

Professional Informational Interviewing

Why?

- 1) To obtain first-hand information on current conditions within your area of interest, from people who are involved in the field.
- 2) To make contacts with people who share your occupational interests.
- 3) To build your experience and self-confidence in interviewing with professionals in a professional setting.
- 4) To discover if you really are interested in a particular occupation before you choose a major or get hired in that specific line of work.



How?

- 1) Get a list of jobs about which you wish to do this personal kind of research. (CDC resources for self-awareness exploration: Self-Directed Search; My Plan; FOCUS 2)
- 2) Assemble your contact list of people currently working in those specific areas. (Talk to parents, friends, acquaintances; look through the Alumni list in the CDC) Prepare to meet with several people in each field to get a non-biased point of view.
- 3) Contact each person by phone and tell them you are a Samford student seeking information in order to make informed decisions about choosing a major/future career. (Emphasize that you are not looking for a job!)
- 4) Ask to meet with them in their office for a twenty to thirty minute interview at their convenience. (Sometimes an on-site meeting is impossible due to scheduling conflicts. It would be appropriate to ask if you could question the person over the phone for a shorter time period at his/her convenience. Email is also an accepted form of information sharing.)
- 5) If they cannot comply with this request, ask if they could refer you to someone in the same line of work who may.
- 6) If an interview time and date are agreed upon, do research on that company and position before the meeting. (Visit the company website. CDC resource for information: CDC Research Library)
- 7) Be sure that you stick to the mutually agreed upon time limit. (Acknowledge that their time is valuable)
- 8) Write a thank you note immediately after the interview to express your appreciation.
- 9) Keep a written record of who you talked to and the information you received.

What? Possible Questions:

1. How did you decide to work in this field?
2. Describe your career path.
3. What did you major in?
4. What is a typical workday like?
5. What skills do you use?
6. What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?
7. What is the greatest challenge of your job?
8. What personality traits are important for this field?
9. What is the job outlook for this field?
10. What are the major issues in your field?
11. What were your most positive career decisions?
12. What would you have done differently?
13. What is a typical starting salary and earning potential?
14. What advice would you give someone like me interested in this field? How do people enter this field?
15. Is there someone else you could recommend for me to talk to about this field? When I contact them, may I use your name?
16. Ask what you want to know!