

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Find out the information you need about a particular career or job by talking to **people** who are already employed in the industry or occupation in which you are interested.

The people who you approach have **information and advice** about their industry, organisation and job, and what is required to get into each of these.

It is also a very good way to find out the “reality” of making a move into a particular area.

### Research

The first step in starting the informational interview process is to target organisations and occupations that you are interested in, and then research what they do.

Information can be gained on a particular organisation or occupation, or a name of someone that works in a particular organisation or occupation from:

- Friends, acquaintances, fellow students, work colleagues, members of your interest groups, people you meet in everyday life, etc. Ask them if they know people working in the area that you are interested in.
- The internet – most organisations have a web site; use Google or try [www.ubd.co.nz](http://www.ubd.co.nz)
- The Yellow Pages – use the index to find organisations listed under their products and services or go to [www.yellow.co.nz](http://www.yellow.co.nz)
- Careers New Zealand – go to ‘Jobs Database’ for information on over 600 jobs which includes related organisations and associations; [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

### Contact

You can then call the organisation directly, ask for the contact if you have one or for the person in charge of a particular department, explain that you are seeking information and advice and ask for a meeting of about 20 minutes. Make sure that the person understands that you are *seeking information only, not asking for a job* and make sure that you keep within the time frame.

Alternatively you can ask for a telephone interview, however it is ideal as a face to face meeting.

### Informational Interviewing allows you to:

- Find out whether you like the occupation/organisation
- Learn what would be required to get into this occupation
- Find out possible issues that they have that you could find a solution to
- Make contacts, which may lead to a job in the future

### Prepare

Prior to your informational interview, prepare a list of questions that you would like to ask.

Examples of questions are given over the page and you can create your own.

Questions should be based around finding whether this organisation/industry/occupation is in line with your skills, values and goals, as well as finding out the reality of working in that occupation and/or organisation.

Send a thank you note or email after the meeting, to thank them for their time and information.

This reinforces your name and also associates a positive feeling about you.

## Examples of informational interview questions

### Questions about the job

- Could you describe what you do on a day-to-day basis; your main tasks.
- What are the things you most like about your work?
- Which part(s) of the job is most challenging for you? Why?
- What are the most important skills needed to do this work well?
- What personal attributes do you think are essential to succeed in this role?
- What experiences have you had that you think have been valuable to your learning?
- How did you get into this job?

### Questions about the field/industry area

- How do most people get into this field of work? Networking, advertised positions, other?
- What area of study/degree would you suggest people have to get into this area?
- What trends are there in this field that would be important for me to know about?
- What is the demand for employees in this industry at the moment?
- What has motivated you to stay in this field of work?
- In what ways is your occupation changing?
- What are the best resources for me to research this career area?
- Which professional journals and organisations should I know about?

### Questions about the organisation

- From your point of view, what qualities do you look for in this organisation?
- Could you describe the culture of this organisation and specific benefits of working here?
- What types of positions do you think I would now be qualified for in an organisation such as this?
- What training opportunities do you think I should expect in an entry-level position in an organisation such as this?
- Are there other job titles or roles that I should be looking at that are comparable or related to this area of work?

### General questions

- To enter this occupation what do you recommend as my next step?
- Can you suggest other organisations you think may be useful for me to research?
- Would you be happy to look at my CV? Do you have any suggestions of changes?
- Are there people you know whom I could also talk to in this area? When I call her/him, may I use your name?
- What else do you think I need to know in order to make an informed decision about possibly getting into this field of work?

Remember to ask questions in line with your values to see whether this line of work will meet what is important to you