

Sample Informational Interview Questions

Preparing for the position

- What credentials or degrees are required for entry into this kind of work?
- What types of prior experience are absolutely essential?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?
- Is an advanced degree, such as an MBA, useful in your company?

Understanding the industry

- What trends affect your company's direction?
- Who are the company's competitors and how are their actions predicted or handled?
- What are the professional organizations in the industry?

Learning about the function

- Describe how you spend your time during a typical work week.
- What skills or talents are most essential for effective job performance in this job?
- What are the most satisfying aspects of your work? What are the most frustrating?
- What are some of the challenges and decisions you face in your position? And what skills are required for handling them?
- If you were to leave this kind of work, what factors would contribute to your decision?

Balancing work/life

- What obligations does your work put upon your personal time?
- What hours do you normally work? Is overtime common and, if so, is it regular, seasonal or sporadic? Is there flexible scheduling?
- How often do people in your line of work change jobs?

Managing your career

- If things develop as you'd like, what are your career goals?
- How rapidly is your present career field growing?
- How would you describe or estimate future prospects?
- If the work you do was suddenly eliminated, what different types of work do you feel that you could do?
- What types of employers hire people with your background; what are some representative job titles?

Searching for positions in the field

- How do people find out about available positions? Are they advertised on Web sites (which?), by word of mouth, by the human resource department?
- If you were to hire someone to work with you today, which of the following factors would be most important in your hiring decision and why? Educational credentials; past work experience; specific skills, talents; applicant's knowledge of your organization, your department, your job; other

_____.

Advising professionals new to the field

- How well suited is my background for this type of work?
- Can you suggest other related fields?
- What educational preparation do you feel would be best?
- What types of experiences, paid employment or otherwise, would you most strongly recommend?
- If you had it to do over again, what would you do differently to prepare for this occupation?

Networking in the field

- Based on our conversation today, can you suggest other people who may be able to provide additional information?
- Would you suggest a few of these people who might be willing to see me?
- May I have permission to use your name when I contact them?

Learning about the employer

- What is the size of the organization/geographic locations?
- What is the organizational structure?
- Explain to me what the organization does.
- How would you describe the work climate?
- What is the average length of time employees stay with the organization?
- What types of formal or on-the-job training does the organization provide?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- What are the arrangements for transferring from one division to another?
- Is the company planning to expand, maintain or downsize?
- How does it compare with its competitors?
- What new product lines/services are being developed?