

Conducting Informational Interviews

Informational interviewing is the opportunity to ask thoughtful questions to provide deeper insight into a specific role, company or industry, as well as educational and career pathways. During periods of physical distancing, informational interviews can be conducted virtually by following some of these tips:



Research and Preparation

- Research the interviewee and their company – use LinkedIn, alumni press, company websites and don't underestimate the power of a Google Search.
- Prepare great questions and focus on what you can't learn online. You can find sample interview questions on our website.
- Be on time for your meeting and stick to the agreed upon timeframe – Respect your interviewee's time and honour your arrangement.
- You initiated the meeting, so it's your job to start and lead the conversation.
- Take notes – you will thank yourself later!
- Be prepared to talk about yourself. While you should not be asking for a job, be ready to talk about your specific education, experience, and skills as they relate to the industry.



Technology Platform

- Platform - Create an account and test out your chosen platform well in advance. Practice with friends or family so that you can navigate it confidently.
- Audio and video – Ensure that your webcam, mic and speakers are all functioning the way they should. Sitting upright in a chair, raise your phone or laptop to face height using a stack of books or a box and at a distance that frames your face to fill most of the screen.
- Location – Choose a room that offers a clean, clutter-free background and good lighting. You will also want to ensure little to no background noise or distraction.
- Final preparation – Solid colours tend to work well. Stripes and patterns may “strobe” (flash intermittently) on camera.



Follow Up

- Self-reflect – Think about what went well, and what you might do differently next time. This will help you to improve your communication and interview skills.
- Send a thank-you! Within a day or two of your meeting, send a thoughtful and personal thank you to your interviewee. If this informational interview was the result of a referral, thank them too!
- Maintain contact. Keep this connection alive by connecting on LinkedIn, keeping them posted on your career journey, or by sending a birthday/holiday greeting, or an article you think they might enjoy.