

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews and job shadow experiences are helpful tools to learn from professionals in a career area of interest. The benefit of conducting an informational meeting is that you get direct, relevant information about the realities of working in a career or industry including day-to-day job duties, challenges of working in the field, and preparation needed to work in a specific industry.

To find contacts for informational interviews, consider the following:

- Use Blugolds CAN (Career Alumni Network) through Career Services to identify UWEC alumni who have volunteered to be contacted by students
- Utilize the *Alumni Insights* function under UW-Eau Claire's page on LinkedIn
- Research professionals at an organization and connect with them on Handshake or LinkedIn
- Attend networking events on campus to meet alumni and employers
- Contact people you know (e.g., extended family, friends, professors, and former employers)

Informational Interview Tips

- Establish a goal for each informational meeting (e.g., learn about an industry or careers in a geographic area)
- Identify potential contacts to schedule an informational meeting or job shadow
- Prepare for the interview by creating questions to ask the interviewee
- Dress appropriately and conduct the virtual or in-person meeting
- Ask the interviewee for additional contact names in the field of interest to build a network
- Send a thank you email or note that expresses your gratitude for the meeting

Informational Interview Questions

The purpose of an informational meeting is to obtain knowledge about a career field. Typically, interview topics include the industry, employer information, and career advice. Your goals will determine the exact questions you ask during an informational meeting. Sample informational interview questions are:

1. What are the main duties and responsibilities associated with the career?
2. Please describe a typical day in this role.
3. What professional qualities and skills are needed for a successful employee in this field?
4. What are the advantages of working in this career? What are the disadvantages of working in this career?
5. What education and experiences will I need to gain employment in this field?
6. Have standard or licensing requirements been established for this field by professional organizations?
7. Are jobs in this field limited to any geographical area(s)?
8. What are the best resources for learning about job openings in this field?
9. What opportunities exist for advancement and/or lateral movement?
10. What is the current outlook for new college graduates pursuing this occupation?
11. Are you satisfied with your career? How could it be improved?
12. What trends do you see happening in the profession in the next ten years?