

Informational INTERVIEWS



Informational interviewing is a networking approach which allows you to meet key professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals.

The art of informational interviewing is in knowing how to balance your hidden agenda (to locate a job) with the unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the demands of your field. Never abuse your privilege by asking for a job, but execute your informational interviews skillfully, and a job may follow.

What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

Most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, love giving advice. If someone from your high school reached out to you for advice on attending the University of Maryland, you would most likely be more than willing to answer questions and give advice. Some may simply believe in encouraging newcomers to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for anticipated vacancies. It is common for professionals to exchange favors and information, so don't hesitate to call upon people.

How do you set up informational interviews?

You can set up an informational interview through email, phone call, **LinkedIn** or **Terrapins Connect** (see adjacent box). The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred to someone, so make sure to ask your network if they know of anyone in your field of interest and research **LinkedIn** to find individuals of interest.

What do I say to someone to ask for an informational interview?

Example message to send through **LinkedIn** or email:

"Dear Andrew, My name is Julie Jones and I received your contact information from Megan Lee in the Career Center. I am currently a senior at the University of Maryland majoring in public relations. I admire your career path in PR and am wondering if you might have time to meet with me or have a quick phone call to answer some questions I have about the field. Thank you in advance!" Julie Jones

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.

JOB MARKET QUESTIONS

If you are preparing to enter the job market, you may wish to ask questions such as:

1. What experiences would make an entry-level job seeker competitive?
2. What are the major challenges/problems that your organization is facing and would like solutions for?

TERRAPINS CONNECT

A free, online platform that allows alumni to provide career and professional advice to students and alumni in a safe and secure environment.