What is an information interview?

The information interview is a method of information gathering as you explore possible career options, and a way of building personal contacts or “networks.” You will actually interview someone in a profession you are exploring to discuss the pros, cons, and other information that will help you understand the day to day work of a professional in that career. This promotes “reality testing.”

You are encouraged to do at least two information interviews for each career in which you have interest. Information interviewing is a primary information gathering resource because you actually visit with a professional. Secondary information resources include reading about careers or talking to counselors or advisors about careers. Secondary information resources are helpful in preparing for the actual information interview with a professional.

The following questions might give you ideas about what to ask in an information interview:

1. Help me understand a little more about what you actually do.
2. How did you happen to get involved in this kind of work? (or) Why did you decide to go into this particular profession?
3. What training, experience, or other qualifications are required in what you do?
4. What kind of formal education and college majors are most useful in preparation for this kind of work?
5. What is a typical work day like for you?
6. What do you especially enjoy about your work?
7. What about your work is less enjoyable?
8. What is necessary for a person to be successful in this profession?
9. Why did you choose to work for the employer or organization you are currently working for?
10. How does this profession fit with family life?
11. What seems to be on the “cutting edge” in this profession?
12. What are the professional networks or organizations that are related to this profession?
13. What other professional careers are related?
14. What advice do you have for a person who is interested in doing this kind of work?
15. Would you be willing to give me names of other professionals I might talk with?

Don’t forget to send a thank-you note to each professional you interview.

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