

Informational Interviewing and Job Shadowing

FIND PROFESSIONALS TO GUIDE YOU:

Start by exploring the Candid Career videos (link on the ACPC homepage) and watching recorded interviews with real people talking about their real jobs. You can learn a lot that way.

Then, ask your parents and your friends' parents if they know someone and are willing to provide an introduction. Ask your professors for recommendations of professionals in the field. You can also use LionLink to identify alumni Career Coaches (see previous page).

Next, email or call individuals to request an informational interview or job shadowing experience. Explain how you found the person you want to interview and request time to interview them. Emphasize that you want to find out more about the career—not find a job. You do not have to feel nervous about reaching out—people who like their job usually enjoy talking about their career path. If you're lucky, the professional you contact may also have colleagues you can talk to.

CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

Interview a professional about their job. This can be a formal meeting or simply a conversation over coffee, phone, Skype, or by email. Learn firsthand about your chosen profession by asking questions about the work environment, daily activities, and educational background required for that field.

SHADOW PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD YOU ARE CONSIDERING:

Follow someone in your career field of choice as they go through a typical day or week on the job. Ask questions and observe the work.

ASK QUESTIONS:

Take notes during your time with the professional. Think about your goals for the interview as you select your questions. Here are some questions you might ask:

1. What is your typical workday like?
2. What do you like most (and least) about your job?
3. What skills/abilities are most important to succeed in this job?
4. What is your educational background?
5. How did you get started in this field?
6. What courses/experiences were most helpful to you and which would you recommend?
7. What is the best way to get started in this field?
8. Do you have any additional advice to help me prepare?
9. Is there anyone else that you recommend that I speak with?

FOLLOW UP AFTER YOUR INTERVIEW:

Review your notes. What was your impression? Did you leave the interview feeling as if you can envision a future in this occupation? Do you need to learn more about the occupation? Does the job description still sound appealing?

Bring your thoughts and concerns to a career counselor at the ACPC to get feedback on the next step in your career exploration. You may want to conduct more informational interviews in this career path, or you may want to reexamine your goals and find a different path for your interests.

Always send a thank-you note to anyone you interview or shadow. Whether you decide to forge ahead on that career path or find another one, this professional may be a good person to network with when you begin your job search.