

Questions to Ask at Your Job Shadow or Informational Interview

“Do Your Homework. It’s Your Future”

Since a job shadow and informational interview is a non-hand on experience, it is a good idea to ask questions to learn more about a specific career. Look through the list of questions below to get an idea of what things to ask. You may want to choose 8-10 questions to ask during your job shadow experience. The idea is to ask about those things that are important to you. You should come away from this experience with a good understanding of job.

Introduction

What is your occupation and job title?

How long have you worked for this employer? How long have you been in the job?

How did you become interested in this type of work?

How did you become interested in this field? How did you get started?

Why did you choose this career?

How did you choose this employer to work for?

Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like best about it? How is this company different from the competition? What is the corporate culture like?

How did you get your job with this company?

How did you know this was the right career for you?

What makes you excited about your job?

What would you be doing if you didn’t work for this company/in this field?

If you could do it all over, would you choose this career again?

What experiences have you had that have been invaluable in learning your job?

From your personal experience in this field, what attributes do you think are essential for success?

Work Qualifications

What kind of training, education, or course work is required?

What skills are needed in this field? What skills should I be concentrating on at this point in my education?

What type of education and training prepared you for this career field?

What classes did you take in high school that prepared you for your job?

Did you have to interview, take any tests, complete an internship or apprenticeship for this position?

What skills or talents are most essential in this career?

What types of skills are necessary for succeeding in this career?

What skills are the most important in your job?

What personal qualities are important?

What kinds of prior experiences are necessary?

How did you prepare yourself for this work?

How are technology demands increasing or changing?

Is there anything you wish you would've done to better prepare yourself?

What is the best educational preparation for this field? Is a recent graduate's GPA important in hiring decisions?

What websites and tools do you use to stay current with your career and your profession?

Nature of the Work

What are the specific duties and responsibilities?

What's something that most people don't know about this career?

Can you describe a typical day/week at work?

What do you like about your job?

What part of this work do you find most rewarding?

What part of your job do you find most interesting or rewarding? What parts do you dislike or feel dissatisfied with?

What do you like least about your job? (Tread carefully when asking this question.)

What's the hardest part about your job?

What are the toughest issues that you deal with?

What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your job?

What's the biggest challenge you've faced at work?

What are some of the difficulties in working in this field and what motivates you to stay in spite of them?

What's the most valuable lesson you've learned in this job?

What kinds of problems do you deal with? What kinds of decisions do you make?

Working Condition

What type of setting, hours, atmosphere, etc. can be expected?

How much of your day is spent behind a desk? Out in the field?

Is your workflow steady or do you alternate between being very busy and very slow?

How is your work-life balance with your job?

How does your employer differ from its competitors?

What obligation does this type of workplace upon you outside of the ordinary work week?

Are you, or how much are you required to work outside normal business hours?

What do you like most about working for this employer?

Have you worked for any other employers?

How much flexibility do you have in terms of hours of work, dress, vacation, etc.?

How has this career field changed since you started?

Work Entry

What types of employers hire people in this field? Where are they located?

What kind of jobs did you have before this one? How did they help prepare you for this work? Which jobs were most helpful?

What skills are looked for in entry-level employees?

How much demand is there for entry-level jobseekers?

What type of education and training would you recommend for someone just starting out in this career? For someone who wants a job title like yours?

How do I find out about internships/job openings in this field?

Do you offer experiential learning opportunities such as internships, co-ops, and summer jobs? What level of college students do you consider for these positions? Whom can I contact for more information?

What types of summer jobs or internships should I seek out as I continue my education?

What's the biggest stumbling block you see with younger jobseekers?

What does your employer—or employers in general in this field—look for in younger jobseekers?

Work Advancement

What additional training or qualifications are necessary for advancement?

What are some of the job possibilities for experienced workers in the field?

Is turnover high in this field?

What kinds of professional development does your company offer? Do employees in this field generally get advanced degrees or special training?

What are the advancement/growth opportunities?

Do people normally move to another facility/organization or do they move up in the facility/organization?

Employee Outlook

How rapidly is the present career field is growing?

Do you expect the workplace to change much in the next five years?

What kind of growth patterns are you seeing in this field that I should consider in my decision?

What is the employment outlook for this career field?

What other careers or industries could you work in with your education and experience?

If the work you do was suddenly eliminated, what different kinds of work do you feel you could do?

What is a common misconception people have about what you do?

What do you see as the biggest changes that have happened in this career field? That will happen in the future?

How has technology changed this career? What kind of technology do you use to do your job? What's the most common technology used in this industry?

How has the state of the economy affected this career?

Salary Questions – Do not ask them for their salary!

Ask general questions about their knowledge of average salary; what the variance might be for experience, employers, regions, industries.

What's the most valuable reward you've reaped from this job?

Referral Questions – Always Ask Them

Do you know of any comparable job titles I should be exploring in this field?

Based on our conversation today, what other resources would be helpful to I research?

What are the professional associations in this field? What professional journals do you read? What professional organizations do you belong to?

What else should I know in order to make an informed decision about this field? What advice do you have for someone considering this career?

Is there anything else that I have not seen today, or that we have not talked about, that you think is important for me to know as I continue my quest for the ideal career?

Can you recommend someone else for me to talk with in this field? When I contact this person, may I use your name?

Would you be willing to critique my resume?