

# Informational Interview Tips

## Before the Meeting

- Research the contact, company, or industry to be as prepared as possible.
- Develop an understanding of the industry and any current events in that industry to help facilitate conversation.
- Be specific about the information you are hoping to inquire about, the time, medium, or location that you are comfortable with using for the potential meeting.
- For the initial meeting, the amount of time requested should not exceed 30 minutes, unless both the contact and you are comfortable with more time.
- Carefully select your questions (no questions about salary, company benefits, or asking for a job, etc.).
- Be prompt and respond to any emails within the day it was received. Do not be late to a meeting and be respectful of the time requested.
- Practice your statements (alone, with a friend, or with a career coach).



## During and After the Meeting

- Help facilitate, not monopolize the conversation.
- Express your genuine enthusiasm and interest in the industry and your field.
- Follow up and express thanks (through an e-mail or hand-written card)!
- Keep the connection open by reaching out regularly.

## Informational Interview Template

In his book, *The 2-Hour Job Search*, Steve Dalton explains his method to an effective networking email that is sure to yield a response.

The "5-Point E-mail" includes the following:

- 100 words or less
- No mention of jobs (either in the subject line or the email body)
- Your connection goes first (Carleton, an acquaintance in common, etc.)
- Generalize your interest
- Maintain control of the follow-up

Here is a Carleton specific example:

**SUBJECT: Carleton History Major Seeking Your Advice**

Dear Ms. Penguin,

My name is Carl North, and I'm a second-year history major at Carleton College. I found your information using the Carleton Alumni Directory. May I have 30 minutes of your time to ask you about your experience at This Amazing Company? I'm trying to learn more about highlighting my Carleton liberal arts degree during the job search process in tech fields. Your insights would be very helpful.

If you are available to meet, I've included my availability for the next two weeks below for your convenience. If we're unable to connect this week, I'll follow up next week with updated availability.

[List Availability]

Thank you for your time,  
Carl

\*Be sure to follow up the following week, if you haven't heard anything. After two emails, this person can likely be crossed off your list.

