

# SCHEDULING THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

## By Email

1. Your correspondence should include:
  - a. A brief introduction about yourself;
  - b. Why you are writing to this individual;
  - c. A brief statement of your interests or experiences in the person's field, organization or location;
  - d. Why you would like to converse. Be straightforward; tell him/her you are asking for information and advice.
  - e. The last paragraph of the letter should always include a sentence about how and when you will contact this person again.
2. Make sure to follow up the letter as you said!
  - a. Usually this follow-up involves a phone call to set up a phone appointment or an informational interview. Never expect the person to phone you. If you have difficulties contacting the person, ask the receptionist or his/her assistant for a convenient time to phone again.
3. Finally, proofread all correspondence and save copies!

**Here's a sample cover letter requesting an informational interview:**

Mark Steppe, Esq.  
VAVILOV, WEBB, WALSH & RIVER  
1313 Avenue of the Harbors  
Suite 4444  
Silver City, CA 12345

Dear Mr. Steppe:

I am student at California Western School of Law, beginning my third trimester. Labor law has been of interest to me since I took a class in that subject as an undergraduate. Your firm has an outstanding reputation in that field of practice.

My area of concentration in law school will be labor law. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you briefly and discuss the practice of your specialty. I am especially interested in your views regarding public vs. private employment experience. Any further insights you have would be greatly appreciated.

I will contact your office the week of October 2 to set up a mutually convenient time for this informational meeting.

Sincerely,

Jeremy D. Mondaca

<https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/information-letter>  
<https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/information-phone>

## By Phone

1. People who grant informational interviews are generally willing to share 20-30 minutes of their time to explain their expertise in their field. Please remember to be flexible in your scheduling, as these volunteer interviewees may have prior commitments.
2. If your prospective interviewee seems too busy to talk to you, ask a convenient time when you could call back to discuss scheduling an appointment. Although there are many techniques to requesting the informational interview, the following are good approaches:
  - a. "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm conducting career research in your field. I would like to meet and talk with you for about 30 minutes so that I can find out more about your field of expertise."
  - b. "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a student at \_\_\_\_\_ University. I got your name from \_\_\_\_\_. You're in a line of work that I'm interested in, and I was hoping that you could help me gain insights into the profession. I'm sure that my questions could be answered in a 20-30-minute informational interview."
  - c. If you prefer to arrange an appointment in person and cannot get past the front desk, treat receptionists and assistants as resources. They hold the key to getting inside the unit or section of that organization if you do not already have an inside contact or referral. Ask them some of your questions. You will usually get good information. Receptionists and other support staff know much more about their company than we often realize. They know

how it works, the names of key people, job requirements, etc. It is important that they understand what you want. If you ask them something that they feel could be more fully answered by someone else, they will usually give you a referral.

- d. You can use your own creativity, but the most important thing is to emphasize that you are simply trying to get first-hand information, and whatever the prospective interviewee shares with you will be appreciated.
3. Most of the time, your interviewee will be more than willing to take 20-30 minutes to answer your questions. Sometimes the person will want to talk over the phone, but often he or she will invite you to his or her workplace. When you can, choose that the interview be at their workplace because you'll learn more and make a stronger connection with the person.
4. You may want to schedule some of your interviews with managers and supervisors who have the authority to hire. Identify yourself and explain that you are researching careers in the contact's field, and that you obtained the person's name from \_\_\_\_\_(if you were referred).