They’ve been in your shoes and remember what it’s like to be starting out. Agreeing to the interview is proof they want to support you!

**Informational Interview:** Professional conversation with someone who is working in a career field or job of interest.

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**BEFORE THE MEETING**

Research the person, industry, and the organization before you ask for an informational interview.

Reach out to the individual and include the following:

- A brief introduction of yourself
- How you found their contact information and what interests you about their role/experience
- A request to schedule an informational interview to learn more about X, Y, and Z
- A meeting location that is convenient for them

Prepare questions ahead of time.

Bring copies of your **resume** and a notepad and pen.

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**DURING THE MEETING**

Arrive early. We suggest 10-15 minutes early.

Restate the reasons for your interest in meeting and what you hope to learn from them.

Ask open-ended yet pertinent questions. Request referrals to other appropriate individuals in the field or in related organizations.

Remember that you are here for information and not to ask for a job or internship.

Take notes and don’t forget to ask for a business card.

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**AFTER THE MEETING**

Send a Thank You note or email within 24 hours.

Keep in touch on occasion to maintain the relationship. People who provide assistance want to celebrate your career success.

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**TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

**GENERAL**

- Send a confirmation email to your interviewee 24-48 hours in advance.
- Triple-check spelling and grammar before you send any correspondence.

**IN PERSON**

- Make eye contact, smile, breathe.
- Respect their time. Stick to your agreed timeframe and end the conversation once you meet that time.

**ONLINE**

- Respond within 24-48 hours to online correspondence.
- If using virtual platforms to connect, test your technology and internet connection ahead of time.

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*Note: Asking for general feedback on your resume is okay, but don’t provide it in hopes of an opportunity, unless the interviewee offers.*
WHAT are the benefits?

Build professional relationships while getting the inside scoop on:
- A typical week and its challenges
- An organization’s culture, structure, and reputation
- Recommended skill sets, classes, experiences, and resume tips

WHAT about timing?

- Request to meet for 20-45 minutes
- Establish your timeframe in advance so that you both know what to expect
- If applicable, include time zones for video or phone calls

HOW can I find interviewees?

- On LinkedIn, use the “Find Alumni” function and search groups like Puget Sound’s ASK Group
- Participate in CES events that feature alumni and recruiters
- Attend local interest groups and meetups, or regional and national conferences

WHERE should this take place?

In-person interviews often convene at a cafe or the interviewee’s place of employment that both parties agree upon in advance.
- If applicable, include time zones for video or phone calls

WHO guides the conversation?

You do!
- Bring a list of 8-10 questions to ask
- Don’t let your reliance on your questions prevent you from genuinely connecting
- Find sample questions on CES’ Informational Interview Worksheet

CAN I directly ask for a job?

No. This conversation is primarily about expanding your network and learning about other people’s career paths.
- Although an informational interview may result in an offer, these are initiated by the professional and not the student

HOW should I invite the person?

Reach out via email, phone, or LinkedIn.
Remember to:
- Communicate with a professional tone
- Triple-check for spelling or grammatical errors
- Thank them for their time and consideration

WHAT should I wear?

Dress like this meeting matters! Business casual is usually a good standard. What type of clothing does business casual entail?
We recommend:
- Trousers, skirt, or dress
- Blouse or button-down shirt
- Make sure your clothing is wrinkle-free

WHY send a Thank You note?

This person has kindly taken their time to share advice and support your career development. Cultivating an appreciative attitude is a vital skill!
INTERVIEWEE NAME: ________________________________
JOB TITLE: ________________________________
ORGANIZATION: ________________________________
PUGET SOUND ALUM? □ YES □ NO  CLASS YEAR: ________

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:
• How did you break into your career and what has been your path to this role?
• How has your major helped you in the workplace?
• How has your liberal arts education helped you as a professional?
• What previous roles prepared you for your current position?
• What is your favorite part of your role?
• What do you like about working for this organization?
• What are the most challenging and most rewarding aspects of your role?
• What is one thing that surprised you about your career?
• What is a common misconception people have about what you do?
• How is the work/life balance?
• What advice do you have for someone who’d like to enter this field?
• What type of professional development is offered by your employer?
• How did you build skill sets to advance in your career?
• What career advice would you have offered your college self?
• What are your main tasks or responsibilities at work?
• What does a typical week look like?
• What kind of education, training, or other preparation is needed to enter this field?
• What advice do you have for an entry-level graduate who is just starting out?
• What was the importance of networking in your field?
• What advancement opportunities exist beyond an entry-level role?
• For your organization/industry, what social networks are relevant?
• Do you have any recommendations for other professionals in this field to contact?
• I’d like to stay in touch. May I reach out to you again or follow-up via LinkedIn?

Add Your Own:
• ____________________________________________________________
• ____________________________________________________________
• ____________________________________________________________
• ____________________________________________________________
• ____________________________________________________________