



# Public Health

## GRADUATE CAREER SERVICES

### Informational Interviews

Conducting informational interviews is an effective tool used to gain insight into your field from professionals currently working for organizations or in positions that you aspire to, while simultaneously building your network.

#### BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

**Identify individuals within the top ten organizations that you have researched and selected to pursue for your job search. Utilize the following to find individuals to interview:**

- LinkedIn (GW Alumni Association, Filtered Connections, Company Sites)
- Faculty, Colleagues, Family, Friends
- Previous Supervisors (Practicum, Internships, Full and Part-Time Jobs)

**Request the interview by sending a professional written email or social media message**

- Provide context for your connection (where you met, commonality you share, a brief professional introduction).
- Include the purpose of the meeting and time requested.
- Provide your contact information for an availability response.

#### Example Meeting Request:

*Dear Mr. Dresden,*

*It was a pleasure meeting you at the APHA conference last week. I would love to learn a little more about your role as an epidemiologist at the National Cancer Institute. Do you have 20 minutes in the next week or so to continue our conversation about your position at NCI? Please let me know if there is a date or time that works best for you. You can reach me at my personal email address, [janesmith@gmail.com](mailto:janesmith@gmail.com)*

*Best,*

*Jane Simmons*

**Be sure to be prepared for your informational interview**

- Prepare a list of questions to ask
- Polish up your resume in case they request a copy
- Practice answering a few standard interview questions
  - While informational interviews are not meant to serve as job interviews sometimes the conversation moves in that direction. Questions may include:
    - What do you know about the organization?
    - Why are you interested in this role?
    - What is your preferred supervisory style?
    - What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

#### DURING THE INTERVIEW

- You are the interviewer. Be sure that you lead the conversation.
- Restate why you requested the meeting and what you are hoping to learn.
- Be efficient with your time and the interviewee's time and adhere to the amount of time you requested.

- Do not ask for a job, however, always be prepared to discuss your resume and qualifications.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are some short and long-term goals of the organization?
- Can you describe a typical day in your position?
- What is a typical career path within the organization?
- What skills are most valuable in your role/organization?
- How did you find this position?
- Is there anyone else that you would recommend that I meet with to learn more about this field? **(last question)**

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a thank you note including something that you learned from the meeting within 24 hours.
- Contact referrals provided during the meeting no later than 48 hours after the meeting.
- Begin taking the suggested actions as soon as possible to keep your momentum going.
- Keep in contact with each professional connection you interview.
  - Update them on notable progress.
  - Connect with them on LinkedIn and like/comment on posts.
  - Send seasonal greetings during transition periods (New Year, Beginning of Summer, etc.).

### Example Thank You Note:

*Dear Mr. Gleeb,*

*It was a pleasure meeting with you this morning. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me for the program manager position at Zero to Three. It was wonderful to learn about the innovative work the organization is doing around screen time recommendations for toddlers. I also thoroughly enjoyed our discussion about Game of Thrones. I hope you have a wonderful weekend.*

*Warm Regards,  
Josh Mendel*