



The Informational Interview Process

What is an informational interview?

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in a field, industry, or specific job that is of interest to you. It allows you to network and develop professional relationships to help you prepare for a specific career path or position.

Who do I ask?

Make a list of people you could interview. Which career fields or majors would you like to learn about? These could be professionals in that field or upper-classmen students. Consider people in your network:

- Bethel Alumni
- Neighbors/friends of your parents/church community
- Upper-classmen at Bethel in your major and professors
- Older siblings/parents/family members

How do I ask?

Ask to meet with them via email. State your name and objective for the meeting and include how you found out about them as a potential professional contact. Make sure to state how long a phone call or meeting would be (typically 20-30 minutes). Be clear that you are looking to network and create a professional connection and that you are not asking for a job.

Examples for Interview Questions

Career Pathways

- Tell me more about your career path. How did each job lead to your next position?
- What was your undergrad major? How did it prepare you for your career?
- Have you had additional training or certifications outside of your degree?
- What are some other related jobs and industries I could explore? What fields would you consider if you made a career change?
- Where can a person in an entry-level position in this industry expect to be in two years? Five years?

Education & Experience

- What qualifications do you look for in a new hire?
- How do most people enter into this profession?
- What do you think of my resume and experiences so far? What types of positions do you think I could qualify for in this industry in the future?

Work Specific

- What is a typical workday like for you? What is a typical workday like for someone in a lower-level position?
- What skills are required in your position on a daily basis?
- What parts of your job do you like the best?
- What parts of your job are most challenging?

General Career Preparation

- What do you recommend students do to find an internship or summer job in this field/industry/company?
- What are other ways of gaining experience you would recommend to students?
- What general advice do you have for someone wanting to prepare/get into this industry/field/company/position?
- Do you have any recommendations for networking within this field?
- What abilities are important for success and enjoyment in this profession?

Example:

Hello Christina,

My name is Sally Carter, and I got your contact information from my professor, Dr. Carver. I am a junior at Bethel University, studying Biology. Graduation is coming up soon, and I want to gather more information about working in a lab full-time. I am wondering if you would be willing to have a 30-minute phone call with me so I could ask you some questions about your company, your job, and how you've developed your career. Thank you so much for your time, and I hope we can connect soon so I can learn more about ways I can use my Biology degree when I graduate.

Sincerely,
Sally Carter

How do I prepare for the interview?

- Show up early if meeting in person or call on time if you scheduled a phone call
- Carefully prepare questions before the meeting to ensure that you can keep the conversation going
- Actively listen and be engaged when the person answers your questions
- Ask if they have additional referrals for you in the field or industry of interest that would be good for you to connect with

How do I follow-up?

Always send a thank you note after a meeting thanking your new contact for their time, advice, and useful information. Plan how you will maintain your newly attained contacts. Start by connecting with them on LinkedIn and potentially setting up follow-up meetings if applicable

Example:

Dear [insert name of contact],

Thank you so much for the time you took last week to talk with me on the phone about [Insert job title, company name, field/industry, or whatever specific thing you were discussing with the contact]. I appreciated hearing your insights about the industry and learning from your career journey. I plan on using the job boards you told me would benefit me as I look for jobs after graduation.

I would like to stay connected with you on LinkedIn and will follow up with you on my progress as I continue towards [list intended industry or job]

I look forward to staying connected!

Sincerely,
Your name

More resources:

[5 Tips for Non-Awkward Informational Interviews](#)

[How to Ask for an Informational Interview](#)