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The Career Conversation

A Career Conversation is your opportunity to meet with someone who is doing work that interests you and ask them questions. Ask your professors, Career Services, friends, and relatives for recommendations/contacts. You can also use LinkedIn to research MMC Alumni and other professionals in your field of interest.

How do I set up a Career Conversation?

Send an email or LinkedIn message to make an appointment with your contact. If you have their phone number, you can also try giving them a call. Briefly explain who you are, why you want to talk with them, and request a short meeting (20 or 30 minutes, in-person or over Zoom). Play the “Student Card,” professionals are more likely to chat if they know you are in college. If the answer is no, ask for suggestions of other people you can contact in or out of their organization. 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?

Whether you are meeting in-person or joining a Zoom call, it is important to show up early. When you first meet them, thank them for taking the time to meet and start with some casual small talk: “How is your day going?” “How was your weekend?” Then, confirm with them that the time you scheduled still works: “I know we said 1pm – 1:30pm, does that time still work for you?” Then, you can dive into your first question. Remember to research the person, occupation, and field beforehand so you don't ask questions you could answer for yourself through a quick Google search. Here are some examples:

1. How did you decide to become a _____?
2. What do you like most about your job?
3. Is there anything you don't like about it?
4. What training would you recommend for someone interested in becoming a _____?
5. How did you find your job? What experiences led you to your current position?
6. Why did you decide to work for this particular organization?
7. Do you think the field is growing or shrinking? Are there opportunities?
8. Do you travel often?
9. Where do you see yourself in five years? Is there room for advancement?
10. What do you do in a typical day?
11. What sort of people do you work with?
12. Do you work mostly alone, or mostly with other people?

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 the professional's time, don't overstay your welcome. If the professional wants to keep going, that's fine. It is helpful to confirm the stop time with them at the top of the interview before you ask your questions; they may have more time or they may have a hard stop to get to a meeting.

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.

To learn more about Career Conversations, receive email templates, and get guided support for meeting with professionals, sign up for the next session of Career Launch Academy!



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