company's goals
You: decide who you want to interview	Employer: decides who interviews you
You: schedule time to meet with someone in your area of interest	Employer: schedules time to meet with you if interested
You: decide if you are a good match for a chosen occupation/career	Employer: decides if you are a good match for a job opening

Getting Started

- Research the occupation/career field of your interest.
- Make a list of employers that hire in your field of interest.
- Take a look at your professional network for contacts.
- Prepare your informational interview questions.

Resources for Career Exploration

OhioMeansJobs

<https://ohiomeansjobs.ohio.gov/home>

Ohio Department of Job & Family Services

[JFS.ohio.gov](https://jfs.ohio.gov)



How to Set Up and Complete the Informational Interview

- Find out the name of the person with whom you need to schedule the interview.
- Call that person or send them an email with your request for an informational interview.
- If he/she is not available at that time, plan to contact them a second time to schedule the interview.
- Have your questions ready, in case he/she can do the interview, the first time you contact them.

Below are some sample scripts to help you.

Phone Script (Requesting Informational Interview):

“Hello, my name is _____. Is this a good time for you to talk briefly? It is my understanding that you work in the field of _____ and I would like some advice from someone who is in that field. I am not looking for a job, but rather trying to decide if _____ (major or occupation) is a good match for me. Would you be open to meeting for about 20 minutes in the next two weeks? I would really like to learn more about your occupation or company and the field of _____ from you.
I can come to you for a face-to-face (in person or video) or, by phone, if you prefer.



Email Script (Requesting Informational Interview):

 Send	To...	johndoe@email.com
	Cc...	
	Subject	Availability for Informational Interview



Hello, Ms /Mr. _____ ,
My name is _____. I am researching careers and seeking opportunities for informational interviewing to better understand what it is like to be a _____ (name of profession). I am not asking for a job interview, just an opportunity to explore my areas of interest before making a decision about my career goal. I found your contact information through _____ (website, another professional). If you are willing and able, I would appreciate about 15-20 minutes of your time to have a short conversation within the next two weeks, to hear about your career path and to get your advice on how to prepare for this career field. I can come to you for a face-to-face (in person or video), or we can do this by phone if that is your preference. You can reach me by email _____ or by phone _____. Thank you for your time and help.

Kind Regards,
(Your name)

Resources on Informational Interviewing

The Balance Careers - Questions to Ask at an Informational Interview
thebalancecareers.com/informational-interview-questions-to-ask-2061056

Informational Interviewing - Career Center
<https://career.berkeley.edu/start-exploring/informational-interviews/>

The Day of the Interview

- Be early (by no more than 15 minutes) or exactly on time to your appointment.
- Dress appropriately (business casual).
- Have a way to track time (stick to your promise of 15-20 minutes).
- Ask for a business card.
- If there is a question that you forgot to ask, add it to your list for the next interviewee.

Follow Up After the Interview

- Follow-up with a simple “thank you” note within 24-48 hours of your meeting.
- The note may be neatly handwritten on a card or sent via email.
- Thanking the interviewee, in writing, will leave a positive lasting impression!

Here is a sample “Thank You” note:

Thank you for meeting with me and becoming a part of my professional network. This meeting gave me a much better understanding of the work performed by you and your organization. I appreciate that you shared [insert something from the conversation]. This provided me with information I plan to use to make decisions about pursuing a career in _____ (occupation/career). I cannot thank you enough for your willingness to help me launch this next phase of my career. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think of any additional suggestions for expanding my career options and /or professional network.

Respectfully,
(Your name)
(Your phone number)
(Your email address)

Follow Up with Your VR Counselor

- Share copies of your informational interview questions and answers with your VR Counselor.
- Be prepared to discuss your thoughts about this as a career option.

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Programs provided by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) are funded, in whole or in part, with federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For purposes of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), OOD received 78.7% of its funding through the DOE VR grant. In Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2024, OOD received \$166,384,030 in federal funds. Funds appropriated by the State covered 21.3 % of the total costs, or \$45,031,510. Of these federal funds, \$24,957,605 is set aside for Pre-ETS. For purposes of the Works 4 Me program, OOD received 100% of its funding through the DOE Disability Innovation Fund grant. In FFY 2024, OOD received \$716,175 for this program. For purposes of the Supported Employment (SE) Program, the DOE SE grant funded 90% of the costs for the Supported Employment for Youth with a Disability Program up to the grant amount and 100% of the costs of regular Supported Employment program costs up to the grant amount. In FFY 2024, OOD received \$593,853 for SE Youth with a Disability, and State appropriated funds paid the remaining 10%, or \$65,984 of the total costs. In FFY 2024, OOD received \$593,853 in regular SE grant funds. For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind (OIB) Program, the federal grant received from DOE in FFY 2024 paid 90% of the total costs incurred under the program. In FFY 2024, OOD received \$1,166,389 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid the 10% required match, or \$129,599 of the total costs incurred under the OIB program. For purposes of the Independent Living (IL) Program, the federal grant received from HHS paid 90% of the total costs incurred in FFY 2024. In FFY 2024, OOD received \$646,297 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid the 10% required match, or \$71,811 of the total costs incurred under the IL Program.

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Informational Interview Questionnaire:

NAME:

COUNSELOR:

Sample introductory statement:

"Hello, My name is _____. I'm considering a career in _____ (major or field) and would like some information. Would you be willing to give me some information related to your business or your knowledge of this field or connect me with someone who can?"

JOB/FIELD TARGETED:

COMPANY OR AGENCY NAME:

ADDRESS:

PERSON INTERVIEWED:

NAME:

TITLE:

PHONE:

DATE:

TYPE OF INTERVIEW: IN-PERSON ☐ ON SITE ☐ JOB SHADOW ☐

OTHER (describe)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: (summarize on the back of this sheet)

1. What type of jobs does the company have for someone majoring in?

2. How did you decide to become _____?

3. What is a typical day like for you?

4. Do you have special advice for entering this field?

5. Select one job mentioned and ask about:

Minimum qualifications

Skills/abilities necessary

Typical duties

Advancement/career path

Projected number of entry level jobs the year I graduate

Salary Range

Benefits

Work/Life Balance

Job Security/Turnover

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

Am I interested in this job/field? Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

How has this interview helped clarify or redefine my career goal?

What are some things you can do to prepare to achieve this career goal?

Education:

Skills:

Experience:

Training:

Community Involvement:

Activities:

Is this salary in line with my needs?

Be sure to thank the interviewee for his/her assistance with a written thank you note.