

Imperial Work Shadowing Scheme: Informational Interviewing

An informational interview is an informal conversation you have with someone working in an area of interest to you. This technique can provide valuable information and build a better awareness of a role or industry. The goal of an informational interview is to help you learn more about a particular job role or sector, or get exclusive insights and advice; it is not about asking for a job or internship.

Below is a list of some suggested questions and themes for your informational interview. This list is not exhaustive and you do not need to ask every question. Tailor your questions to match your goals for the conversation and ensure you plan open-ended questions to get the conversation flowing.

The Individual

- How did you get into this role? What is your career path to date?
- What are your educational backgrounds?
- Where do you see your career going next?
- What career expectations do you have in the short and long term?
- If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?

The Job Profile

- What are your primary responsibilities?
- What do you do in a typical workday?
- What do you like most and least about this role?
- How does your job affect your general lifestyle?

The Skills

- What skills are most critical to your success?
- What are the most valuable skills in your job?
- Which experiences enabled you to develop these skills?
- How do you keep skills current?

The Company

- How does your position fit within the organisation?
- What are the common misconceptions about this organisation?
- What do you see as the biggest competitive challenge for this organisation?
- What motivates you to continue in this organisation?

The Industry

- Are there professional associations I should look into?
- What do you read to keep up to date with the latest developments in this field?
- How do you see this industry changing over the next 5 years?

Early Graduate Careers

- How do most people get into this field? What are common entry-level jobs?
- What kind of job responsibilities could I expect as a new graduate?
- What steps would you recommend I take to prepare to enter this field?
- What advice would you give someone who is considering this type of job?