

An informational interview is a lot like it sounds. It is a way of learning about occupations by talking to people who are in them. Informational interviewing can help you choose a major or career field, and help you make connections with people in occupations or career fields you are considering. Some say that informational interviewing is the ultimate networking and career exploration tool. How better to discover whether your dream job is right for you? Some students find that an informational interview confirms their interest in a career and others find their dream job is not so dreamy. Use 7-10 of the following questions during your informational interview or create your own.

Questions About The Career Field

- *Please describe your career path. How did you get to where you are today?*
- *If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?*
- *Could you describe a typical entry-level job?*
- *What type of entry-level job offers the most learning opportunities?*
- *What training opportunities do you think I should expect in an entry-level job?*
- *What do you do on a typical day? What are your responsibilities?*
- *What advice do you have for someone preparing for a career in this field?*
- *What majors and minors do you recommend for someone interested in this field?*
- *What courses or advanced degrees would be helpful for me?*
- *What experience is necessary to enter this field?*
- *What do you like most and least about your job? Why? What would you change?*
- *What would you say are the lifestyle considerations of this career?*
- *What are some of the more difficult or frustrating parts of this career?*
- *How does your work fit into the mission of your organization?*
- *Would you advise me to enter this career area? Why or why not?*
- *Are there related fields I might want to look into if there are few jobs available in my primary interest area?*
- *Considering what you know about my skills, education, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I learn more about before I make a final decision?*

Questions About The Organization or Industry

- *How did you get into this organization or industry? What other organizations have you worked for?*
- *What is unique to your industry, organization or office?*
- *Who are your main competitors?*
- *What do you like most or least about the work you do?*
- *What is your work environment like?*
- *How does your organization fill job openings? Is that typical of other organizations in your field?*
- *What is the best way to find out about jobs in this field?*
- *Are there other organizations in this field that you would suggest I explore?*
- *What is the economic forecast for this industry?*
- *Is this industry changing? How?*
- *What industry experience do most people in this field have in common?*
- *How do you stay current in your knowledge about your occupation/industry?*

Questions About Future Growth and Salary Information

- *What are the employment prospects for someone entering this field?*
- *What is the growth and promotion potential in your field?*
- *What areas are growing/changing in this field?*
- *What is a typical starting salary in this field?*

Follow-up Questions

- *Can you recommend other professionals in this field with whom I should speak? May I use your name when I contact them?*
- *May I contact you again if I have further questions?*
- *Which professional publications/organizations and other resources do you consider relevant?*

SAMPLE LETTER

Jane Ryan
15 Spring Road
Decorah, IA 52101
(555) 387.9999
jryan@emailaddress.com

August 25, 200X

Ms. Susan Carson
Director
Decorah Child Development Center
Decorah, IA 52101

Dear Ms. Carson:

I am a student at Luther College and I am investigating careers to learn which would be best for me. I am interested in the education profession and would appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about your work.

I found your article in the *Decorah Gazette* about teaching phonics to preschoolers very interesting. After reading the article and learning about the Child Development Center, I am confident that your insight would be very helpful.

I will call on Friday to request an appointment. Ideally, we can meet or visit by phone for about 20-30 minutes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,
Jane Ryan

Jane Ryan

SAMPLE LETTER

Julie Johnston
SPO 1111 Luther College
Decorah, IA 52101
September 10, 200X

Dr. Bonder
ABC Clinic
Anywhere, IA 52032

Dear Dr. Bonder:

As a junior at Luther College, I have begun taking classes in my major field of psychology. I am especially interested in the adolescent therapy track, and would like the opportunity to schedule an informational interview with you to learn more about the day-to-day activities of an adolescent therapist.

I was fascinated with the approach to therapy that you described in your recent article in *Adolescent Therapy Today*, and I feel you would be one of the most helpful people in the field that I could possibly interview.

I know you are very busy, so I assure you our meeting will be brief. It would be wonderful for me to meet with you face-to-face and see your clinic, but I am also open to interviewing by phone or e-mail. I will give you a call next week to find a time that is convenient for you and I to meet for about a half hour.

Thank you so much for considering this request.

Sincerely,
Julie Johnston

Julie Johnston

SAMPLE LinkedIN EMAIL

Dear Jeff Green:

I am a sophomore communication studies major at Luther College and I found your name through the Luther College LinkedIN group. I would like the opportunity to speak with you about how you got into your field and to get your perspective and advice as I consider my own career path.

Would you be willing to set aside 20 minutes for an informational interview? I am open to further correspondence by e-mail, phone or in person if you prefer.

Feel free to reply to this email (youremail@luther.edu) or call my cell phone: 333-333-3333. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
John Norge
Luther College

PHONE CALL SCRIPTS

Follow-up to a Letter

Hello, My name is _____. I am calling to follow-up on a letter I sent last week. Is this a good time to talk? [Wait for a response.] I am calling to arrange an informational interview with you to discuss _____ (industry, professions). I would like to meet with you one day next week. Do you have a half hour next Thursday afternoon? (Verify the address, date, time, and location before you hang up.) Thank you for your time, and I look forward to meeting with you.

Cold Call

Hi, my name is _____. I'm a student at Luther College majoring in _____, and I am exploring related careers. Is this a good time for you? [Wait for a response.] I am wondering if it would be possible for me to conduct a short interview with you so I can get your advice and find out more about your job? I promise I wouldn't take more than a half hour of your time.

Follow-up to an email

Hi, my name is _____. I am calling to follow-up on an email I sent last week. Is this a good time to talk? [Wait for a response.] As you may recall, I am interested in the _____ field, and I wrote to ask if you could spare 30 minutes to talk with me about your career. Do you think we could schedule a meeting?

Follow-up to a voice mail

Hi, my name is _____. I left you a voice-mail message earlier this week. Did I catch you at a good time? [Wait for a response]. I was calling to see if I could arrange to interview you briefly about your career.