



HERLEAD

THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW: ADVICE AND TIPS FROM HERLEAD FELLOWS

So you're interested in a school, a degree, a career, or an industry. You've done all the Google research. You've read all the forums. You're at the point where making an informed next step requires the insight and feedback of a face-to-face meeting. In other words, an informational interview.

How can you get the most out of your meeting? The HERlead Fellows are here to help you prepare thoughtful, productive questions.

STEP

1

GET TO KNOW YOUR INTERVIEWEE

Keep up that research! Learn as much as you can about the person/organization/business so you are well-acquainted with the information and topics presented to you during the interview.

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

The key to developing good questions for an informational interview, first and foremost, is knowing your interviewee. Do some research on their individual background and experiences. Knowing the qualifications of your interviewee can help you develop unique questions that can lead to insightful answers. There is always a lot to learn from another's experiences, so don't pass up your chance to gain intimate advice!

ALLIE N., 2016 FELLOW

My advice would be to do your due diligence on the organization and come prepared for your interview with a specific question about the aspect of the organization that interests you most — a specific initiative they run, for example. This will not only show your interviewer that you're both thorough and invested in the organization, but will also give you the opportunity to speak more to your own interests and strengths.

ALISHA Z., 2015 FELLOW



STEP

2

INTRODUCE
YOURSELF
(BRIEFLY!)

Prepare a short introduction of yourself and your goals for the interview. Include a brief overview of both yourself and your education/work experience, and share this at the beginning of the interview.

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

STEP

3

ALLOW THEM TO
GIVE AN OVERVIEW
OF THEIR CAREER

Even if you did your research, ask, “How did you begin your career?”

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

STEP

4

DIVE INTO SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS
(FOR ANSWERS YOU
CAN'T GOOGLE!)

You know what you want to get out of the interview, so be efficient with your questions, and remember, the interviewee wants to help you.

Examples:

- When/how did you realize this career path was right for you?
- What is your work environment like?
- What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?
- What do you recommend I do next to advance myself in this field?

ALLIE N., 2016 FELLOW

My biggest advice is to make the interview relaxed and conversational. I get the most information from someone when we are both comfortable and relaxed. It is not a job interview, so I am not acting super poised and scripted.

Example:

- What would you tell your 18-year-old self if you could go back in time?

NIA R., 2017 FELLOW

STEP

4

DIVE INTO SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS
(FOR ANSWERS YOU
CAN'T GOOGLE!)



I enjoy asking hypothetical questions because they provide tangible (and subtle) ways to get advice from someone. I'm also a fan of stories, and these questions present the person with a chance to talk about themselves and their experiences, which can help you forge a connection.

Example:

- Is there anything you would have done differently while applying for or beginning your career here?

AMY W., 2016 FELLOW

Plan open-ended questions beforehand. Don't be afraid to ask about anything you're curious or confused about.

Examples:

- What steps should I take to prepare to enter this field?
- How do you see this job/position/field changing in the next 10 years?
- Are there any organizations or businesses that I can look into to further my experience in this field?

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

STEP

5

TAP INTO
NETWORKS

Consider asking for referrals to help continue your networking!

ALLIE N., 2016 FELLOW

Ask for names of other people to meet or talk to so you can gain different perspectives.

Examples:

- Do you have any recommendations of other people I should speak with in this field?
- What publications would you recommend that I read in order to stay informed on developments in this field?

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

STEP

6

THANK THEM FOR
HIS/HER TIME

Always thank your interviewer for his or her time.

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

STEP

7

FOLLOW UP

Make sure to follow up with the interviewer. Keep in touch with the person, and let him or her know that you followed up on their advice. Update them on how things are going as a result. The relationship you build with your interviewer could become an integral part of your network.

ANGELINA Q., 2018 FELLOW

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? PLEASE EMAIL HERLEAD@VITALVOICES.ORG.