

*As you connect with alumni and professionals, keep this in mind:
Confidently ask for information, advice, and referrals. Do not ask for a job.*

1. Start with friends, parents, professors, alumni, etc. While these people may not have job openings in your area of interest, they do have important resources (information, advice, and networks) relevant to your job search.
2. Be prepared. Research the person, the company, and make a list of questions before the meeting.
3. Make a positive and professional first impression (show up early, dress professionally, take notes).
4. Send a thank you letter after an interview.
5. Add them on LinkedIn.
6. Follow up on any advice or referrals that you receive and give them updates on how it went.

Formulating Questions

*You are the interviewer. Do the prep work to make sure you ask relevant questions.
Here are some examples to work off of:*

Career Path

- How did you decide what you wanted to do?
- What was your career path?
- How did you secure this particular job? or How do most people enter this career field?
- What types of internships would you recommend for this field and how does one secure them?

Responsibilities

- Could you describe a typical day?
- What are your responsibilities?
- What do you find most enjoyable?
- What parts of your job do you find challenging?
- What are the job duties/titles of your co-workers?

Work Environment

- How would you describe your work environment?
- Why do people stay/leave this field/role?

Industry

- What is the employment outlook in this field?
- Who are the current leaders in this field?

Training and Preparation

- What type of additional skills and knowledge are important to this role?
- What major/classes/other preparation would you recommend for someone who wants to advance in this field?
- Do you have any suggestions regarding specific experiences I should seek for improvement?

Closing Questions

- Any additional advice you may have for someone interested in this field?
- Do you know of other professionals with whom I might speak with in this field?
- Would you be willing to look over my résumé?

Reaching Out: Example Message

“Hello [Their Name],

I hope that you are doing well. I am a [Grade Level + Major] at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul. I would like to learn more about career paths, tips, and advice from professionals in the [Industry] field. I found you through our Career Communities portal and would love to learn more about what you do. Do you have 20 – 30 minutes in the next week or two to connect with me at a local coffee shop or via Zoom?

Thank you for considering, [Your Name]”