

What is an Informational Interview and How Can They Help My Career?

An informational interview is a short 20-30 minute meeting (either in person or via phone) to learn more about a person's career path and to see if an organization is a good fit for you. Informational Interviews can also help you to build your professional network.

Where Can I Find People to Conduct Informational Interviews?

- People you meet at conferences
- Key contacts that you are referred to that match your career interests
- SNRE Students, Alums, Professionals in eRecruiter's Professional Network
- Other Social and Professional Networking sites: LinkedIn, U-M inCircle, etc.
- Ask people you are conducting informational interviews with to recommend additional people for you to contact.

Below is a starter list of questions. Of course, you should feel free to add your own questions too.

SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING/ NETWORKING QUESTIONS

- Tell me about your organization
 - How is it organized?
 - How large is your organization?
 - Where do you have offices?
 - How does your organization differ from similar ones?
 - What is the reputation of your organization?
 - What do you like most about working there?
 - What are some challenges/ frustrations about working there?
 - What's the work atmosphere/ culture like?
 - Are there opportunities to grow in your career?
 - What kinds of skills sets/ experience does your organization value?
 - How do colleagues interact? Is it a friendly place to work? Do people eat lunch together or do things socially?
- What is your specific role at your organization and what is your background?
- How did you get your job?
- Here's a little about my background . . . Are there opportunities for people with my skills and experiences at your organization or other partner organizations that you can recommend?
- Here's a copy of my resume, would you mind taking a look at it and letting me know which of my skills may be valued by your organization and which skills may be missing that would make me a more marketable candidate at your organization/ in this field?
- Can you please give me the names and contact info for other people that I can follow up with to learn more about your organization/ partner organizations that may be a good fit for me?
- Thank you for your time and please keep in touch. I'd appreciate hearing from you if you learn about any opportunities that match my interest areas.