

Sample Informational Interview Questions

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE OCCUPATIONAL FIELD

Preparation:

- What credentials or degrees are required for entry into this kind of work?
- What types of prior experience are absolutely essential?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?

Present Job:

- Describe how you occupy your time during a typical work week.
- What skills or talents are most essential for effective job performance in this job?
- What are the toughest problems you must deal with? Apart from external motivators such as salary or fringe benefits, what do you find most rewarding about your job?
- If you were to leave this kind of work, what factors would probably contribute to your decision?

Lifestyle:

- What obligations does your work place upon your personal time?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation schedule, place of residence?
- How often do people in your line of work change jobs?

Career Future/Alternatives:

- If things develop as you'd like, what sort of career goals do you see for yourself?
- How rapidly is your present career field growing?
- How would you describe or estimate future prospects?
- If the work you do was suddenly eliminated, what different types of work do you feel that you could do?
- What types of employers hire people with your background; what are some representative job titles?
- Which related fields are you exploring?

Job Hunting:

- How do people find out about these jobs? Are they advertised in the newspapers (which ones?), by word-of-mouth (who spreads the word?), by the personnel department?
- How does one move from position to position? Do people normally move to another agency (company, division), or do they move up in the agency (company, division)?
- If you were to hire someone to work with you today, which of the following factors would be most important in your hiring decision and why?
 1. Educational credentials

2. Past work experience
3. Specific skills, talents
4. Applicant's knowledge of your organization, your department, your job
5. Other _____

Advice to Me:

- How well suited is my background for this type of work?
- Can you suggest other related fields?
- What educational preparation do you feel would be best?
- What types of experiences, paid employment or otherwise, would you most strongly recommend?
- If you were a college student and had it to do over again, what would you do differently to prepare for this occupation?

Referral to Others:

- Based on our conversation today, can you suggest other people who may be able to provide additional information?
- Would you suggest a few of these people who might be willing to see me?
- May I have permission to use your name when I contact them?

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE EMPLOYER

- What is the size of the organization/geographic locations?
- What is the organizational structure?
- Explain to me what the organization does.
- What is the average length of time employees stay with the organization?
- How much freedom is given to new people?
- What types of formal or on-the-job training does the organization provide?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- What are the arrangements for transferring from one division to another?
- How much decision-making authority is given after one year?
- What new product lines are being developed?
- Where is the organization expanding? How does it compare with its competitors?

Special thanks to [University Career Services](#) at the University of Virginia for the use of these questions.