

# Informational Interview Assignment

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Source: <https://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Network/informational-interviews.aspx>

An informational interview is a meeting to learn about the real-life experience of someone working in a field or company that interests you. It's not a job interview, so it's important to keep focused on getting information, not a job offer.

## How do I set up an informational interview?

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### Find contacts:

1. Use CareerShift: <http://www.careershift.com/?sc=Potsdam>
  - a. Click on **Jobs**
  - b. Click on **Search**
  - c. In **Keyword** field, enter job title
  - d. Click on **Advanced**
  - e. Select **State**
  - f. Enter **Zip Code** of either Potsdam or where you will be for break – so that you can plan a day/time that works
  - g. Select **Zip Radius**
  - h. Click **Search**
  - i. Under **Job Listing**, select **Find Contacts**
    - i. If a contact is available, they will be listed
    - ii. Select a name and see if they have contact information listed, you may also search the company website on Google for a staff directory
    - iii. Contact the individual via phone/email and use the “make contact” section below to determine what to say/write
    - iv. It is ok if someone says no, just move on to another contact
    - v. If the individual does not respond within 3 business days, follow up
    - vi. Make sure to work with their schedule, as they are volunteering their time. Have your schedule at hand, so you may work around your class schedule – but also understanding their limitations with their work commitments
      1. Interviews may be done via phone, skype or in person
    - vii. Use the *Hold the Meeting* section below to prepare for the interview
2. Use LinkedIn to find SUNY Potsdam Alumni: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/state-university-of-new-york-college-at-potsdam/alumni/>
  - a. In the search field, enter job title
  - b. Filter based on *where they live, where they work, and what they do*
  - c. Scroll down and see the list of contacts
  - d. Review each contact and select who to contact
  - e. Select **Connect** and **Add a Note**
    - i. In the **Personal Message** section, use the *Make Contact* to determine what to write.
  - f. Click **Send Invitation**

## **Make Contact**

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Either call or e-mail to make contact. The introduction could be:

Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am interested in the \_\_\_\_\_ field. I could use advice from someone who is in this field. Do you have time in the next two weeks to meet or talk on the phone for about 20 minutes? I would really like to learn more about your company and the \_\_\_\_\_ field from someone like you.

Thank you so much for considering my request.

Kind Regards,

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Hold the Meeting**

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After introductions, give a brief summary of your career goal, or what you want to learn from them. Prepare plenty of questions to make good use of the time. Respect their time.

Sample questions include:

- What is a typical day like in your job?
- What do you like most/least about this career?
- Is your job typical of others in this field?
- What are current job prospects like?
- Are there related fields I might want to look into?
- What makes a resume impressive in your field?
- Is my resume appropriate for this occupation?
- How do you stay current in your knowledge?
- What are employers looking for in this career (skills, education, experience)?
- What's the best way to find out about jobs in this field?
- What is the career ladder for this position?
- What would you recommend I do at this point to get into this field?
- What are the future trends for this field?
- Is there anyone else you would recommend I talk to in this field?

To learn more about a specific company, ask questions like these:

- What's the corporate culture like here?
- How do you normally hire for this occupation?
- What is the average turnover in this type of job?
- Which firms do you think are your toughest competitors, and how do they differ from your company?

What else do I need to know?

- Make a good impression. This person may provide additional referrals that could lead to a job.
- Keep it short. Limit your initial interview to 15 to 30 minutes based on how the conversation is going.
- End the interview with stating any follow up actions you will take based on their recommendations.
- Thank them for their time, information, and send a thank-you note after your interview.