

Requesting an informational interview or networking meeting via telephone or in writing

This template is designed to help you create a brief and effective networking introduction when reaching out to potential networking contacts to request an informational interview. This template should only be used as a suggestion and provide guidelines on how to write your own. You should customize it for your own situations. It should be adapted to reflect your particular interests, questions, and goals, and to be relevant to the person addressed.

Phone call: **Hello, Mr. _____, Ms. _____, or Dr. _____**

Written letter or email: **Dear Mr. _____, Ms. _____, or Dr. _____**

(In writing you do not need to start off your first sentence with your name because your signature line will be written the bottom of the letter or email. However, make sure the greeting is formal and uses "Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. ...," not "Greetings...," "Hello...," or other informal phrases)

I am a _____ (student, senior, communication major, or any combination to best identify yourself) at Tulane University and will graduate in _____.

I was referred to you by _____ who suggested I might contact you.

(If someone you know has referred you and as long as you have their permission, name the person who made the referral and relationship to you. For example, a career advisor at the Tulane Career Center, my past internship supervisor, Dr. Jones, etc.)

I am (writing or calling) because

(Indicate to the person why you would like to talk to them. For example, "I am exploring a career in business and talking with professionals in different areas of practice to determine if this is a good career fit for me." Or, "I have taken very interesting design classes, but I am not exactly sure where I fit in the design field, whether that be interior, graphic, or digital design." Or "I am seeking career advice from event planners and fundraisers working in nonprofits, my area of interest.")

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for about 20-30 minutes to

(Suggest what you would like to know, which is related to the reason above. For example, "share with me your perspective on your specialty in the field of business," or "provide your insights for coursework that might prepare me for graphic design positions post-graduation," or "advice you may have on gaining event planning experience for nonprofit organizations," etc.)

I will be in _____ (location, e.g. New York, Boston, etc.) (when, e.g. “during my spring break in mid-March, or the entire summer, or provide specific dates, if possible) and will make every attempt to accommodate your schedule if we could talk then. If that is not possible, I am open to other suggestions at your convenience.

Phone, if you are leaving a voice mail message: I can be reached by phone at _____ or by email at _____. I look forward to hearing back from you. Thank you very much.

(Say this slowly and repeat it so they may hear it twice. Spell out your email address so that each letter is clear and articulate.)

Writing: You can reach me at this email address or by phone at _____. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

(Your Full Name)

Sample Networking Questions

Different networking goals require different questions. As you begin reaching out to your contacts, you may use these questions to guide your conversations or adapt them to fit your individual interests and goals.

Career Exploration & Industry Research

- How did you get interested in and get started in your work?
- What kind of experiences or studies that you had in college relate to your work now?
- What is a typical day like in your job?
- What is the typical career path, if there is one, in this particular industry?
- What are the various entry level opportunities in this career field?
- Describe a typical day, week, month.
- Which companies have the best track record for promoting minorities?

Specific Interest in a Job or Internship Opportunity:

- What specific skills are necessary for success in this position?
- What specific educational experiences do you recommend?
- What separates a strong candidate from the competition?
- Who else would you suggest I speak with for advice?

Specific Interest in an Organization:

- Is there a basic philosophy of the organization and what is it?
- How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?
- How has your job affected your lifestyle?
- What is the organizational culture like here?
- What do you like/dislike, find exciting/unexciting in this organization?
- What are the challenges in balancing work and personal life?
- What advice do you have?