



Career Tools:

Informational Interviews

Exploring your interests with people in the field.





Informational Interviews?

- Information gathering interviews that are generally in person
- An effective way to get career information
- Information that is more personal than websites
- Can help you confirm your career choice
- Gives you the best sense of the working environment
- Assists in building your career network





Step 1: Research

- Take time to investigate career fields – you can use sites such as...
 - USM's [Major 2 Career](#)
 - [O*NET](#)
 - [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)



Step 2: Develop

Create a list of everyone you know in your field of interest

- Need connections?
 - Contact Career & Employment Hub
 - usmcareers@maine.edu or 207.228.8505
 - We can provide a list of community partners
 - Speak with faculty about contacts
 - Talk with your family and friends about potential contacts
 - Use LinkedIn and connect with USM alums



Step 3: Prepare

- Develop a short (15-30 second) overview of yourself, including your reasons for contacting this person, as a way to introduce yourself and define the context of the meeting.
- Gather questions to ask during the interview.
 - Sample Questions on Slide #9.
 - Additional Questions at <http://usm.maine.edu/cecd/career-tools>



Step 4: Connect

Contact the community partner(s) by phone

- Introduce yourself, using the overview you created.
- Mention how you received his or her name.
- Ask whether it's a good time to talk for a few minutes.
- Emphasize that you are looking for information, not a job.
- Ask for a convenient time to have a 20-30 minute appointment.



Step 5: The Interview

- Conduct the interview with a high degree of professional presence
- Ask the interviewee for his/her business card
- Ask for the names of two other people you can interview
 - Ask for permission to use his/her name
- Let the interviewee know you will follow up on your progress





Step 6: Follow-Up



- Write a brief hand-written thank you note
- Connect with the interviewee via LinkedIn
 - Email or send a message occasionally on your career investigation
 - Reconnect with the interviewee when you start your job search – they maybe able to assist you!



Sample Questions

1. What are your primary tasks and responsibilities?
2. What specific strengths and/or skills are needed to be successful in your field?
3. What publications could I read to learn more about your field?
4. What organizations/meetings could I join/attend to learn more?
5. What has made you successful in your career? What things did you do to achieve your success?
6. What are the challenges facing people in your field?
7. What kinds of growth and new directions are you experiencing in your field?
8. How can I best prepare for a career in your field?
9. Why did you choose your field?
10. What rewards do you get from your field?
11. Would you choose this field again?
12. What is something that you see new college graduates in this field struggle with the most?

For more information or to set up an appointment:



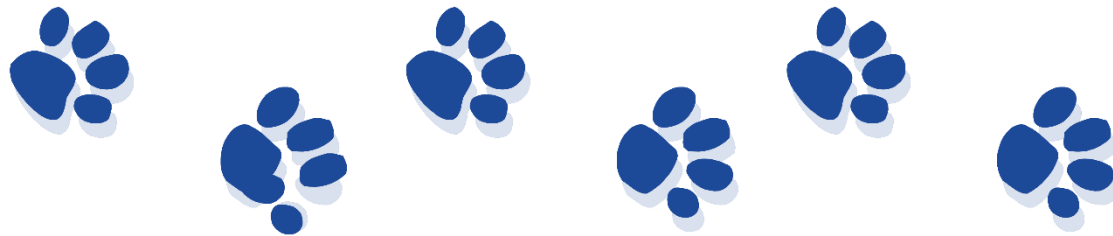
Career and Employment Hub

207-228-8505

usmcareers@maine.edu

231 Luther Bonney, Portland Campus

usm.maine.edu/careers





References

- Adapted with Permission: Mundhenk, L.G. Associate Professor, Leadership and Organizational Studies University of Southern Maine, Lewiston-Auburn College.
- Informational Interviewing. (2016). Career Center. Retrieved from URL: <https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/InfoInterview>.