INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

WHAT IS AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

Informational interviews can help you explore and research occupations and organizations. It involves talking to people who are in professions, companies or industries that you are interested in. It is a great way to network, research potential employers and learn more about specific careers (beyond what's posted in job descriptions). Some of the benefits of informational interviews include the following:

1. **Discover "First Hand" Information About an Occupation**
   a. Job postings can provide facts about an occupation, such as salary, required qualifications and responsibilities, but informational interviews provide a personalized perspective of an occupation. It can be very useful in deciding if a particular career is a good fit for you.

2. **Build a Professional Network & Access The "Hidden" Job Market**
   a. Only 20% of all job openings are advertised, the other 80% is based on networking and referrals! Job searching is about who you know, who knows you and what they know about you. Informational interviewing can be a helpful first step in building a professional network, getting connected to decision makers, finding a mentor and may lead to an extension of a formal job interview.

HOW DO I CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

1. **Identify Professionals in Your Field of Interest**
   - Start with family members, friends, coaches, mentors, supervisors, professors, employer directories, company websites and professional association directories. Also, consider joining LinkedIn, build your profile and connect with individuals online. You can also visit www.CandidCareer.com to watch videos and learn what it's like to work in various careers.

2. **Schedule an Informational Interview**
   - You can either send an email, LinkedIn message or call them directly to arrange an appointment. Be courteous, respectful, concise and professional. Direct telephone calls or face to face interviews are usually more effective and personable.

SAMPLE STUDENT SCRIPT

"Hi, (insert their first and last name), my name is _____. I am a senior at the University of Central Florida studying _____ and I am pursuing a career in the _____ field. I have done quite a bit of research about this industry but feel I that I could learn even more by talking directly to experienced professionals in _____ industry. I found your contact information through _____. Considering your current position and years of experience I thought that you would be a perfect person to connect with. If your schedule allows, would it be possible for me to do an informational interview with you for about 15-20 minutes to learn more about your career path and what it's like to work in the _____ industry? My schedule is flexible and I can meet with you at your convenience. Please let me know if this is something you would consider. I look forward to hearing from you soon."

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How did you get started in your field?

What attracted you to this profession?

How are you sustained in your profession?

Could you describe a typical day/week working in your career?

What are some challenges/rewards of working in this field?

Are there any certifications, licensures or other credentials that are required/preferred for entering this career? What types of previous work/volunteer experiences would be ideal for students seeking employment in this career field?

What are some of the job specific/technical skills that the ideal entry level candidate would possess?

What opportunities are there for growth and promotions beyond entry level?

What are potential career paths for professionals in this field?

What are typical work hours an entry level ____ can expect to work?

What are standard expectations during holidays/weekends for your profession?

With consideration of education level and years of experience, what is the typical salary range for an entry level position in this field?

While working in this career, what is your opinion on finding a balance between your personal and professional life?