



MarymountManhattan

THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

An informational interview, or courtesy interview, is your opportunity to meet with someone who is doing work that interests you and ask her/him questions.

How do I find people to Interview?

Ask your professors, Career Services, friends and relations, for recommendations/contacts. Soon you'll have a list of bankers, social workers, biologists, etc.

How do I set up an Interview?

Email or simply phone to make an appointment with your contact. Briefly explain who you are, why you want to talk with him or her, and request a short meeting. If the answer is no, ask for suggestions of people to whom you might speak.

Will anyone talk with me?

People love to talk about themselves and are flattered to be asked. Sometimes a person is just too busy, but as long as you are asking for information, not for a job, few people will be offended.

What do I say?

Here are some sample questions:

(Remember to research the occupation or field beforehand so you don't ask questions you could answer for yourself through a quick Google search.)

How did you decide to become a _____?

What do you like most about your job?

Is there anything you don't like about it?

What training would you recommend for someone interested in becoming a _____?

How did you find your job? What experiences led you to your current position?

Why did you decide to work for this particular organization?

Do you think the field is growing or shrinking? Are there opportunities?

Do you travel often?

Where do you see yourself in five years? Is there room for advancement?

What do you do in a typical day?

What sort of people do you work with?

Do you work mostly alone, or mostly with other people?

What is a typical starting salary?

Remember to be professional. This includes arriving on time, dressing appropriately, avoiding slang, and practicing good listening skills. Taking notes is encouraged. Keep an eye on the time; if you asked for 20 minutes of your interviewee's time, don't overstay your welcome. If the interviewee wants to keep going, that's fine.

Don't forget a thank you email/note afterwards! You may want to come back to this person for help finding a job in the future and you'll want to be remembered fondly.