



## Sample Guidelines for Conducting an Informational Interview

Informational interviews are an excellent source of information when you are considering your career goals. While you may have some ideas of what working in that area may require, speaking with someone who is doing that work will help you fill in the gaps for the “look” and “feel” of their job. An extra bonus is the resulting network you can build that can serve as source of potential internships and job shadow experiences. For more information on preparing for the interview, please read Rebecca Knight’s Harvard Business Review article, *How to Get the Most Out of an Informational Interview*.

Purpose	Potential Questions
Think like a journalist by preparing informed and intelligent questions ahead of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you get into this line of work?</li> <li>• What do you enjoy about it?</li> <li>• What’s not so great about it?</li> <li>• What’s changing in the sector?</li> <li>• What kinds of people do well in this industry?</li> </ul>
Address sensitive topics so that you have as much information as possible to determine if this line of work is right for you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the worst parts of your job?</li> <li>• What didn’t you know before you got into this industry that you wish someone had told you?</li> </ul>
Do	Don’t
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Your homework.</b> You should do enough background research before going in that you sound like a credible candidate who is committed to moving into a new sector.</li> <li>• <b>Prepare a succinct explanation about your background and what you are looking for</b></li> <li>• <b>Send a handwritten thank-you note.</b> It’s good manners and makes you memorable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Go in cold.</b> Practice doing informational interviews with friends and family, so you get used to asking great questions and listening.</li> <li>• <b>Let one negative informational interview sour you on a job, company, or career path.</b> Solicit other opinions.</li> <li>• <b>Ask for favors</b> – it’s inappropriate. Instead, ask for advice on how to position yourself in the job market.</li> </ul>