INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviews are a low-pressure, highly productive way to learn about a field, get career advice, build your network and hone your interviewing skills. Reach out—it’s easy and fun.

Informational interviews are an opportunity for you to talk with professionals about their career path, profession, organization and industry. These conversations can take place in person, but it’s much more fruitful when conducted in person.

Follow these simple steps to get started.

Step 1

LOCATE THE PEOPLE YOU WANT TO MEET

Search for emerging and career-vested professionals in different stages of their careers. Referring to the “Informational Interview” handout or your Career Facilitator Guide, you can learn about various people and their roles, and use this information to get to know their company and industry. You can then use LinkedIn to determine their work email address.

Search for DePaul alumni on LinkedIn, and try to connect with them. One way is to use the “job shadowing” label in the “HOW I CAN HELP” program to search for alumni and look for contacts in your field of interest.

Connect with your existing network (family, faculty, peers, etc.) to get the contact information or referrals for people who work in your field or industry.

You have nothing to lose and much to gain—the worst case is that they say no. So reach out to them! You may even learn of an internship or job opportunity!

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Make the most of the experience!

Once you have conducted your informational interview, you need to follow up with your interviewee. Refer to the “Informational Interview” handout to determine their work email address.

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Confirm the details and location and what time to arrive. Ask about how you can help the person you’re shadowing to see how they conduct meetings or conference calls? How does the person you shadow keep track of details or manage tasks? Make note of terms and expressions used.

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Referring to the “Informational Interview” handout in the DePaul Career Library, your students will interview each other to get a sense of their partner’s career interests. Then they will use their laptops to find three targets for informational interviews (for their partner) using both the Alumni Sharing Knowledge platform (ASK) and LinkedIn.

The three targets vary by age so that you can explain the benefits of speaking to a wide range of professionals in different stages of their careers.

NOTE: In order to search on the ASK platform your students will have to login and create a profile in advance. For LinkedIn, students will have to create an account/profile in advance as well. Students can use the “LinkedIn Basics” handout for basic guidance on how to craft a profile. If students don’t have a LinkedIn account, they can use Handshake—which now allows students to message “peers.”
Interview Reflection Exercise

The goal of this assignment is to reflect on the experience through a personal lens that considers your future objectives, profession/career of choice, areas for professional growth, and existing skill sets. Use the following prompts as a guide:

- Identify and describe the person you interviewed, including name, title, organization, and why you chose this person (this section should take no more than a paragraph).

- What did you find most interesting or surprising about this person’s career path or professional field?

- In what ways can you envision following a path similar to that of the person you interviewed? What would you do differently?

- What did you learn about best strategies for breaking into your field of choice?

- What skills do you need to develop further and what specific actions would you take to do so?

- Did this experience change the ways you perceive your immediate future?
In this activity, you will be identifying three possible targets for a peer to informational interview.

Matcher __________________________ Matchee __________________________

1 Interview your partner and jot down their answers to these questions:

What is your current major?

What is one internship you might seek in the next year or so?

Write one headline that might describe your accomplishments 30 years from now.

2 Using the ASK platform and LinkedIn, find three possible informational interview targets for your partner using these parameters. At least one must be from each LinkedIn and ASK. Briefly explain why you chose each one.

**TARGET #1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>• Graduated within the last 5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Employer:</td>
<td>• Has the same major or minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td>• Is working on one of the industries or roles preferred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write one question your partner should ask this interviewee:
### TARGET #2

| Name: | • Has interned in a related role or industry in the last 2 years  
|      | • Is a current student or recent graduate |
| Internship Employer: | |
| Explanation: | |

Write one question your partner should ask this interviewee:

### TARGET #3

| Name: | • Has worked in their industry for at least 15 years  
|      | • Is working on one of the industries or roles preferred |
| Current Employer: | |
| Explanation: | |

Write one question your partner should ask this interviewee:

### BONUS!

For anyone in your search who did not fit these parameters, but would be a good target to add to the list.

| Name: | Write one question your partner should ask this interviewee: |
| Current Employer: | |
| Explanation: | |