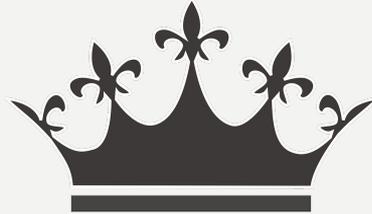




# **Informational Interviews**

## **using the TIARA Method**



**UMSI CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

If you would like access to this document in a different format, please email us at [umsi.careers@umich.edu](mailto:umsi.careers@umich.edu).

# Learning Outcomes

## Who is this workshop for?

- Students who are preparing for their first informational interview.
- Students who have conducted many informational interviews.

## What we hope you take away from this workshop:

As a result of taking part in this CDO workshop, students will be able to summarize their main takeaway related to informational interviews and translate that into a personalized next step for their their career plan.

# Agenda

- What is an Informational Interview?
- How to Prepare
- Start with Small Talk
- What is the TIARA Method?
- Following Up
- Questions



# What is an Informational Interview?

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in an area that interests you who will give you information and advice.

**Note:** It is not a job interview, and the objective is *not* to find job openings...but it is a very powerful networking tool!

# Be sure to prepare!

- Ask yourself (and have answers for) the “big” questions:
  - “Tell me about yourself.”
  - “Why are you interested in our company?”
  - “Why are you interested in the industry/career pathway?”
- Research the person, company, and industry.
- Prepare questions to ask.
  - Use the TIARA method!



# Start Simply

- Thank them for taking the time to meet with you!
- Ask small talk questions
  - “How was your weekend?”
  - “How is your day going so far?”
- Have something **“buildable”** to share about yourself.
  - **“Buildable”** = something the other party can ask you more about
  - Ex. “I tried out a new restaurant in Ann Arbor this weekend!”

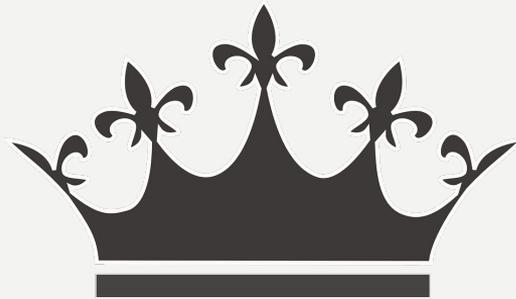


# Transition to Q&A

Gently evolve the conversation from personal to professional by saying, “I’d love to learn more about your background” or “I’d love to learn more about your journey to your current role.”

Then, you can use the TIARA Method to guide the questions you ask during the Q&A portion.

So...what kinds  
of questions  
should I ask?



*Trends*

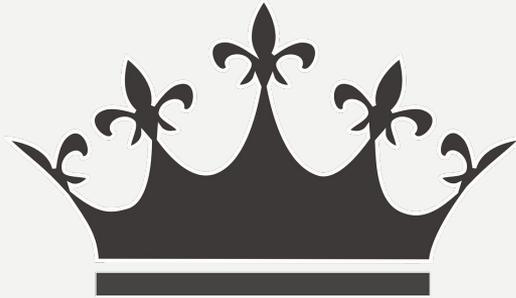
*Insight*

*Advice*

*Resources*

*Assignments*

TIARA is a proven systematic approach to build likeability with other people and your guide for the Q&A portion of any informational interview.



Source: Steve Dalton's *The 2-Hour Job Search*

*Trends*

*Insight*

*Advice*

*Resources*

*Assignments*

# T- TRENDS

Try to make trend questions specific to the company, industry or function for the person you are interviewing.

- **Example Questions:**
  - “What are the big things your company is thinking about?”
  - “How are changing consumer trends affecting your company’s products?”
  - “How is your company keeping pace with all the innovation in the Industry?”
  - “How is your company leveraging technology like VR?”

# I- INSIGHT

Insight questions slowly bring the interview down to a personal level. Ask your interviewee about their specific experiences, day-to-day work, and career pathway.

- **Example Questions:**
  - “What is the most challenging part of your job?”
  - “What is the most rewarding project you’ve worked on so far?”
  - “How did you manage your career switch?”

# A- ADVICE

Asking for advice brings the conversation back to you.

- **Example Question:**
  - “What should I be doing right now to prepare myself for a career in this industry?”



# R- RESOURCES

Ask for tools, blogs, websites, and other resources that the interviewee can recommend. This begins to close your conversation while giving you reasons to follow up with your interviewee later!

- **Example Questions:**
  - “What resources should I be looking at to learn more about this industry/function?”
  - “What next steps would you recommend I take if I plan to pursue a career in this industry?”

# A- ASSIGNMENTS

Asking “assignment” questions can give you another reason to follow up with your interviewee and show your dedication to the field.

- **Example Question:**
  - “What kinds of projects seem to add the most value to your organization? I’d like to see if I can start doing that kind of work in my classes at UMSI.”
  - “What tools or skills does your team really value for new employees? I’d like to start working on those during my time at UMSI.”

# Close & Ensure Next Steps!

You've completed your TIARA questions! Wrap up your informational interview by ensuring next steps:

- **Example:** “I truly enjoyed our conversation today and you’ve given me a lot to think about. Would you mind if I reached out again if I have additional questions about the industry and specifically your company as I move forward?”
- **Be sure to send a follow-up thank you email.**
  - For examples, see our “Intro to Emailing Alumni” Workshop in the CDO Career Resource Library in Canvas.

# Online Resources

- How do I ask for an informational interview?
  - “Intro to Emailing Alumni” workshop in the CDO Career Resource Library in Canvas (access through iTrack)
- How do informational interviews play a key role in my job/internship search?
  - “The 2-Hour Job Search” workshop in the CDO Career Resource Library in Canvas (access through iTrack)
- More Resources:
  - [“3 Steps to a Perfect Informational Interview”](#) from The MUSE
  - [“Preparing for Informational Interviews”](#) from Monster.com

# **Thank You! Questions?**

**Be sure to visit the CDO for  
individual career advising!**



**Make an appointment to meet with a CDO Career Advisor at any time via iTrack.**