Informational Interview
An informational interview is the opportunity to talk to a professional who works in a career that you are considering for your future. This is not an opportunity to get a job; however by interacting with the professional you have now developed a contact, an acquaintance, who can become a part of your network for a job search.

How do I find a professional? Say you have decided on the career choice of an accountant. Maybe you know someone or you have a friend who knows someone who is an accountant. If not, try to research online for a listing of organizations. You can search by <field + city, state> or search the local area Chamber of Commerce Member Directory to find an organization. Call the organization and ask for the opportunity to meet with an accountant for the purpose of making a decision about a career of interest. Sometimes they may only be able to speak to you by phone. If you are able to meet with the professional, please remember to:

1. Contact the professional for directions, instructions, appropriate attire and parking instructions.
2. Arrive 10 minutes early.
3. Be appropriately dressed. Be respectful of the host’s time and office space.
4. Be prepared. Research the organization and prepare questions.
5. Be observant. Do not interfere with the daily routine of the organization.
6. Maintain a professional demeanor.
7. Follow-up with a thank you note after the shadowing experience.

Here are some sample questions you can ask:

- What is your educational background?
- What has been your career path?
- Which skills are most / least important in your job?
- How did you learn the skills required for your job?
- Are there any particular personality traits that are required for your job?
- What do you do in a typical workday?
- What types of problems do you encounter?
- What types of decisions must you make?
- How do you handle the stress?
- What do you like most / least about your job?
- How many hours must you work per week?
- How do you maintain work-life balance?
- If you could start your career over, would you again choose the same path?
- How did you land this job?
- How much experience does it take to land a job like you have?
- What other types of jobs could you land with your skills, education and experience?
- What adverse and positive changes are taking place in your career field?
- What adverse and positive changes do you foresee occurring in the future?
- How’s the job market for your occupation?
- What are the opportunities for career advancement in your job?
- May I ask what is an entry-level salary and range of salary for a position like yours? (Never ask how much money your interviewee personally makes.)
- May I ask what types of benefits and perks a company like this offers?
- Would you recommend that I work for this company after I graduate?
- After I graduate, what companies do you recommend that I apply for a job in our career field?