

Informational Interviewing

A Career Development Guide for UIW Students

What is Informational Interviewing?

An informational interview is a conversation where you learn about someone's career path, industry, or organization. Unlike job interviews, you're seeking knowledge and advice—not a job. It's a powerful networking tool that helps you explore careers, gain insider perspectives, and build professional relationships.

Why Informational Interviewing Matters

- **Gain real-world insights** about careers, industries, and companies that you can't find online
- **Build your professional network** with people who can offer guidance and potential opportunities
- **Clarify your career goals** by learning what different roles actually involve day-to-day
- **Uncover the hidden job market**—many positions are filled through connections before they're posted

How to Conduct an Informational Interview

Before the Meeting:

- Identify professionals through LinkedIn, UIW alumni networks, family connections, or UIW Career Services
- Request 20-30 minutes via email or LinkedIn—be clear you're seeking advice, not a job
- Research the person and their organization—prepare 5-7 thoughtful questions

During the Conversation:

- Express gratitude for their time and briefly introduce yourself (30 seconds max)
- Ask open-ended questions about their career journey, challenges, and advice
- Listen actively, take notes, and let the conversation flow naturally
- Ask for referrals: "Who else would you recommend I speak with?"

After the Meeting:

- Send a thank-you email within 24 hours, mentioning specific insights you valued
- Stay in touch periodically—share updates on your progress or relevant articles

Sample Questions to Ask

- What does a typical day or week look like in your role?
- What skills or experiences have been most valuable in your career?
- What do you wish you had known when you were starting out?
- What trends are shaping this industry right now?
- What advice would you give someone interested in this field?