

CAREER DECISION-MAKING

Step 3: Conversations With Professionals

Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

Thomas Jefferson

If you have questions about careers, the best person to ask is a career adviser, right?

Yes and No. While meeting with Career Services and Cooperative Education is a very important step and we will assist you with your career development, including learning about occupations through research, students must also speak with professionals in their interested career field(s). One of the best ways for students to learn what a job is really like—the good, the bad, and the ugly—is to speak with someone who works in that job everyday. You can get the real scoop about a career by conducting information interviews, participating in the student-alumni mentoring program and even by attending career fairs on-campus.

Below are active methods of career exploration. While they take more time and effort than passive methods, you will benefit from taking charge of your career planning and decision-making process.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

This is an opportunity for you to learn firsthand about a particular career by speaking with someone who works in the profession. By asking this person questions about his or her work tasks, work environment, personal/educational background, and how he or she obtained the position, you can learn about careers you may be considering. Information interviews are very beneficial because they can help you decide if a particular job is (or isn't) the right career choice for you.

Primary objectives and outcomes of an Informational Interview

- Investigate a specific career field
- Gain insight into a career field
- Obtain advice on where you might fit in
- Learn the jargon and important issues in the field
- Broaden your network of contacts for future reference

In some ways, information interviewing is like test-driving a car. Buying a car is a big decision, but choosing a career is even bigger. An information interview can help you test-drive a career before selecting it. So talk to friends and family or ask Career Services and Cooperative Education how you can learn more about test-driving your career!

MENTORING PROGRAMS

UE alumni and friends of the University have expressed the desire to help, support and communicate with students who are interested in exploring and learning more about their career field. Contact career services to learn more about the Evansville Rotary Club Mentorship Program and the Student-Alumni Mentoring Program.

CAREER FAIRS

Time spent at a career fair pays off. A career fair is a great place to gather information from a wide range of potential employers and make contacts that can lead to your first internship or job. Also, it is your chance to see many of the career opportunities that are open to you.

To get the most out of the event, it is very important for you to do some preparation before you attend. Here are some suggestions for how you can make a positive first impression to a potential employer at a career fair:

- Research the companies you are interested in speaking with before the event.
- Dress to impress; no shorts, jeans or flip-flops. Ask Career Services if you have questions.
- Take copies of your resume along. If you don't have one, now is the time to get started!
- Prepare your 30 second oral resume.
- Follow-up with the company's representatives you meet at the fair.

Contact Career Services and Cooperative Education at 488-1083 or career@evansville.edu for more information

NETWORKING/CONTACT INFORMATION

"I want to speak with someone, but I don't know anyone working in the career(s) I'm researching."

Yes you do! The person may not be your mom, dad, or sibling; but, if you brainstorm and ask people, you'll find someone to interview. The person may be your mom's friend or your friend's mom. Consider everyone you know—faculty, friends, family, neighbors, etc. What do they do for a living? Who do they know? Eventually you will learn of someone working in the occupation you want to research. Also, the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education will be able to help you identify alumni and/or employers who are willing to help you in your career exploration. Utilize the chart to help you begin identifying your network.

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Family Members			
Alumni			
Friends/Neighbors			
Past Employers/ Co-Workers			
Professors			
Other Acquaintances			

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