One activity extremely helpful toward the college major and/or career decision-making process is the **Informational Interview**.

*Informational interviewing can help you:*

- Determine which career paths do and do not meet your personal criteria for success.
- Define what specific competencies are most critical for achieving our career aspirations.
- Decide which career competencies you may need to develop so you can begin to focus on acquiring that education or training while in college.
- Look at the different ways successful people have met their competency development and experience needs.
- Identify which of your current strengths make you the most marketable within your preferred career path.
- Start building professional presence as you build a network of contacts in your chosen field. These contacts are a crucial element as you begin to market your competencies and experience.

This packet contains a simple **5 PHASE process** that allows you to experience stress free **Informational Interviewing**. Included is a complete informational interview template of what to say and when to say it.

**The 5 steps are:**

1. **The Introduction**: Finding potential interviewees, scheduling an informational interview, state your purpose and establish rapport.
2. **Job Content**: Results Expected, Relationships, key Decisions, Communications Required, Future Growth Possibilities.
3. **Important Qualifications**: Competencies, Experiences, Training
4. **Key Events**: Successes, Failures, High and Low Points, Values Met or Missed
5. **Closure**
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW FORM

PHASE 1: OPENING
(Statement of Purpose, Establishing Rapport)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCUSSION TOPICS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>(complete during the interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for agreeing to talk with.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose**
As you know, I’m not here looking for any specific employment opportunities. My purpose is longer range. I’ve been doing some extensive career planning recently…and…

- After a lot of analysis I’ve concluded a career path similar to yours would probably be very productive and rewarding…especially for someone with my personal values and goals. (Be prepared to be asked what your values and goals are. This can be a good way to establish rapport and show you have done some real homework. However, keep your response brief since you’re there to learn about the interviewee.)
- I’m looking at how I can best prepare myself for a similar career path.
- You’ve been recommended (by specific name/names, if possible) as someone who is highly regarded in this field…and who has a lot of expertise that I could benefit earning from.
- I appreciate your seeing me and I’ve done some homework on the questions to make the best use of our time. (This prepares the individual for the fact that you will be using and taking notes.)

*Use the above only as a general guideline and add any other questions/comments you feel are appropriate to the specific situation/local environment.*)
### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### Results Expected
- What are the most important results expected from you in this job?

#### Relationships
- What are the key relationships?
  - Superiors?
  - Peers?
  - People who report to you (if any?)
  - Internal and external customers?
  - Suppliers/vendors whose output you rely upon?
  - What does each expect from you?
  - What do you expect from them?
  - What problems do you encounter and how do you resolve them?
  - Etc.

#### Key Decisions
- What are the most important decisions you need to make?
- Who else is involved in making them with you?
- Who approves them?
- What is your typical process or method for making decisions and getting them approved?

### NOTES
(complete during the interview).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications Required</strong></td>
<td>(complete during the interview)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • What are the most important communications required in this job?  
  • Upward?  
  • Within the organization?  
  • Downward?  
  • Within teams?  
  • With customers/clients? | |
| • What process or method do you use to assure you are communicating sufficiently?  
  • Are they any special cross-functional, cross-business, or cross-cultural/global communication challenges? | |
| **Future Growth Possibilities** | |
| What’s next? | |
| What sort of jobs/challenges would you like to take on after this job? | |
| What will you have to do to prepare yourself? | |
| What are your long-range career goals? | |
| What else do you want to do before you retire? | |
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW FORM

PHASE 3: IMPORTANT QUALIFICATIONS
(Competencies, Experiences, Training)

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Competencies

- What do you see as the most important competencies or skills required for success in this job/career or path?
  - Technical?
  - Functional?
  - Leadership?
  - Team-oriented?
  - Others?

Experiences

- Looking back over your career, are there any specific experiences or challenges that stand out as very important in preparing you for success in this work?
  - On the job?
  - Off the job?
  - Hobbies?
  - Other

Training

- What type of training do you feel is most important in order to qualify for a career path like yours?
  Degrees or formal certifications required or merely desired?
  Functional/Technical training?
  Leadership training?
  Other?
DISCUSSION TOPICS

**Successes**
- What are the one or two successes you are most proud of (either in this or an earlier job)?
- What was our personal contribution to making it successful?
- What problems/barriers did you encounter?
- What did you do to overcome the problems?

**Failures**
- What were your one or two most important failures?
- What happened?
- What did you learn from them?

**High and Low Points**
- Were there any other particularly significant high or low points in your career to date that we haven’t talked about?
- What did you learn from them?

**Values**
- What are the things you value most in life?
- Has this job/career path helped you express those values?
- What one thing would do differently as you look back?
## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW FORM

### PHASE 5: CLOSURE

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### DISCUSSION TOPICS

**Missed Questions**

I’ve been asking a lot of questions.

- Is there anything you think I should know that I didn’t ask about or we haven’t covered?

**Thanks and Wrap-up**

- This has really been very informative.
- I’ve learned a great deal here that will be very helpful in my future career planning.
- I’m very grateful to you (specific name) for agreeing to meet with me!
- **SEND A HANDWRITTEN THANK YOU NOTE!**

### NOTES

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RESOURCES FOR FINDING INTERVIEWEES

Current managers, supervisors and co-workers.
- Keep in mind that, usually, each person you meet in the workplace knows a lot of other people that can benefit and become a part of your career search network; people that you might never meet without an introduction.
- Of course, choose only those colleagues whom you don’t mind knowing about your career search.

Social media.
- Be sure to create and fully develop your professional presence on LinkedIn. Keep your profile up to date especially career related experience, education and skill set.
- Have a goal of making 500+ connections to those in fields that are related to your interests. (Some employers won’t even look at your profile is you haven’t reached the 500+ level!)
- Be aware of what you are putting out in all social media in the form of pictures and comments that can shed a poor light on your character and job qualifications. Avoid online arguments, foul language, and strong statements regarding politics, religion, and any slurs against an individual or group.

Networking Events
- Events are a great way to meet people who are working in your fields of interest. You never know who you might meet and what opportunities can surface from a friendly conversation.
- Be sure to join UK’s alumni association! Employers love to hire alumni and UK alum are everywhere! There are UK Alumni chapters all over the world.

Those you are already interviewing.
- At the end of any informational interview, be sure to ask the person you are interviewing if they can refer you to someone else who might be willing to participate in an informational interview with you. Also, ask this person if they can recommend any resources for learning more about the career path you’re discussing.

- Friends and Friends of friends
- Family connections
- Students organizations/clubs
- Neighbors
- Religious/Spiritual organizations
- Classmates
- Faculty and Staff