

## Job Exploration Project



### ASSIGNMENT (60 points total):

- Working together with a partner(s), conduct a 45-60 minute informational interview of a nutrition professional at his/her work site. At the end of the session, have the "interviewee" sign the "Verification Form".
- If time and schedules permit, make arrangements to do a field observation of the program or services in action, such as a nutrition education class session, tour of facility, or possibly observe one of their Nutrition Assistant staff in action.

### PART I: Written Report (due Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 50 points)

Each student will write his/her own 3-4 page narrative of the informational interview. Include a brief description of the organization, summary of the interview, and a summary reflection paragraph (analyze and evaluate your experience—*i.e.* *What did you learn from this interview-both positive and negative impressions? How does a nutrition career path fit with your own interests, abilities, and goals? What surprised or inspired you?*) Please turn in the completed "Verification Form" with your report.

### PART II: Discussion Groups: (due Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 10 points)

Be prepared to participate in a small group discussion by giving a 15 minute summary of your informational interview.

## Informational Interviewing

One of the best sources for gathering information about what's happening in an occupation or an industry is to talk to people working in the field. This process is called *informational interviewing*. An informational interview is an interview that **you** initiate - you ask the questions. The purpose is to obtain information, not to get a job. Informational interviewing can be one of your most valued strategies in gathering information and establishing contacts as you build plans for the future.

### Reasons to Conduct an Informational Interview:

- to explore careers and clarify your career goal
- to discover employment opportunities that are not advertised
- to expand your professional network
- to build confidence for your job interviews
- to access the most up-to-date career information
- to identify your professional strengths and weaknesses

## Steps to Conduct an Informational Interview:

### **1. Identify the Occupation or Industry You Wish to Learn About**

Assess your own interests, abilities, values, and skills, and evaluate labor conditions and trends to identify the best fields to research.

### **2. Prepare for the Interview**

Read all you can about the field prior to the interview; find out background information about the place of employment. Decide what information you would like to obtain about the occupation/industry. Prepare a list of questions that you would like to have answered.

### **3. Identify People to Interview**

Start with lists of people you already know - friends, relatives, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, etc. Professional organizations, the yellow pages, organizational directories, and public speakers are also good resources. You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person by job title.

### **4. Arrange the Interview**

Contact the person by e-mail or telephone, or by a letter followed by a phone call to set up an interview appointment. Be sure to give a choice of a couple of dates and times, and reconfirm the appointment a day or so ahead if you have made the appointment far in advance. Pre-visit the site so you know the location, parking situation, or public transit route.

### **5. Conduct the Interview**

Dress appropriately, arrive 10-15 minutes before your appointment, be polite, gracious, and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions; stay on track, but allow for spontaneous discussion. Adhere to the original time request.

### **6. Follow Up**

Be sure to send a thank-you note to your contact within a day or two after the interview.

## Professional Contacts

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(NOTE: you might be able to participate in a  
nutrition assessment at the walk-in clinic by peer  
educators – a great opportunity, but must make  
2 weeks advance arrangements with Teresa.)

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