



# 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 via phone or email, 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, mid-career and established professionals in roles or organizations that interest you. Recent graduates that are emerging in their careers have first hand knowledge about existing pathways. Mid-level and advanced professionals have large networks and can share their views about how industries are changing.

- Definitely consider targeting DePaul alumni. They are often the most open to speaking with students and recent graduates of their alma mater.
- If you're still in school, DePaul faculty are an excellent place to start—ask your professors if they know of any contacts in your field of interest.
- DePaul's ASK (Alumni Sharing Knowledge) network and LinkedIn are excellent places to find professionals whose pathways align with your passions.
- Don't be afraid to be bold—is there a well-known person in your field of interest whose perspective would be helpful, interesting or inspiring? Reach out to them! You have nothing to lose and much to gain—the worst that could happen is you get a “no.”

## Step 2

### MAKE CONTACT

Send a brief message (via email or the ASK platform) asking for an informational interview.



*Here's an example of how a request might be worded:*

- Be concise and friendly. Make sure your request is reasonable—acknowledge their busy schedule, ask for an hour at most (or 30 minutes, which can easily expand to an hour once you meet), offer to meet at their convenience, including outside business hours such as early morning.
- Tap into your existing network by asking a mutual contact to send an email of introduction first, where appropriate. A call or email of introduction from a mutual contact like a DePaul professor can increase your chances of scheduling an interview.
- Be appropriately persistent. Don't expect a return call or email, especially from the first contact. If you haven't gotten a reply after a week, it's not inappropriate to send a follow-up note. Remember, they're busy!

*"My name is Lisa Stone, and I am a junior at DePaul. I am considering pursuing a career in journalism, and I am writing to find out if you might be available to meet with me briefly for an informational interview. I'd love to hear about your career path and experience, and get any insights you can provide on the field. I understand if you're too busy, but please let me know if you have any time to meet in the next several weeks. Thanks so much for your time!"*

## Step 3

### BE PREPARED

After scheduling a time to meet, prepare some questions. Remember, people like to talk about themselves so this should be fun for both of you! Here are some questions to consider:

- What attracted you to this type of work?
- What are the most challenging and most rewarding aspects of your current role?
- What skills, qualities and experiences does your employer seek in new hires?
- What trends are you seeing currently in your profession?
- Given what we have talked about today, are there other people you'd recommend I connect with?

## Step 4

### FOLLOW UP WITH THANKS

A working professional who has taken the time to meet with you for an informational interview has done you a wonderful favor. Be sure to follow up with a heartfelt thanks in an email or handwritten personal note.