

Informational Interviews

What is an Informational Interview*?

A 20–30-minute informal conversation with an industry professional to gain insider knowledge about a role, career, company, or industry — **not to ask for a job**, but to gather information and build your professional network.

Identify Industry Professionals

- **Start** from someone in your target industry who you already know
- **Ask** friends, coworkers, or instructors to refer you to industry professionals
- **Reach out** through LinkedIn, email, or phone (see the Initiating Script at the end)

Before The Interview

- **Research** the company, industry, and the person's background (LinkedIn, company website, Google)
- **Tailor** your questions to the professional's role and your career goals
- **Set up** in person, online, or phone — test your tech in advance if it is a virtual meeting
- **Prepare** 8–10 questions that fit the person's profession and your goals

During The Interview

- **Arrive or log on** 10–15 minutes early
- **Introduce yourself** and initiate the conversation
- **Ask questions**, listen attentively, and take notes
- **Guide the conversation** with your prepared questions
- **Wrap up** at the agreed time even if questions remain
- **Do NOT ask for a job!**
- **Ask:** "Do you have any recommendations on other industry professionals I could speak to?"
- **Ask for** a LinkedIn connection or business card

After The Interview

- **Send** a thank-you email within 24–48 hours
- **Connect** with the professional on LinkedIn and follow their company
- **Nurture** the relationship over time
- **Update** the professional on your career progress

Informational Interview Initiating Script

Subject: Quick Question About Your [Target Career] in [Field]

Hi [First Name],

My name is [Your Name] and I am a [student/recent graduate] at BCIT in [program]. I came across your profile through [LinkedIn / mutual connection] and I admire your work in [field/company].

I would love to set up a 20-minute virtual coffee chat to learn about your career path and gain your perspective on [industry]. I know your time is valuable. I am happy to work around your schedule.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I can be reached at [email] or [LinkedIn URL] or [Phone].

[Your Name]

Sample Questions

Choose 8–10 questions that fit the person's role and your goals. Be flexible and let the conversation flow naturally.

CAREER PATH

- › How would you describe your career journey up to where you are today?
- › What types of roles or positions should new graduates at BCIT target?
- › Are there employers or sectors in the industry that are often overlooked by new graduates?
- › Are there courses, certifications, or work experiences you would recommend?
- › Do you have employers or industry professionals in mind for me to approach?

COMPANY KNOWLEDGE

- › What does your workplace culture and management style look like?
- › What made you choose this company — and what makes you stay?
- › What kind of on-boarding and training process is offered for new hires?
- › Does the company offer mentorship, coaching, or internal promotion opportunities?
- › What are the key areas of growth or strategic priorities for your company currently?

INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

- › Which associations, conferences, or online communities do you recommend for staying connected?
- › How do you see AI impacting and influencing the industry in the next three to five years?
- › Are there key tools, platforms, or AI applications reshaping how work gets done in this field?
- › Where do you see the most growth or hiring activity in the industry over the next 1–2 years?
- › What skills or attributes do the most successful employees in this field consistently demonstrate?

CLOSING (ALWAYS ASK)

- › Do you have any recommendations of whom I should speak with next?
- › Is there anything you wish you had known at the beginning of your career?

Career Tips**

Make the best of LinkedIn: Use LinkedIn to find 2nd-degree connections, a warm intro doubles your response rate.

Email Subject Line Matters: Try: 'Quick Question About Your Career Path', clear and low-pressure.

Virtual/Online Etiquette: Test audio + camera, find a tidy and clean background, look into the camera when speaking.

Technology in Your Field: Ask: 'What tech tools or platforms are changing how your team works?'

AI as a Tool: After your personal efforts, explore with AI to find new discoveries about the field or company.

*Informational Interview is also called coffee chat or career chat.

For **more detailed guidance on building your LinkedIn profile and networking effectively, check our **LinkedIn Basics and Beyond** E-learning workshop on the Event Calendar, or connect with a Career Specialist (bcitsa.ca/career-services).