

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT

WHAT IS IT?

An informational interview is a **meeting with an individual in a career field you would like to explore**. It is one of the best ways to find out about the realities of a career/job. It provides an opportunity to **gather first-hand information and guidance** about the people, environment, and skills involved in that field.

IDENTIFYING CONTACTS

First, **identify contacts** in career fields that interest you. The most effective method of finding and talking to such individuals is through **personal referrals**. Ask your **parents, relatives, friends, classmates, professors, and career counselors** for names of people they know and obtain the person's full name, title, and contact information. If possible, ask your parent, relative, friend, or advisor to contact the person before you approach him/her.

APPROACH

Before contacting a referral, do some **basic research** about the career field. Clarify **why you seek to meet a specific person** and what you hope to gain through an informational interview.

When you contact a referral, **state who you are and who referred you to him/her, and that you are seeking career information and advice**. Ask about a convenient time to meet. Be confident and courteous in your communication.

Request a 30-minute in-person interview, preferably at their worksite (location not mandatory). This arrangement will allow you to see the working environment, and compare various work settings if you conduct several interviews. If an in-person meeting is not possible, you may do the interview via the Internet or telephone.

INTERVIEW

Dress and act professionally. Establish rapport and demonstrate your interest in the interviewee's comments. Take this form with you and ask all the questions on the worksheet. (Question #15 is for you to answer.) Use the space provided for jotting down notes. If you have not finished the interview within the time period you had requested, thank the person for helping you by saying, "I said I would only take 30 minutes of your time. I know how busy you are." Extend the time only if the person you are interviewing encourages you to do so. Request a business card before leaving.

FOLLOW-UP

Typewrite or handwrite a **short thank you note within a day or two after your interview**. **Keep the interview information on file** for future reference – the person may be an important contact for you later.

ASSIGNMENT

After you have performed the informational interview you will need to type the responses to the interview questions using **complete sentences**.

1. Go to www.csusm.edu/careers
2. Click on GEL 101 Students in the Navigation Bar
3. Click on GEL 101 Informational Interview Assignment
4. Type the responses to each of the questions, **THEN PRINT OUT A HARD COPY!** (There is always a possibility for lost assignments.)
5. From the File menu, select "Save As" and save the assignment to your desktop
6. Email the assignment as an attachment to yourself AND your Career Module instructor
7. Before closing the assignment, print out a hard copy for your records. (Always be prepared for technical glitches.)