

Five Steps for Conducting an Informational Interview

Step 1: Identify a Career Field of Interest and Potential Contacts

- Use information you've gathered about yourself -- your interests, values and abilities-- to identify a field of interest.
- Conduct research to learn about your career field/employer of interest using the Internet and print resources. Identify related professional organizations/trade associations.
- Use LinkedIn, Twitter and Google to identify potential contacts. Consider family, friends, professors, former employers, and contacts through volunteer and community service.
- Contact HCC Career Services and ask staff for assistance in identifying potential contacts.

Step 2: Prepare for and Make Contact with Professionals in Your Field of Interest

- Develop a 30 second summary to introduce yourself including your reasons for contacting the individual. Refer to the [sample script](#) provided through HCC Career Services.
- Contact the person by phone, letter or e-mail.
- Identify how you acquired their name (who referred you?).
- Be professional in your communication. Use proper grammar, punctuation, etc.
- Emphasize you are **NOT** looking for a job but for career information.

Step 3: Prepare for the Informational Interview

- Plan to use [open ended questions](#) (such as those provided through HCC Career Services).
- Plan what you will wear and what you need to bring (notebook, pen, etc.). Dress as if it is an actual job interview. First impressions are very important!
- Be sure you know exactly where you are going. How will you get there? How much time should you allow for travel to ensure you arrive on time?

Step 4: Conduct the Informational Interview

- Get to your appointment a few minutes early and be courteous to everyone you meet in the organization (office assistant, receptionist etc.).
- Take the lead in conducting the interview.
- Ask open ended questions which promote discussion.
- Once inside the company or organization look around and observe the work environment, dress style, communication patterns (casual or more formal), etc.
- Examine if this is a place you would want to work.

Step 5: Follow-up

- Take notes, write down what you have observed and learned about the particular career field. Does this field seem like it would be a good fit with your values, lifestyle, interest, skills and future career plans?
- Send a thank you note by e-mail or mail within 1-2 days.
- Keep in touch. Their relationship with you could be an important part of your professional network.