

Sample Questions for an Informational Interview

Determine your purpose

Decide whether you want a face-to-face, telephone or email exchange

Avoid scheduling the conversation at the end of the workday or other times when the contact may be fatigued

Mail, email or fax your resume to the contact once the appointment is made

Plan your questions/agenda

Section II: Questions for the Conversation

What Work Is Like

Could you describe a typical workday for me?

What skills are required in your position on a day-to-day basis?

What parts of your job do you find most challenging?

What do you find most enjoyable?

How often do you work late nights (past 6 p.m.) and on weekends?

Which seasons of the year are busiest in your job?

Does the work involve frequent travel or late-night nights?

If you could change anything about your career choice or path, would you change anything?

State of the Industry

Is this field growing?

Are too many or too few people entering this profession?

What developments, new technology, etc. could affect future opportunities?

Has this industry changed much recently?

How frequently do layoffs occur?

Why do people leave this field?

Who are the most important people in the industry today?

Which companies have the best record of accomplishment for promoting women and minorities?

How does your company compare to others in the same industry?

Are there opportunities for self-employment in your field?

Money and Advancement

What do you think is the earning potential for this field?

How and how often are people in this field promoted?

How did you get your job? How much did your degree(s) influence the process?

How long does it take managers to advance?

What is the background of most senior-level executives?

Resume, Skills and Experience

What degrees or programs do you recommend someone to advance in this field?
What qualifications do you seek in a new hire?
How do most people enter the profession?
What do you think of my resume? How would you suggest I change it?
Can you recommend any courses I should take?
What companies might be interested in hiring someone with my degree?
How important is internship experience?
How does someone get an internship in this field?
When should I start planning for my new/first career?

Fitting In

What personal attributes are essential for success?
Is there a personality type that is a good fit with this industry/job?
What type of personality does not excel in this industry/job?
Can you suggest any ways that I can learn about corporate/organizational culture?

Career Change

Do you know anyone who has made this type of change?
Do you have any recommendations for someone making a career change?
Is your company/industry interested in people with my background?
Do you see a way I can capitalize on my background in order to get into this field?
What are the general/transferable skill sets needed for your position?

More Information

What professional journals, publications, Websites and organizations should I be aware of?
Are there services, office or organizations at DePaul that I should take advantage of now?
Do you have a mentor? Is that relationship helpful? Why?
Would you have benefited from an alumni mentor when you were at DePaul?
Is there anything else you think I need to know?
Who else would you recommend I speak with? When I call, may I use your name?