**ACTIVITY 5: Informational Interviews**

Informational interviewing is a low-pressure way to gather career information from people who are already working in occupations, organizations, or geographic locations you are interested in.

Both the content of the information, and the process of gathering it will help you to **refine your career goals** and possibly discover new ones.

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| **1. Identify Professionals to Interview**  Start by asking people you already know.  • Family, friends, neighbours, professors, or past co-workers may work in the career you want to explore.  • The NUST Alumni Directory, LinkedIn, and professional associations are other places to find people who are working in your field of interest. | **2. Connect with Contacts**  You can request to set up meeting by email, in person, via social networking sites like LinkedIn, or on the phone.  • Introduce yourself and explain how you got their name.  • Tell them you are researching the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ field and seeking advice (Remember, the purpose of informational interviewing is not to ask for a job or internship).  • Request a 20-30-minute meeting at their worksite if possible. Meeting at a local coffee shop, or via phone or skype are good alternatives.  • Be clear, concise, and courteous in your communication. | **3. Prepare for Your Meeting**  Now it’s time to prepare for your meeting just as you would for an actual job interview.  • Conduct preliminary research on the organization. Knowing some specifics about the occupation and the company will help you to create targeted questions, and show your enthusiasm and professionalism.  • Develop and bring a list of open-ended questions that will help you evaluate if the career is a fit for you.  • It’s important to clarify your objectives before the meeting to determine what information you are seeking. Your goals will change along a continuum from general career research to specific job research advice. | **4. Conduct the Interview**  Informational Interviews are more casual than job interviews, but you should still make a positive professional impression. On the day of the interview:  • Arrive early, especially if you are meeting in a public place such as a coffee shop. This will ensure you are able to find a place to sit.  • You are leading the interview. Start by thanking the individual for his or her time  • Monitor the time and end the interview within the specified time.  • Show gratitude after the interview by sending a thank you email or note within 24 hours. | **5. Evaluate the Information Gathered**  Take a moment to reflect on the following:  • What did you like? What positive impressions do you now have about this area of work?  • Did you discover any new concerns about or advantages of the occupation?  • How does this information help you to clarify your own career objectives? Did you discover another occupation you might want to learn about?  • What are your next steps? With whom else do you plan to talk? (Beware of relying too heavily on the views or advice of only one or two people). |

**Ongoing**

Keep a **document** with a **record of the people with whom you have interviewed, the dates of the meeting, what was discussed**, and names of **additional contacts**. The people you meet are **potential members of your professional network**.