



Career Research Interview Outline

I am interested in learning more about this specific career area: _____

Describe both the role and the industry, such as "Marketing Specialist at a University". If you're not clear on which career roles or industries are appealing to you, please complete CareerWow! Modules 2, 3, 4, and / or 5 for ideas.

This is a specialist I would like to interview: _____

Find someone working in a role and industry that are closely aligned to the career area that interests you. Resources: LinkedIn (input keywords, such as 'X specialist, Y industry', to review profiles); contact someone in a department that interests at your company; research a professional association specializing in your desired career area, and ask the membership chair for suggestions. Request:

- "I'm conducting career research, and your work is interesting to me. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your career, things like how you got into your work, and what you like most about it. Could we schedule a brief conversation?"

When you've linked up a specialist, follow this career research interview agenda:

- **Introduce yourself and your purpose**
- My name is YOUR NAME, and I'm conducting some career research. Currently I work in CURRENT SPECIALTY, and I'm researching careers that may be a better match for my talents and interests. Your work is intriguing to me, and I'd like to learn more about it. I have between 5 and 10 questions I'd like to ask you about your work. It should take between 15 and 30 minutes. Would it be okay if I take notes about what you tell me?
- **Ask enlightening, fun-to-answer questions**
- How did you get into this career?
- What do you like about it, and what are the downsides?
- What does a typical day or week look like for you?
- What skills or talents help you succeed in your work?
- What sort of training is helpful?
- How do people enter this line of work?
- What are typical pay ranges for entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level experience?
- Who else do you respect in this line of work that I should also interview?
- If I have further questions about your work in the future, may I contact you again?
- **After the interview, send a thank you note, and follow up with anyone to whom you've been referred**
- Sample note: "Dear THEIR NAME, Thank you for taking the time to share information about your career. It was extremely interesting, and will be helpful in my career planning. Thank you also for your suggestion to interview REFERRAL NAME. I look forward to talking with him in the near future. If I can ever return a favor, please let me know. Sincerely, YOUR NAME."

Remember, the purpose of a career research interview is to gather helpful information, not to try and land a job (you can work on that after you decide on a career focus that fits you!) Use effective listening skills: Focus on the specialist; he / she should be talking 75% or more of the time. Maintain eye contact, and rephrase / repeat key information to convey your understanding.