

Information Interviews

An information interview is a meeting with an individual in a career field you would like to explore. It provides an opportunity to gather information and guidance about the people, work environment and skills involved in that field.

Identifying Contacts

First, identify contacts in career fields that interest you. The most effective method of finding and talking to such individuals is through personal referrals. Ask your parents, friends, relatives, professors, and career counselors for names of people they know.

University of the Pacific has created Facebook or LinkedIn groups for the purpose of networking with alumni. Pacific students also have access to Pacific alumni through the Tiger-to-tiger mentor program. The Student Alumni Connection [mentor program](#) will connect students and alumni for the purpose of enhancing educational and career opportunities.

Approach

Before contacting a referral, do some basic research about the career field. Clarify why you seek to meet a specific person and what you hope to gain through this interview. When you contact a referral, state who you are, that you are seeking career information and advice, and when you would like to meet. Be confident and courteous in your communication. Request an in-person interview. This arrangement will allow you to see the working environment, and compare various work settings if you conduct several interviews.

Sample Telephone Introduction

“Hello Mr. Tiger. This is _____ and I am a student at the University of the Pacific. I found your name through.....

I am exploring careers in your field and have some questions about your profession. Would it be possible to schedule a short meeting or phone conversation with you?”

Sample Email Introduction

Subject: USD Networking

Dear Mr. Tiger,

I am a student at the University of the Pacific and I am interested in a career in (be specific). I found your name through.....

I am exploring careers in your field and have some questions about your profession. Would it be possible to schedule a short meeting or phone conversation with you?

Please let me know if you would be willing to meet with me. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Your name

Class level or graduation year

Phone number

Email address

Sample Questions

How do you spend a typical day or week in this job/organization?

What do you find the most/least satisfying about your job?

How did you obtain this position?

What kind of college degree/credentials/skills are needed?

What kinds of part-time jobs or internships do you think are helpful for entering this field?

What types of people do well in your field? What types do not succeed?

What are the opportunities for advancement? What is the entry-level salary range in this field?

What is the employment outlook (locally, regionally, nationally)?

Are you active in any professional organizations? Are students invited to attend?

What advice can you give me on how to break into this field? Can you suggest anyone else I might contact?

Interview

Dress and act professionally. Establish rapport and demonstrate your interest in the interviewee's comments. If you have not finished the interview within the time period you had requested, thank the person for helping you by saying, "I said I would only take thirty minutes of your time. I know how busy you are." Extend the time only if the person you are interviewing strongly encourages you to do so. Request a business card at the end of your interview.

Follow-Up

Write a short thank-you note within 24 hours after your interview. Keep the interview information on file for the future—this person may be an important contact for you later.