



# Informational Interviewing Checklist

**Did you see the [Networking 101 worksheet](#)? If not, go there first to learn:**

1. Who you need in your network and why,
2. How to find people you need, introduce yourself, and request a meeting.

**After setting up an informational interview, here are your next steps!**

## Informational Interview Checklist

- 1 You sent a message requesting a 15–45-minute meeting
- 2 You confirm a date, time, location/virtual link to meet
- 3 Look up 3+ facts about their company and 1+ fact from the person's LinkedIn profile
- 4 Make a list of 5+ questions you want to ask (see page 2)
- 5 \*Optional: Update your resume and bring a few printed copies ([see samples here](#))
- 6 Bring your list and something to take notes on – it's okay to write while they share!
- 7 Introduce yourself (see sample elevator pitch on [Networking 101 worksheet](#))
- 8 Take the lead asking questions – this is your time to get to know them
- 9 Ask if there's another person they'd be willing to introduce you to or recommend
- 10 Send a follow up thank you email, message, or card within a week

## Feeling Anxious?

This type of networking is normal for a U.S. context, *and* it's still a rigged game with hidden rules – it's not fair. Students often say things like "I'm afraid of asking too much," or "I'm being a burden." It's vulnerable to talk with someone you don't know, and you might get mixed reactions or even ghosted! Networking doesn't need to be your favorite thing. It's all part of the process, take it one step at a time.

### Here are a few insights from liberal arts students, staff, and alum:

*One tip I liked is that **networking isn't about being interestING – it's about being interestED.** I put on my curious researcher hat, pretended to gather intel for a "character in my book who was exploring publishing careers – what would they want to know?" It took the pressure off.*

*I'm first gen and always thought networking was "can you give me a job?" at fairs. I felt way better when I remembered it's just people and getting to know them. I practiced offering a few ways they could help me; those that got back to me **were excited to talk about themselves!** They're adults who consented to helping! **It takes practice and will get easier.***

*I wanted to learn about careers in tech, but I was worried about talking to some stuffy dude who wouldn't get me. **I went to the Pride @ Work Panel and learned about a company with an LGBTQIA+ Employee Resource Group (ERG).** I contacted someone who leads it, and it was great to have real stories from them.*

***After a year of applying to 100+ jobs,** I was desperate and needed to try something else. I went to a fair and reached out to 3 people in sports media; 2 became mentors and 2 recruiters. **It was energizing talking with a person, not a rejection email.** Within a month, I had offers. This isn't everyone's experience, but **I wish I'd started while I was still in college.** I would've saved myself so much time.*

## Informational interviews will help you build your network, and...

Make an informed career decision and explore possible career paths of interest.

Determine which skills you have or need to gain to stand out in applications.

Gain information you won't find on the internet that's local, specific, and up to date.

Get a sense of a "day in the life" and career trajectories to focus your goals.

### Sample Questions for the 3 Network Roles

<p><b>Mentor</b> <i>People with work experience you're interested in, faculty, advisors, coaches.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did you view this career before you got into it? Is your view different now?</li><li>• How prepared did you feel for this career before you entered it? Any advice?</li><li>• What's your education background? Is that the norm, and is a BA degree enough?</li><li>• What is a day or week in the life here? What do you wish it was, and why?</li><li>• What interests you most about your job and what do you find most rewarding?</li><li>• What are major frustrations, pressures, or anxieties you have experienced in this field? What were some of the influencing factors for that, if you want to share?</li><li>• How do your identities or lived experience impact your experience in this career?</li><li>• What challenges do you notice new people have transitioning into this field?</li><li>• How does your career affect your general lifestyle?</li><li>• How does someone get started in this field; what skills stand out, any advice?</li><li>• Looking at my resume and skills, what roles would I be qualified for? Any gaps?</li></ul>
<p><b>Link</b> <i>People who are connected to a company or person you want to meet.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why did you decide to work here? How did it match or change your expectations?</li><li>• Do you offer any internships or volunteer opportunities here? How do you apply?</li><li>• How do most people get positions here, especially as an outsider or new graduate?</li><li>• Any advice for how to stand out; skills or values to emphasize, or how to connect?</li><li>• What methods do you use at your company to post employment opportunities?</li><li>• Can you suggest anyone else I get in contact with for additional information?</li></ul>
<p><b>Hiring Official</b> <i>Recruiters, HR professionals, managers hiring for a job.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In what ways does your company proactively support diversity, equity, &amp; inclusion?</li><li>• Can you tell me about a DEI issue your company faced? How did you respond?</li><li>• Do you have typical hiring cycles for entry-level positions in [your interest area]?</li><li>• What type of training, management and professional development programs or onboarding does this organization offer?</li><li>• What is the turnover rate for X role? How long has it existed on this team, and why was it created? Any application advice?</li><li>• What are some upcoming projects or challenges your team is facing, and how would this role contribute? What are some strengths and gaps on your team?</li><li>• How have you adapted projects based on previous interns' interests?</li><li>• What is the company "culture" and work environment like here?</li><li>• How are the salary bands determined, and what opportunities for promotion exist?</li><li>• Is promotion generally earned with internal or external candidates?</li><li>• How are team members given appreciation or feedback and vice versa?</li></ul>

For more liberal arts career preparation resources, [visit this website](#).