

# Career • Centre

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## Networking Tip Sheet

*“Networking is not about superficial connections and brief encounters. It’s about cultivating relationships with others in a meaningful way so that you have people to turn to when you need information and support, and people you can help when they need someone to turn to.”*

Michael Tullier, *Networking For Everyone*

### What is networking?

Networking involves...

- Sharing knowledge, information and ideas
- Giving and receiving advice, feedback and support
- Establishing relationships with people
- Connecting with people you know
- Talking to people you don’t know
- Having conversations

### Why network?

Networking allows you to do a number of things...

- Develop supportive relationships for advice and feedback from people you trust;
- Identify role models and mentors;
- Conduct research to explore new paths and opportunities in an occupation or field;
- Tap into the hidden job market (only 20% of jobs are advertised; the rest are filled through word of mouth from colleagues, professional contacts, friends and family members)

### How do you network?

Networking takes many different forms but in its most basic sense it’s how we live our lives. Opportunities exist everywhere.

- Be aware of opportunities in everyday life;
- Be open to and explore opportunities that present themselves to you;
- Take advantage of unplanned encounters to explore opportunities;
- Introduce yourself to potential contacts in your field of interest;
- Participate in things that interest you (don’t just attend);
- Follow your interests by connecting and talking to people;
- Focus on exploration, not just short term goals such as getting a job;
- Start with people you already know;
- Attend events (networking events, speaking engagements, industry events);
- Get involved (volunteer, join a club or professional association).

Remember, networking is a two-way street so be open to giving feedback, resources and advice as well as receiving. Network throughout your life, not just when you’re looking for a job. The network you start to develop now will be a part of the rest of your life.

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Here are some sample questions you can choose from when meeting someone in the field, occupation, or organization you're interested in.

- Why did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field/job?
- How did you get to this position? (what experiences, contacts, strategies, decisions were involved?)
- What courses do you suggest for an undergraduate as preparation for this position?
- What do you like most/least about the work? (what values are satisfied, what are the negative aspects?)
- What is a typical day on the job like for you?
- What motivated you to get involved in this field?
- How did you decide to go for it? When and why did you decide to do this? Who helped you?
- What kind of entry-level jobs do you think are good training grounds for a person entering this field right now?
- How long have you been in this job/occupation/field/organization?
- If you were going to change direction now, how would you do it?
- What's your sense of the future outlook of this occupation?
- What opportunities are there for advancement?
- How would someone with \_\_\_\_\_ (x personality, Y style) fit in here?
- How often might you have the opportunity to do \_\_\_\_\_ (activity you specify) in this occupation, position or organization?
- What makes this occupation, position or organization exciting/satisfying?

## Information Interview Sample Questions

- What was it that made you think you could do it?
- What is a typical career path in this field or occupation?
- What is the best way to enter this occupation?
- What are the major qualifications for success in this occupation/field?
- If no clear path exists, how do you advance in this occupation?
- What barriers did you encounter?
- What are some of the specialties in this career area?
- How do you find work in a specialty of this occupation? (describe specialty)
- Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain the necessary experience?
- What actions did you take before you entered this occupation? Which have been most helpful?
- What other jobs can you get with the same background?
- What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job?
- How did you learn these skills?
- Did you enter the position through a formal training program?
- How can I evaluate whether or not I have the necessary skills for a position such as yours?
- With the information you have about my education, skills and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
- Are there any written materials you suggest I read?
- Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?

These questions are only suggestions. Remember to ask questions about the things you are genuinely interested in. And don't forget to let your unique self shine through!