

Tip sheet for conducting an Information Interview

The purpose of an information interview is to strengthen your contacts, develop a network of people in your field of interest and possibly uncover future career possibilities. The more people you are able to talk to, and exchange information with, the stronger your professional network becomes.

Your goal when information gathering is to:

- Learn how your strengths fit with this area
- Learn about the area and its potential fit for you
- Determine what additional training you might need
- Access information on where upcoming opportunities might exist
- Develop connections with people who can assist you
- Get feedback on how you present yourself
- Get your contact's advice
- Uncover any emerging areas or trends

Conducting an information Interview at U of T

1. Introduce yourself by email and mention where you got their name
2. Explain your purpose and clearly indicate why a meeting would be helpful e.g. to seek their expert advice as you are currently exploring careers or trends in their area.
3. Request a meeting by phone or in person.
4. Agree on a convenient time. If the person is unavailable to meet, request an alternate contact in the area.

During the Meeting:

- Dress professionally and arrive a few minutes ahead of time.
- Establish rapport by expressing appreciation for their time and information. (20-30 minutes is all you can expect). Restate the purpose of the meeting e.g. for advice and information.
- Briefly describe your background, experience, skills, and interests. Ask about his/her background.
- Bring the individual up-to-date on your current knowledge of their area so that new information will be shared.
- Ask the questions that you have prepared and show them your resume if asked
- Ask for referral to other people in the area who may be helpful.
- Thank your contact and ask if you can keep in touch to update him/her on your progress.
- Send a thank-you letter, and make reference to at least one point of interest from your discussion.
- Update them on your next steps.

Sample questions for information gathering:

1. Could you describe your career and what factors contributed to your success?
2. Given my background and experience, what kinds of areas should I be considering?
3. Given my background and experience, what skills/experience/training/education/knowledge do I need to develop?
4. How would you recommend I develop these competencies?
5. Can you think of areas that would be potentially suitable?
6. What special skills and qualities are related to success in this area?
7. What are some typical job responsibilities?
8. What is the potential for career progression or development?
9. Who else do you think I should talk with to get additional information?

Contact:		Department:	
Title:		Email Address:	
Phone:			
What did I learn about the area?			
What did I learn about the department?			
What key information did the contact have about the career?			
What did the contact suggest?			
What are my impressions of the area?			
Positive		Negative	
Additional Referrals:			
Follow-up Steps:			