

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW CHECKLIST:

The best way to learn about a career is to talk to someone who's actually in it every day! After you've found connections from your friends, family, and LinkedIn contact them to schedule a brief face-to-face or phone informational interview.

Why informational interviews?

The purpose of an informational interview is to learn more about an industry or career field, not to ask for an internship or job. When you connect with the professional to schedule the informational interview, you should introduce yourself, briefly explain your interests in their field and work, and your curiosity to learn more. It is important to make this message concise and to the point!

Email or LinkedIn Message template:

Dear Ms. Jessica Dailey,

My name is John Doe and I am a graduate student at Wake Forest University School of Divinity. I am exploring potential careers in nonprofits related to food insecurity, and I came across your profile. I was really interested in the work you are currently doing as Project Coordinator at the World Hunger Relief Organization, and I would appreciate the opportunity to learn more about how your experience.

Would you be willing to chat by phone for 15-20 minutes over the next two weeks about your career story?

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you!

John Doe

How to prep for the informational interview?

Once the interview is scheduled you will need to prepare insightful questions to ask your contact as well as explanations about why you're interested in this field. You can use this [list of questions](#) to help you begin but make sure you also research the company and prepare questions specific to their work.

Make sure you can clearly highlight why you want to take this career path and what strengths you have to contribute to that specific line of work. Remember, you're not trying to get a job, just trying to better understand the field while building your professional network and practicing your interview skills.

In preparation for your informational interview, make sure you:

- Know your skills, interests, qualifications, and goals, and that you can articulate them
- Have a 1-2-minute pitch prepared that succinctly describes your background and professional goals. This is also known as the Elevator Speech/Pitch.
- Know what your goals are for the conversation; your goals will shape your questions.

During the informational interview, make sure you:

- Use your listening skills and show interest in your interviewee's story.
- Take notes on important information.
- Be confident in your skills and experiences.
- Be polite, professional, and respectful of their time. If you ask for 15-20 minutes DO NOT take an hour.

After the informational interview, make sure you:

- Send a thank you email within 24 hours of having the conversation, and a handwritten thank you note within 48 hours. Thank you notes are a common courtesy and important professional practice.
- Know that this person is now a valuable part of your professional network.

Informational Interview Tip: If you want to continue expanding your professional network, a good way to end the conversation is ask: "Are there any other professionals you would be willing to connect me with?"