

Getting Informational Interviews

WHAT IS AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

- A meeting to learn about someone's career and get their perspective on an industry, company, or job function.
- It is not a job interview nor the place to ask for a position; focus on gaining insight, advice, and feedback.
- Done well, it lets others get to know you, leads to new contacts, and increases the chances you get referred for an open position (See: ["3-Step Informational Interviews"](#)).

WHO SHOULD YOU TALK TO?

- Anyone working in a role you have a short-term or long-term interest in.
- Anyone working for a company you'd like to work for, regardless of their role; they can tell you about company culture and introduce you to a colleague whose role is closer to what you're seeking.
- People in junior roles: they have good information on how they got hired and may have more time to spare.
- Senior professionals: they usually hire people (and interact with other hiring managers) and have insight into valued skills and experience.

HOW DO YOU FIND PEOPLE TO TALK TO?

- Start with your own network: ask everyone you know (including faculty) for contacts they might have in your target industry or job function, and whether they'd be willing to introduce you or pass along their contact's email.
- Search for ENG alumni who've offered to do informational interviews in BU Connects, Boston University's exclusive networking site for students, Alumni, faculty and staff.
- Search LinkedIn for target employers; you can filter results by college to find BU Alumni.

HOW DO YOU ASK TO MEET?

- Email is best for first contact. Remember the worst that can happen is they say "no" or simply don't reply (See: ["How to Write a Cold Email"](#) for more tips!)
- Explain how you found them. LinkedIn research? A referral?
- Be clear in your request. If they think it's a job inquiry, they may push you to HR (or ignore you).
- Ask for help! People like knowing they're making a difference.
- Make it easy. Assure them it will be brief and let them choose the time and location or medium. Meeting in person is best, but online meeting platforms like Zoom are now part of the norm.

Dear Dr. Cheung:

I am a Biomedical Engineering student exploring careers in the drug delivery field. While researching Getwell Pharmaceuticals on LinkedIn, I came across your profile. I would love to learn more about what you do and what advice you might have for someone like me looking to follow a similar career path. Can we meet for an informational interview at a time and place of your choosing? I understand how busy you are and won't take more than 30 minutes of your time.

*Sincerely,
Leslie Peters*

Dear Ms. Jones:

Mr. Jack Smith suggested I reach out to you. I am a Mechanical Engineering student at Boston University researching career paths in automated manufacturing. Considering your expertise in this field, I could really use your help learning more about it. Would you be available for an informational interview at a time and place convenient for you? It shouldn't take more than 30 minutes.

*Best regards,
Dakota Greene*