UAA Career Services Informational Interviewing

An informational interview is an informal conversation you can have with someone working in an area of interest to you. It is a great way to learn more about a company or career field, gain valuable feedback, and build your professional network.

Benefits of Informational Interviews

- Initiate a professional relationship and expand your network of contacts in a specific career field.
- Get firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working within a particular field, industry, position, or organization.
- Discover new and interesting career paths.
- Get tips and insider knowledge about how to prepare for and land the position.

Steps for Conducting Informational Interviews

- 1. Research career fields, job types, and employers using <u>Handshake</u>, social media, and internet searches.
- 2. Ask people you already know including family, friends, teaching assistants, professors, co-workers, former employers, etc. Even if they don't work in your field of interest, they may be able to connect you.
- 3. Develop your elevator pitch to include who you are, why you are looking to meet with them, and what you hope to accomplish.
- 4. Create a list of 5-10 questions you would like to ask your interviewee.
- 5. Contact the person by phone or email.
- 6. Mention how you got their name, and why you are contacting them.
- 7. Emphasize that you are **not** currently looking for a job but would like to learn.
- 8. Ask for a convenient time to meet for 0-30 minutes.
- 9. Be prepared to talk with them on the spot.
- 10. Whether you are meeting in person or virtually you'll want to dress for success, arrive on time, and be prepared to take notes.

Sample Questions

- 1. What are the main responsibilities of your position?
- 2. Could you describe a typical week, or workday?
- 3. How would you describe the company culture?
- 4. What would surprise people about your work?
- 5. What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your position?
- 6. What are the most rewarding aspects of your work?
- 7. What level of decision making is required for this position?
- 8. How does your role impact the organization?
- 9. How does your position interact with, and impact the industry as a whole?
- 10. What kinds of accomplishments tend to be valued and rewarded in this field?
- 11. How did you become interested in this field, or position?
- 12. Tell me about your career journey.
- 13. Would you change your career path if you could? Why?
- 14. What do you like most about your work?
- 15. What do you like least about your work?
- 16. How would you recommend I prepare to enter this field?
- 17. What kind of education, training, or background does this position require?
- 18. Do you feel your degree is relevant to your career or current position?
- 19. What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to succeed in this field?
- 20. Could you please describe the desirable attributes, knowledge, skills, and abilities of recent hires?
- 21. What are the most effective strategies for seeking a position in this field?
- 22. What industry issues or trends should I be aware of?
- 23. What is currently changing in this industry? How should I prepare for this change?
- 24. What resources would you recommend I pursue through my professional development?
- 25. What advice would you give someone who is choosing this type of position or a related position in this career field?
- 26. Are there any questions I'm not asking that I should be?
- 27. Is there anyone else you recommend I connect with as I get ready to launch my career?

Follow Up

Always follow-up with a handwritten thank you card or email within a week of your interaction. Keep in touch through email, <u>Handshake</u>, or LinkedIn; this person could become an important part of your network.