

## Guide to a Successful Informational Interview or Job Shadow

When conducting an informational interview, job shadow/worksite visit or any career conversation, it is important to prepare in advance and be ready to explore topics that allow you to gain valuable information and insights on careers, industry trends, employer expectations, and the background of professionals with whom you will interact. Use this guide to focus your conversation on the areas that are most important to you.

Remember, this is a professional experience. Be on time. Dress appropriately. Ask many questions and be prepared to talk about yourself and your interests.

### Organization and Career Information

- Background on the business visited including number of employees, services provided, history etc.
- What are the various jobs available in this field?
- What are the typical entry-level jobs and titles in this career? What is the expected salary range?
- Do you predict job growth in this field?
- What is the average length of time that people stay in this position?
- Are the work hours consistent? Are there busy seasons?

### Interviewee's Job

- Can you describe a typical workday?
- What do you find most interesting (or least interesting) about your position?
- How would you describe your leadership style? Your management style?
- Could you give me a few examples of challenges you have faced at work?
- What does success look like to you? What are a few examples of successes that you have had in the workplace?
- What personal characteristics and attributes do you think are most desirable in new hires or employees?
- What skills are most valued in this field? What values or personal attributes do you believe are necessary for individuals to be successful in this profession?
- Do you primarily work independently or with teams?
- Do you have any advice for future professionals in the field?

### Interviewee's Career Path

- What jobs and experience led you to your current position?
- What were the keys to your career advancement?
- What is your educational background? What courses best prepared you for this position?
- If you were entering this career today, would you change your preparation in any way?
- If you were starting your career over again, would you do the same thing? Why or why not?

### Career Preparation

- What is your educational background? What is the educational requirement for this career?
- Are there any certifications or specific job experience required?
- What college activities helped you to gain the skills necessary for this field?
- Are there advancement opportunities in this field?
- What professional journals or organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- Who do you look to as leaders/experts in your field?

### Advice and Other Questions

- Try to obtain new names of professionals to contact. Ask your interviewee if they can suggest others that might be helpful for additional informational interviews or job shadowing. Is there anyone else that you can recommend that I speak with?
- Write a thank you email or note as soon as possible. Mention some specifics from your visit that you found particularly interesting or helpful.
- What other experiences do you recommend I have or take advantage of while in college?