

Career Guide

Informational Interviewing



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Consider what your goal is. Do you want to ask about a specific job? Company? Industry? Do you want advice on how to make the most out of college? How to choose a major? Search for individuals on Loyola Connect and/or LinkedIn who have relevant experiences.

When you find someone you'd like to connect with, reach out to them with a brief, gracious message. For example:

"Hi Pat, my name is Jamie and I am a junior History major at Loyola University Maryland. I am very interested in learning more about your career path in housing policy with the federal government. Would you be willing to share 15-20 minutes over the phone? I have availability next Wednesday between 2:00pm and 5:00pm or Friday between 9:00am and 12:00pm. If one of those works for you, I am happy to call you at a convenient number or you can reach me at 410-123-4567. Thank you and I hope we can connect soon!"

Your Notes:

START WITH GRATITUDE AND SOME BACKGROUND ON YOU

Begin by saying thank you for their time! Then, share a little bit about yourself: things like your class year, hometown, things you're interested in studying, 1-2 personal interests or activities you're involved in, etc.

Your Notes:

BE PREPARED WITH GOALS AND RELATED QUESTIONS

What are you most hoping to learn from this person? Some possibilities:

- Their career path (*Can you share a bit about what you do today and how you got there?*)
- Their experience in college (*Would you tell me about your own college journey?*)
- Advice (*What would you suggest to someone like me to make the most of college?*)
- Fill in the blank (*What's something I didn't ask about that you think I should know?*)
- What does a typical day or week look like in your current role?
- What do you absolutely love about what you do?
- What are some of the biggest challenges or frustrations?
- What trends are going to shape the future of your work?
- What does someone considering this career path need to do as a college student today?
- Do you more often work individually or as part of a team?
- Can you describe the typical work/life balance in this field?
- How does the culture within this profession differ from others?

Your Notes:

WRAP-UP & NEXT STEPS

As the conversation winds down, this is another time to say thank you for the time and information shared with you. If what you've heard in the conversation is exciting to you and you're interested in pursuing a related job or internship, the end of an informational interview is a great time to open new doors. It's not as simple as asking "Do you know of any opportunities?" though...try something like this instead:

"Pat, thank you. You've given me such great information, and this has been an exciting conversation. As a last question, I wonder what steps you might recommend for someone like me to pursue opportunities in a role related to your field of work?"

When you pose the question this way, it allows the person to get creative and think about openings, contacts, and resources that they might introduce you to. Remember that any of those things are helpful and will get you one step close to your next great opportunity! You can also ask for a referral to someone else you could speak with to learn more.

Consider how you'd like to propose staying connected with this mentor, such as:

- *"Would you be willing to continue our conversation in about a month?"*
- *"Would it be alright if I stayed connected with you from time to time via email/LinkedIn/etc?"*

If you received value info and felt a connection with this mentor, go ahead and ask for another conversation! If you feel it would be best to leave the door open without scheduling something, that's fine too.

Your Notes:

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Be sure to send a thank-you email!