

# Informational Interview Question Starter

## What do you want to learn?

What do you envision being the end product(s) of this interview?

- a broader knowledge of career options
- a deeper understanding of their specific field/discipline
- field-specific insights into required skills, background, etc.
- information about company/organization culture, daily tasks, etc.
- information/resources about relevant enrichment activities (e.g. where to volunteer, what types of extra-curricular experiences are valued)
- field-specific nuances in the application process (e.g. typical resume components, what's acceptable on your social media pages)
- a broader network of contacts
- a knowledgeable contact for questions and resources
- information or resources for personal and professional growth (e.g. developing field-specific skills)
- Other:

Where do you feel stuck? What currently challenges you the most?

## Interview Questions

*Use the answers above to help guide what kinds of questions you want to ask. Below is a list of example questions to ask, by broad category, to get you started. This is not comprehensive, so be sure to think of other questions that align with your objectives.*

### Career Development

#### *Example Topics*

- career exploration, a specific or target career
- career exploration, navigating and narrowing options
- application and interview norms
- negotiation strategies
- how to "sell" yourself

### *Example Questions*

- I know that I am interested in (insert your career interest here, e.g. conservation), but I am not sure what all of my options are for jobs in that field. In your experience, what would be available?
- What tips do you have for finding jobs in (your career interest)?
- What advice do you have for narrowing down my options and figuring out what jobs/fields would be a good fit for me?
- I know that I should be “branding” myself and my application materials, but I’m not sure what would stand out to employers. In your experience, what are some good ways to brand yourself so that you are memorable to potential employers?

## Personal Experiences

### *Example Topics*

- mentor's career trajectory
- mentor's personal experiences in the discipline/field
- typical day or week in the life of the mentor
- duties and responsibilities of the mentor
- mentor's experiences with skill development and personal growth

### *Example Questions*

- what skills and experiences have been most helpful in their career and their personal life? Where did they gain those skills?
- Did you do undergraduate research here? If so, with whom? Were you able to apply anything you learned in that lab to your current career?
- Of all of the extracurricular activities, odd jobs, undergraduate research, classes, study abroad, labs, volunteering, internships, etc. what was the most helpful for getting a job out of college? What about in your current career?
- What part of your college experience was the most memorable? What was the most helpful in developing your career?
- What was your first job after college? Was it what you expected?

## Field/Position Exploration

### *Example Topics*

- skills and experiences needed/sought after in the field
- discipline specific interview, networking, job hunting strategies/tips
- typical career paths in this field
- typical job duties in this discipline
- company culture

### *Example Questions*

- What kinds of extra-curricular and enrichment experiences would you suggest having if I wanted a career in this field (such as volunteering, study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- Where do you suggest volunteering?
- What skills and experiences are needed for a career in (insert broad field here, e.g. Conservation)? What about for (insert narrower field here, or specific positions, e.g. forest ranger)?
- What would a typical interview in the field look like? What types of questions do they tend to ask?
- What tips do you have for starting and building my network in the field?
- What are some typical career paths in this field?

## Networking

### *Example Topics*

- connecting with enrichment activities (volunteer, job shadow, organizations)
- connecting with individuals in the field
- resources for skill development and personal growth

### *Example Questions*

- Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me! Is there anyone else that you know of that might also be willing to talk with me about (insert your focus here, e.g. job options in conservation)?
- We talked about how it would be good for someone interested in conservation to build skills in (insert some skills you talked about). Can you recommend some resources or ways to gain those skills?