

Informational Interview

University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee

An informational interview is the opportunity to talk to a professional who works in a career that you are considering for your future. This is not an opportunity to get a job; however by interacting with the professional you have now developed a contact, an acquaintance, who can become a part of your network for a job search.

How do I find a professional? Say you have decided on the career choice of an accountant. Maybe you know someone or you have a friend who knows someone who is an accountant. If not, try to research online for a listing of organizations. You can search by <the field + city, state> or search the local area Chamber of Commerce Member Directory to find an organization. Call the organization and ask for the opportunity to meet with an accountant for the purpose of making a decision about a career of interest. Sometimes they may only be able to speak to you by phone. If you are able to meet with the professional in-person, please remember to:

1. Contact the professional for directions, instructions, appropriate attire and parking instructions.
2. Arrive 10 minutes early.
3. Be appropriately dressed. Be respectful of the host's time and office space.
4. Be prepared. Research the organization and prepare questions.
5. Be observant. Do not interfere with the daily routine of the organization.
6. Maintain a professional demeanor.
7. Follow-up with a thank you note after the shadowing experience.

Here are some sample questions you can ask:

- Could you share with me, what is your academic background?
- How did you evolve into this career?
- Which skills are required to succeed in this position?
- Are certifications or licensure required?
- What are the particular personality traits that make someone successful in this position?
- What do you do in a typical workday?
- What types of problems do you encounter?
- What types of decisions must you make?
- How do you handle the stress of the job?
- What do you like most / least about your job?
- How many hours must you work per week?
- How do you maintain work-life balance?
- If you could start your career over, would you choose the same path again?
- What adverse or positive changes are taking place in your career field today?
- What trends do you foresee occurring in the future that could impact this career?
- What are the opportunities for career advancement in your job?
- May I ask what is an entry-level salary and range of salary for a position like yours? (Never ask how much money a person makes.)
- May I ask what types of benefits and perks a company like this offers?
- Does your organization offer internships?
- How well valued is this position within the organizational structure?
- Is this position grant funded or budgeted for annually?

Career Goal Setting

Define the goal: _____

What is the expected date of achieving this goal? _____

Dream about the rewards for achieving the goal. Describe what will it look like and feel like?

.

Which of the following present obstacles -lack of time management, financial resources, discipline, study skills, personal support, motivation or other?

Take each obstacle and list three things you will do and or the resources available to help you overcome the obstacles:

Obstacle:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Obstacle:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Obstacle:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How dedicated are you to this goal? (On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being highly likely to achieve the goal.) _____

Name the people who will be your cheerleaders and will encourage you in reaching this goal?

You are on your way to great success! Thank you for allowing Career Services to be a part of your journey. We are here to support you in achieving your goals.