

How to Ask for & Conduct an Informational Interview

An informational interview is a structured conversation with the purpose of gaining information and understanding.

Remember — **You** are the interviewer! We tend to think of ‘interviews’ as part of applying for a new job. The key to informational interviewing is to remember that you are in charge of the process — unlike interviewing for a job. You are uncovering and evaluating information to help you identify and prepare for future roles.

Key outcomes for informational interviews are to:

- Identify job families or specific roles that may be of interest to you — or to rule out poor fits
- Understand how your assets align with a role and what you would need to do to prepare for it
- Uncover challenges or problems that you may be uniquely suited to address
- Gain insights on coming changes or trends in an area
- Lead you to other possible areas of interest you might not have known about

An additional benefit of informational interviewing is that you will build your network of contacts within, and outside of the Scripps organization.

Asking for the Interview

- Although you might feel intimidated to approach someone you don’t know or who is senior to you in the organization, remember — most people feel honored when their advice and insight is sought out. Go for it!
- Stress that you are only seeking information and understanding. If the person says that there are no openings in the area, let them know that is fine, you aren’t applying for a job.
- Mention that you value their experience and insight into the department — which is why you specifically wish to speak with them.
- If someone has referred you, say so.
- Make an appointment and let the person know that you don’t need much time, maybe 20-30 minutes.
- Let your interest and excitement show.

Steps to Conducting Effective Informational Interviews

1. Clarify the information or expanded understanding you need.
 - a. What information gaps do you need to fill?
 - b. What areas of interest have emerged that you would like to explore further?
2. Decide who to interview.
 - a. Identify who is likely to have the information and insights that you need.
 - b. Don't limit yourself — cast a wide net!
3. Take the time to prepare.
 - a. Write down the main things you wish to know more about in bullet point format.
 - b. Beside each item, write one or two open questions that will start the information flow.
4. End each discussion with a request for suggestions about who else you should speak to.
5. Thank the person for spending time with you.

Informational Interview Planning & Review Sheet

Person:

Date:

Contact Information:

Questions I want to ask:

Information I discovered: