



MSU Law Career Services Office

Informational Interview Guide

DEFINITION

- Informational interviewing is a chance to network and build professional relationships
- An informational interview is:
 - An opportunity to discover information about someone's career path
 - An in-person meeting or phone call with a professional
 - A simple, focused conversation
 - Information gathering
- An informational interview is NOT:
 - A job interview in disguise
 - About you

NOTE: Informational interviews are great for those who do not like large networking events or are introverted.

ARRANGE THE MEETING

- Find a potential professional to interview by using:
 - Your current contacts
 - Referrals from faculty, staff, and previous employers
 - MSU Law and MSU Alumni Network on LinkedIn
 - Networking events
 - State bar directories
- Ask for the interview in-person, by telephone, by mail, or by email, but always:
 - Introduce yourself as a law student
 - Mention how you found him/her
 - Say why you are interested in his/her practice area
 - Ask if the professional has time to do an informational interview
 - Let the professional know what topics you will discuss during your time together
- If the professional will not meet with you, simply thank him/her and do not force the issue
 - Do not take it personally if the professional will not meet with you, he/she may be very busy

NOTE: The informational interview is not intended to result in a job so do not ask for employment nor should you send your resume to the professional, unless requested.

PREPARE

- Research the practice area and review the professional's biography and social media profiles
- Prepare questions to ask such as:
 - What do you like/find challenging about your job?
 - What skills do you think are important for your field?
 - What steps in your career led you to your position?
 - Are there any other people I should speak with or any other resources I should explore?

- Do not ask the professional about information that you can find the answer to online

NOTE: You requested this meeting, so you must be prepared to ask questions.

ATTEND

- Wear appropriate business clothing and bring a pen and pad of paper to take notes
- Arrive early and turn your phone off or on silent
- Bring your resume, but don't offer your resume unless the professional requests it
- Offer to pay for coffee or lunch
- Thank the professional for taking time out of his/her busy schedule to meet with you

NOTE: Don't keep asking questions beyond the agreed-upon ending time; don't overstay your welcome.

FOLLOW UP

- Within 24 hours, send a thank you note or email
- Reach out to any contacts who were recommended; this will expand your network even further and is expected by the professional whom you met
 - Mention the referral source and then send an update to the referral source about the conversation

NOTE: Now this person is part of your professional network, so continue to nurture the relationship.

SAMPLE EMAIL REQUEST FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Dear Mr. Smith:

I was referred to you by Mona Leeza, with Red, White & Blue PLC. I am a second year law student at Michigan State University College of Law. Ms. Leeza recommended you as a contact because of your corporate transactions and commercial litigation experience. I have a strong interest and some experience in business law and corporate practice. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you learn about your practice experience.

Are you available for a 20-minute meeting at The Coffee Shop sometime next week? I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Legal N. Eagle
Second Year Student
Michigan State University College of Law
517-123-4567