

# MALONE CENTER FOR CAREER ENGAGEMENT

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING GUIDE

An informational interview is a purposeful conversation with a professional in a field of interest. It is an effective way to research careers, gain insight into specific industries, and gather advice from individuals already in the working world.

The purpose of an informational interview is not to find job openings, although sometimes it may lead to additional opportunities or network connections. At first, it may feel awkward reaching out to people you don't know; however, with practice and guidance, informational interviewing can become your best resource for relevant information (no matter where you are in your career development process).

## STEPS OF AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

### 1. RESEARCH CAREER FIELDS

Conduct some initial research on your industries of interest. Visit our Career Pathways pages, discuss with a Career Advisor, or use some of our exploration platforms (i.e. Vault, O\*NET, What Can I Do with This Major?) to help generate a list of potential careers and industries.

### 2. IDENTIFY CONTACTS

First, start by reviewing your own personal contacts. Who do you know? Friends, teachers, mentors, family members, former employers, etc. Then, identify relevant Furman alumni. You can use LinkedIn or the Alumni List provided by the Alumni Relations Office. If you're still stuck, visit the Malone Center for Career Engagement to discuss your strategy with a Career Advisor.

### 3. INITIATE CONTACT

Contact the individual by email, phone, or LinkedIn (see below for sample template). Mention how you found them, and ask about a possible time to talk. Emphasize that you are seeking information and advice, not a job. Be ready to ask questions on the spot if they are available at that moment!

### 4. PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Develop your "pitch" or a brief introduction of yourself and your experiences, skills, interests. Write down 5-10 open-ended questions you would like to ask.

### 5. CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

If in person, treat it as you would a real interview. Dress nicely, arrive a few minutes early, and bring your list of questions with a notepad to take notes. Give a brief overview of yourself and your interests, be prepared to direct the conversation, but also let it flow naturally. Respect their time, and ask if you can contact them again in the future with additional questions. Ask for additional resources and contacts that can offer further perspectives.

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What are your responsibilities as a . . . ?  
What do you like most about your work?  
What kinds of challenges do you face?  
How does your job affect your general lifestyle?  
How do most people get into this field? What are common entry level jobs?  
What advice do you have for someone considering this type of job/industry?  
Can you suggest anyone else I should talk to?  
How did you become interested in this field?

## 6. FOLLOW UP

Make sure to send a thank you note! Keep your notes and contact additional people, if applicable. Stay in touch, especially to inform them of your progress.

## SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: James Paladin: Current Furman Student

Dear Ms. Anderson:

I hope this email finds you well. My name is James Paladin and I am currently a first-year student at Furman University. I was given your name and contact information by my professor, Dr. Smith. I'm writing to you today because I'm looking for information and advice on pursuing a career in your industry. At this point, I believe I would enjoy a career in \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm hoping to gain your perspective on the practical aspects of working in this area.

If you are willing, I would appreciate the opportunity to chat with you about your position, career journey and advice you may have for a student interested in this path. I would also appreciate any suggestions you may have to offer as I consider my options for the summer.

Please let me know if there are any days/times that would work best to meet or talk on the phone. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 864-555-5555 (cell) or at james.paladin@furman.edu. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
James Paladin

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### CONNECTING WITH FURMAN ALUMNI ON LINKEDIN

Visit [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com). Once logged in, use the search bar to look up Furman University. This will take you to the main school page.

**Furman University**  
Founded in 1826, Furman University is one of the nation's premier liberal arts and sciences universities.  
Greenville, SC · 23,406+ alumni · 28,880 followers

Ron & 52 other connections work here · 1,441 employees

✓ Following Visit website More

Home My Employer About Posts Jobs **Alumni** Videos

Once there, select 'Alumni' in the middle of the page. This will show you a snapshot of Furman alumni currently on LinkedIn.

22,851 alumni

Search alumni by title, keyword or company

Start year 1900 End year 2021

< Previous Next >

#### Where they live + Add

22,769 | United States

5,004 | Greenville, South Carolina Area

2,936 | Greater Atlanta Area

1,275 | Charlotte, North Carolina Area

#### Where they work + Add

587 | Furman University

272 | Greenville County Schools

100 | Wells Fargo

81 | Prisma Health

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Click directly on the colored bars to filter your search and explore. Select as many as you'd like or search by a keyword, job title, or company in the search bar.

22,851 alumni

Search alumni by title, keyword or company

Start year 1900 End year 2021

< Previous Next >

### What they do

3,664 | Business Development

2,954 | Education

1,933 | Operations

1,752 | Sales

### What they studied

+ Add

2,536 | Political Science and Government

2,407 | Business Administration and Mana...

1,271 | History

1,125 | Psychology

## SAMPLE LINKEDIN CONNECT MESSAGE

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

I see that you graduated from my current institution, Furman University—go Paladins! I'm a physics major and would be excited to hear more about your work with NASA. I was hoping to learn more about your career path. Please let me know if this is a possibility.

Thanks so much,

James Paladin