

# **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING PACKET**

Adapted, with permission, from materials developed by  
the Marin County School-to-Career Partnership

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING CHECKLIST

Informational interviewing is a way to gather information about an industry, profession or workplace directly from the people working there. Most people enjoy talking about their careers, so informational interviews can provide a comfortable exchange of advice and information, as well as contacts for future opportunities. Most informational interviews are about 15 minutes long, but they can also last longer if the employer has time or is particularly interested in sharing his/her knowledge with you.

Informational interviewing consists of four major steps: contacting the employer, conducting the interview, follow-up thank-you, and documentation of your experience. Your career advisor will help you along the way.

Specifically, here is what you need to do.

- 1) Meet with your career advisor to discuss areas of career interest and possible contacts for informational interviewing.
- 2) Select three employers who are either in different industries, if you want to explore different careers, or in different companies, but in the same industry, if you want to compare how various employers in the same industry do business differently.
- 3) Develop either a telephone script or letter to introduce yourself and ask for an informational interview. If you will do this by phone, practice your script before calling.
- 4) Contact the employer by telephone and ask for a short (15 minute) interview. Make every effort to schedule a personal meeting. Write down the agreed-upon time and place and then reconfirm it. Make sure it's at a time when you have transportation and can get there comfortably.
- 5) Prepare your questions ahead of time. (See attachment for suggestions). If you have not already done research on the industry and company, do so now, and incorporate some of your knowledge into the questions you ask. This will let the employer know you are serious in your quest for information.
- 6) Before attending the interview, make sure you have filled out the *Transportation Protocol* form, and any permission slips required if you are will conduct the interview during school hours.
- 7) The day of the interview, dress appropriately; gather your notes and a notepad and pen; you may also want to bring your resume, if some of your questions relate to your skills or getting feedback on your resume; arrive 5 minutes early.
- 8) During the interview:
  - a) take time to develop rapport with the interviewer -- don't interrogate
  - b) ask the questions you have prepared, but also be open to new questions that come to mind; if time is short make a note of these other questions, but stick to the most important questions first
  - c) leave at the agreed-upon time, unless the interviewer invites you to stay longer, but, either way, acknowledge when your time is up
  - d) do not give the employer your resume unless it is for the sole purpose of getting feedback on it
  - e) at the end of the conversation, thank the employer for taking the time to speak

with you

- 9) After the interview, go back to the Career Center; your career advisor will help you
  - a) send a thank you note -- mention your appreciation, what you learned and how you will use the information; keep a copy of the letter
  - b) record the date, address and telephone number of your contact
  - c) decide who you want to contact next, based on this new information
- 10) Conduct one more interview following the same guidelines
- 11) Compile a packet with copies of your thank you (and other) letters and record of contacts. Make a set for yourself and give a set to your Career Advisor. Complete the *Informational Interview Student Reflection Sheet* and turn it in to your Career Advisor. All of these documents will be kept in a file at the Career Center.

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING STUDENT QUESTIONS SHEET

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Id. # \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Room # \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Individual Interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

### QUESTIONS:

#### Nature of the work

What is done in a typical day? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the functions (tasks) that are performed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are these tasks performed more with people, data or things? \_\_\_\_\_

How much time is spent in direct client or customer interaction? \_\_\_\_\_

How much of the time do people work on their own, versus in teams or groups? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of data do you work with and/or analyze? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What tools and equipment are used? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the physical and psychological demands? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How much creativity and flexibility are required, versus structure and routine? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where is the work performed?

What type of organizations employ people in this occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the working conditions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the work done inside or outside? \_\_\_\_\_

Education and skills required for this occupation

What kind of education and degrees are required to work in this field? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of academic skills are required to be successful in this profession? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of personal and basic skills, such as “problem solving”, communication, teamwork are required to be successful in this profession? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of specialized training is required? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the specific skills you would look for in an entry-level employee or intern (e.g. knowledge of specific computer software, html, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Long-term employment outlook

Are the opportunities in this field increasing, decreasing or remaining stable? \_\_\_\_\_

In what parts of the state, country or world are opportunities increasing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Career mobility and transferability of skills

Does this occupation offer one the opportunity to acquire skills and responsibilities that would allow for advancement in this organization? \_\_\_\_\_

What would a typical "career path" in this occupation look like within your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

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What kinds of other organizations or positions could an individual apply these skills in? \_\_\_\_\_

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Salary and earning potential

What pay range and benefits (e.g. insurance, vacations, fringe benefits) can a person expect? \_\_\_\_\_

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How rapidly do pay and benefits increase? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a maximum possible income? \_\_\_\_\_

Sources of satisfaction and frustration

What gives you the most satisfaction or enjoyment in this work? \_\_\_\_\_

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What some of the main problems or frustrations in your work? \_\_\_\_\_

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Final comments

What advice would you give a person considering this occupation or field of work? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there related fields I should explore? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you refer me to anyone else in this or other fields that I could speak with for more information? (Ask for exact name, organization, title, telephone and address, if possible.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there other sources of information that you think might be helpful to me?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**

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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING STUDENT REFLECTION SHEET

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Id. # \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Room # \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF ORGANIZATIONS WHERE INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED:

Name

Position

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What interests of mine would be satisfied in this kind of occupation?

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What personality traits do I have that match those needed?

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Which of my needs and values can be met in this occupation or job?

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what skills and special knowledge do I already have that are needed in this occupation?

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What skills and special knowledge will I need to develop for this type of work?

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Where can I get these new skills or this knowledge?

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Overall, how has the information obtained help you clarify or redefine your educational and career goals?

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Next Steps:

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## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING: SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING INTERVIEW

Name  
Title  
Address

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

PURPOSE: A Career Advisor at my high school suggested that I might contact you to learn more about the field of \_\_\_\_\_.

WHO ARE YOU? : I am a junior at \_\_\_\_\_ High School in \_\_\_\_\_. I have been very interested \_\_\_\_\_ and am considering pursuing a career in this field after college.

WHY HE SHOULD MEET YOU: I would like to learn more about your profession and the industry, first, to see if it would in fact be of interest, and, second, in order to prepare myself adequate through class work and extra-curricular activities. I would appreciate 15 minutes of your time to ask your advice and get some suggestions.

ASK FOR FOLLOW-UP: I will phone you on \_\_\_\_\_ to see if we can arrange a meeting. If it would not be convenient for me to call or come in, please let my Career Advisor know at \_\_\_\_\_.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Signature  
Name

**Make sure the spelling and grammar are perfect!**

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING: SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE

Name  
Title  
Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on \_\_\_\_\_  
about \_\_\_\_\_. I was particularly interested in

\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. Most  
important, the information will help me clarify my career goals and focus my academic and  
extra-curricular activities to meet those goals.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

Signature  
Name

**Make sure the spelling and grammar are perfect!**