

Networking for PhDs



Networking is a central activity for anyone seeking a successful career in industry, academia, non-profits, government, and many other fields. No matter what job you're seeking, networking and forming meaningful relationships with other professionals is critical to any successful job search.

Networking 101: The Informational Interview

One of the best ways to grow your network is by conducting **informational interviews**.

An informational interview is a **brief, 20-30 minute discussion** with a professional in your chosen field about the work they do and what it takes to succeed in that field.

They can be conducted **over the phone or in person**.

Appropriate people to reach out to for informational interviews include **family,**

friends, and alumni from your department, and anyone working for a company or organization that interests you.

Reach out to administrators in your department to inquire if they have a **list of alumni** you could reach out to.

Don't ask for a job. Instead, always ask for information on how to succeed in a given field. Better questions include, "How did you become

interested in the work that you are now doing?" or "What skills does someone like me need to develop in order to become a successful professional in this field? and "What is your favorite part of your current job?"

Thank people for their time. You should always send a thank you note to each individual who agrees to have an informational interview with you within 24 hours of the meeting.

Growing and Strengthening Your Network

Utilize tools like **LinkedIn** and the People Finder Tool on **Versatile PhD** to identify people doing work that interests you. Use hashtags like **#phdchat** to connect with other PhDs on **Twitter**.

Attend job fairs, conferences, workshops, and meetups in order to connect with people who share similar career goals, such as the annual MSU Expanded Careers for PhDs conference or the Mid-Michigan Versatile PhD meetup.

Networking is a "two-way street" so always state your interest in being of service to an organization or company. Offer to develop your skill set through **volunteering,**

internships, part-time work, or interim opportunities.

Join LinkedIn groups like the **Michigan State University Graduate Career Network** or the **Mid-Michigan Versatile PhD** group to expand the number of people you will be able to reach out to on LinkedIn. You can join the **MSU Alumni Association** group on LinkedIn while still a student.

Keep your connections updated on your professional life. Make sure that your LinkedIn profile is up-to-date, and inform your connections every time their advice leads you to a professional success, such as a job or internship offer.

Networking for PhDs

Online Resources



NETWORKING FOR PHDS

The versatile PhD

Includes a “Discover Interesting Career Paths” and a “People Finder Tool” to help you discover possible career paths for graduate students and network with other PhDs across the country. versatilephd.com

Note: First time users of Versatile PhD will need to log in through MSU; you can access the link on the Versatile PhD website.

Building Your Professional

Network: Additional advice and resources from the staff of PhD Career Services.

careersuccess.msu.edu/phdcareers/explore/build

Informational Interviews: A

Beginner's Guide: From Branching Points, one of the best independent resources on the web for learning the art of informational interviewing.

bit.ly/1EjJa0U

How to do an informational

interview: Advice on informational interviews for graduate students from the Chronicle of Higher Education.

bit.ly/1MY39dC

How the Informational Interview

helps you get the Job: A great piece on how informational interviews can lead to jobs.

bit.ly/1PgHP1g

Questions to Ask during an

Informational Interview: A comprehensive guide put together by the UC-Berkeley Career Center of appropriate informational interview questions.

bit.ly/1E1ke9v

Coffee in 2002, a Job Offer in

2004: How an informational interview led to a job two years later for this jobseeker.

bit.ly/1KZGKti

5 Tips for Non-Awkward

Informational Interviews: A great article for anyone new to informational interviewing from The Muse.

muse.cm/1TKFsLo

8 Networking Tips for PhDs to

Advance Their Careers: Advice from the Cheeky Scientist (applicable to all disciplines) on what and what not to do when networking.

bit.ly/1KgrTvb

Networking Guide for

International Students and Scholars: Fantastic tips for international and domestic students from the MSU Office of International Students and Scholars.

bit.ly/1M1tLd

Long-Distance Networking:

Vitae weighs in on how to network with professionals outside of your geographic area.

bit.ly/1TI7DKh

So What are You Going to Do

with That? (3rd ed) Ch. 3 of this recently updated book by Maggie Debelius and Susan Basilla discusses networking strategies for PhDs. Available through Amazon.

amzn.to/1PcIVKS

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