

The Informational Interview Checklist

Things to keep in mind when you are conducting an Informational Interview:

- ❑ Assume the people you are trying to contact are sincerely interested and willing to talk to other people about their career path. This is especially true when you contact alumni through the Career Services or through other referrals.
- ❑ Know why you are contacting the person. This program is not intended for you to use it to ask for a job or internship. The alumni volunteer to be a resource for you.
- ❑ Use the list of questions to help you prepare questions. Don't feel that you are tied to asking the questions in order, allow for the conversation to have a natural flow. The person who is talking may bring up topic or suggestions that you may haven't considered.
- ❑ When talking to a person, especially until you are used to contact people, be sure to speak slowly and clearly. It is common to be nervous, so be sure to pace yourself and breathe. Be sure to practice good listening skills.
- ❑ Prepare a three-minute commercial about yourself that will briefly show your strengths, skills, experience, abilities and interest to present yourself in the best light.
- ❑ Remember your agenda for the informational interview:
 - Obtain specific information on what it is actually like to work in the alum's field.
 - Ask yourself:
 - Does it match what you thought?
 - Does it use your skills to satisfy your interests?
- ❑ Determine the skills needed and problems you might face if you were to enter this line of work.
- ❑ Be remembered: be personable, demonstrate your skills and send a thank you for their time.
- ❑ During the informational interview use the information data sheet to keep track of information.
- ❑ Rely on pen and paper, not your memory. This is especially true if you are talking to a number of people who are in similar positions. Remember specific things said and by whom.
- ❑ Write the names, titles, addresses and phone numbers of people being referred.
- ❑ After the informational interview, summarize what was discussed and highlights some points that you want to specifically remember.
- ❑ Determined what you learned and how it might affect your career decisions and job search process.
- ❑ Write a thank you note immediately and highlight a couple of specific things you learned from the visit.
- ❑ Conduct another informational interview! Now you know how easy it is and it is best to get more information from a variety of people. They may have the same kind of job, but they will have very different paths as to how they got there, as well as, perceptions or their work environment.