

Guidelines for an Informational Interview with an Alumni Mentor

The following are some guidelines for informational interviews:

- Put “Stockton Alumni Career Network” in the subject heading of an email, if you are contacting them via email.
- Ask for a specific amount of time – either a half-hour or an hour is appropriate – but be willing to accept the amount of time they can give you. If you are contacting the mentor by phone, be prepared to go ahead with the interview right then, if the mentor is free at that time.
- Beforehand, learn as much as you can about the organization.
- Write down the questions that you wish to ask (see below for Sample Questions to Ask).
- Be able to identify what you are looking for from them – knowledge of the field or of specific types of jobs, leads on where to search for jobs, suggestions on how to acquire experience that would help you land a job in their field, etc.
- Plan to take notes. There may be names, phone numbers or other information that you’ll want to remember.
- For an in-person interview, dress as you would for a regular job interview. Because as much as 80 percent of all jobs are never advertised, you should be prepared to make a good impression and be remembered by the employer.
- Don’t ask for a job. Mentors have agreed to career information and advice only.
- Always ask for other contacts the mentor feels could help you with your career questions.
- After you have spoken with a mentor, send them an email or a handwritten or typed thank-you letter using a plain, professional-looking card or stationery.
- If you have contacted a mentor but have not heard back from them within two weeks, please let the Career Center know.

Sample Script for Contacting an Alumni Mentor

EMAIL TIPS: Put “Stockton Alumni Career Network” in the subject heading of an email. The email message should be carefully written and kept short – no more than 5 to 7 sentences.

Sample Email Script

Subject: Stockton Alumni Career Network

Dear Ms. Alvarez:

I am a student at Stockton College majoring in _____. You are listed in our Alumni Mentor database as someone working in the field of _____. I am calling to request a half-hour of your time to ask you about your job and about this field as a career.

I have attached my resume to give you an idea of my background and education. I would appreciate a chance to meet with you or talk with you by phone at your convenience. Please let me know what times and dates would work for you, and I will confirm a time when I hear from you. My phone number is _____.

Thank you for offering to help Stockton students. I look forward to learning about your experiences in the field of _____.

Sincerely,

(name)

(contact information)

PHONE TIPS: Prepare what you are going to say; you don’t have to write out every word, but have notes in front of you to help you remember what you want to say. Try to make it like a conversation

Sample Phone Script

Hi, Mr. Johnson.

My name is _____ and I am a student at Stockton College. I am exploring a career in the field of _____, and you are listed in our Alumni Mentor database as someone working in this field. I am calling to ask if you would meet with me for a 30-minute information interview, so I can learn more about your job as a _____

Sample Questions To Ask an Alumni Mentor

1. On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
2. What training or education is required for this type of work?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? most challenging?
5. How did you get your job?
6. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
7. What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
8. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
9. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
10. Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
11. What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
12. What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
13. What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in this field?
14. Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
15. What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?
16. From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
17. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
18. With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
19. What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
20. Can you provide the names of others who could give me advice about this field? When I call him/her, may I use your name?

Questions Courtesy of the Wisconsin Job Service and Job Center

Check out Stockton's [Informational Interviewing Handout](#) for more tips and suggestions.