



## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Informational interviewing is the process of speaking with individuals about their industry and organizations for two primary purposes:

**Exploration** - Students learn about career fields, what it is like to work in these fields and what information they need to boost/launch their job search.

**Relationship-building** – Students build social capital through an ever-expanding network of contacts, increase their visibility among management-level personnel and, ultimately, learn about the hidden job market.

Because of the very nature and intended outcomes of informational interviewing, it is critical for students to create the best first impression possible during these meetings. Done properly, it is the ultimate networking technique which also enables students to determine their suitability for a chosen career field. Below is a sample list of Quick Tips on informational interviewing that can get you started - be sure to make an appointment with Career Services too for further coaching and guidance on this intricate but highly effective method of finding that dream job.

### *Prior to the Interview*

- Create a list of GSE alumni and others to target for interviews. Alumni are an invaluable resource and highly likely to help out fellow GSE graduates.\*
- Research thoroughly the individuals you are targeting, their career fields and organizations by reading trade publications, company information and online sources of data.
- Think carefully about what you hope to learn from your contacts and create a list of open-ended questions that will elicit information.

### *Initiating the Interview*

- Start with your least intimidating contacts first.
- Stress that the goal of your interview is to gather information, not ask for a job.
- Specify a set time limit (15-20 minutes) when requesting the interview and cite your referral or source.
- Try to meet the person at their workplace but be prepared to do a phone interview (even on the spot) if your contact prefers.

For more information, contact Career Services -

Phone: 617.495.3427

Email: [csso@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:csso@gse.harvard.edu)

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/about/administration/careers/>  
1 Longfellow Hall

### *During the Interview*

- Act professionally as you would for a regular job interview. Dress appropriately and arrive early.
- Listen carefully, let the person talk and write down important points.
- Note your reactions on an objective level.
- *Ask about additional referrals and appropriate professional organizations to expand your network of contacts.*
- Stick to your agreed upon time limit.

### *Follow Up*

- Write a thank you note immediately after the interview.
- Keep in touch with your contacts and inform them of your progress to maintain your relationships.

### **\*How to Access Crimson Compass Alumni Database**

1. Go to [www.post.harvard.edu](http://www.post.harvard.edu) and register under the “Member Login” tab on the right hand side of the page.
2. Click “Crimson Compass” under the Alumni Services tab in the left-hand column.
3. Click on “Search”. There are various search criteria. Keep to a general search to get the best results. Try a variety of searches to get different kinds of results.
4. In each profile, the Contact Information section indicates how the alumni would like to be contacted.
5. You can create a saved contact list by clicking on the “Add This Profile to Contact List” tab in each profile.
6. Contact GSE Alumni Relations at 617-495-0740 if you have questions on using Crimson Compass.