

# Sample Questions

# Informational Interviews

*Informational interviews offer a way to explore a career field in thirty minutes or less. Select questions that are relevant for you as you prepare for your phone or in-person informational meeting. See the reverse side for suggestions on arranging an interview.*

What are entry level position titles in your career field?

What do you spend most of your time doing on the job?

What sort of environment do you work in?

What sort of people do you work with?

Does the salary provide for a comfortable lifestyle?

What kind of educational preparation do you need for this position?

How competitive is entry into your field?

What do you consider the most important college courses you completed as related to your current position?

What hours do you typically work? Do you work on the weekends?

How much work do you take home with you?

Do you have comp-time or the option for flex-time?

How many days of vacation do you receive per year?

Can you describe your benefits package?

What is your next step along your career path?

What skills are necessary to perform your job activities?

How much variety is connected with your work routine?

What do you like about your occupation? Why?

What don't you like about your occupation? Why?

What is the outlook for openings in your field over the next few years?

What qualities do employers look for in job applicants who want to enter your occupation?

Can you recommend the names of other people I can consult to find out more about your field?  
May I use your name to introduce myself?



# Arranging an Interview

## Job Shadow or Informational Interview?

Job shadowing typically is observing someone at work for a day or even a week. It may not be possible for a college student to manage this type of assignment—but an informational interview can fit into anyone's schedule.

Informational interviews are **not** job interviews but are ways to increase your knowledge beyond a description in a book or on a web page. Try to schedule a face-to-face meeting for at least 30 minutes, at the person's place of business.

## Finding a Contact

Ask your family, friends and neighbors, former teachers or coaches for a referral to someone who works in a field of interest.

Visit the UT Alumni Association's web site to check out potential Alumni Mentors. These are UT graduates who have volunteered to answer questions from current students. Career Services may be able to recommend other individuals as well.

## Schedule an appointment

Introduce yourself and mention the person who referred you. Ask if you can meet for 20 minutes in the person's office. If it would be more convenient for the interviewee, offer to call back when he or she has 15 or 20 minutes free. Interviews often last longer than 20 minutes. Many people enjoy discussing their professions. Allow for plenty of extra time.

## Sample Request Letter

*Dear [Recipient Name]:  
I am currently researching positions in the field of [industry or job field] and [name] suggested that you would be an excellent source of information. I would like to learn more about the types of jobs available in this field and the skills required for them.*

*I hope that you can find 20-30 minutes to meet with me before the end of the month. I will contact you the week of [date] to set up an appointment. If you have questions, please contact me by phone at [phone number] or by e-mail at [e-mail address]. I appreciate your time in considering my request.*

*Sincerely,  
[Your Name]*

## Prepare for the interview

After making an appointment, conduct some basic research. Know, in general, what people in the position do. Develop a list of good questions. Examples are listed on the reverse side.

## Keep the appointment

Dress appropriately. Be sure the professional understands you are there for opinions and advice, not a job. Give a very brief background history when you introduce yourself. Take notes. Be sure to thank the person for his or her time and information. Be sure to collect business cards, they will come in handy when you send thank you notes.

## Thank you

Send or email your informational contact a brief thank you message within a day or two of your meeting. It can be a simple statement like this: *"Thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday about your career path. It really helped me understand what my options would be in this field."*