

# Informational Interviewing

## What is an Informational Interview?

- The informational interview is an opportunity to learn about a career which interests you, by meeting and talking with someone who is working professionally in that field.
- In a question-and-answer session, you will learn first-hand about a job directly from someone who performs the tasks on a daily basis.

## Arranging the Informational Interview

- Your Career Advisor at the Pomerantz Career Center can help you "brainstorm". Friends, parents, friends' parents, and parents' friends are potential sources of locating people who might be willing to participate in an informational interview with you.
- Prioritize your list, based on areas of greatest interest to you and convenience of arrangements. Select two or three prospective subjects to interview. When you contact them, identify yourself as a student at The University of Iowa, state that you are interested in the career they have chosen, and ask if they would mind meeting with you for 20-30 minutes to discuss their career and to answer some questions.

## Preparing for the Interview

- Consider what you want to learn during the interview, and select questions accordingly (see below).
- Dress appropriately for the job you are investigating.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Bring a copy of your resume with you in case it is requested. However, don't approach the interview as if you are looking for a job — your purpose is to gather information.

## Evaluation and Follow-up

- Evaluate your experience. What did you learn from it? Do you have new questions? Did the interview reinforce your interest in this career? How does this career "fit" you?
- Keep names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your contacts for future reference.
- Send a brief thank-you note to each person you interviewed, thanking them for their time.
- Talk with your Career Advisor in the Pomerantz Center about your experience.

## Suggestions for Informational Interview Questions

- What is a typical day like for you?
- What is the most satisfying part of your job? Least?
- What was your first job in this field? What was the progression of jobs you had in order to get to your present position?
- Would you choose to enter this field again? If not, what other field would you choose?
- What would you most like to change about your position?
- What is your educational background?
- What courses best prepared you for this position?
- Knowing what you know now about your field, what courses or training would you do differently?
- What are the most valued skills in this field? How can I best obtain these skills?
- What is your biggest responsibility, and how much pressure do you feel from this responsibility?
- How do you feel your salary compares to other occupations with the same educational requirements, skills, and level of responsibility?
- How much travel and/or geographic relocation is required in your field?
- How happy are you with your job here?
- How difficult would it be for you to change to a similar job in another business, industry, or setting?
- What are your future career plans? Are these typical goals for your field? How easy will they be to achieve?
- What is the most common entry-level position in this field?
- Can you suggest other people I might be able to interview who have similar career interests?