



NETWORKING TIPS

Informational Interviews for Prehealth students

Networking provides opportunities to build social capital—being rich in connections to others can open doors to knowledge and experiences just as financial capital can. You worked hard to get to Princeton—be sure to maximize the connections to faculty, staff, peers, and alums that come with being a part of this community.

As a prehealth student, **informational interviews**—meetings that allow you to pick the brain of someone who has done things that you may want to do in the future—can be especially helpful.

Be Intentional

- If you ask someone for suggestions on who to reach out to, specifics may generate more helpful connections. For example, you might want to learn about dual degrees, specific schools or specialties, connecting non-health interests to your career, pursuing research as a professional, or what it's like to be from a certain demographic (e.g., first gen, woman, LGBTQIA, person of color) in the profession.

Search Widely

- Family and friend connections
- Your pediatricians / physicians
- Doctor is In and other campus speakers
- Professionals whose papers you've read
- Princeton Alumni Directory
- [Princeton LinkedIn](#)
- Conferences
- Career Fairs, in person and online
- Internship connections
- Professional Associations (e.g., American Medical Student Association, Student National Medical Association)

Introduce Yourself Professionally

- Sending an introductory email is the most common way to establish a connection.
- Start with a brief introduction, then describe how you found them and let them know what you hope to learn from them.
- Attach a resume if you've connected by email (see sample).

Sample email request for an informational interview:

Dear Dr. X,

I am a first-year premed student and prospective Molecular Biology concentrator at Princeton University and I received your contact information from my advisor, Professor Y. I'm interested in learning more about pediatrics and medicine in general. If you have time for a 20-30 minute phone call or meeting, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to chat with you about your career and some questions that I have. I'm happy to send you my availability in the coming weeks if you're available. I have attached my resume so that you can learn more about me. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

*Jane Tiger '21
Princeton University*

Conduct the Meeting

- Come prepared with questions (brainstorm with a mentor if you need help).
- Research your contact so that you can make your questions more specific/tailored.
- Dress business casual and arrive on time if meeting in person. Test tech if using an online format.
- Lead with a handshake, make eye contact, and introduce yourself, stating your name clearly.
- “Tell me about yourself and your career path so far” can be a good starting question. Be prepared to answer the same question (work on a 60-second introduction!).
- Listen and show genuine interest. Smile!
- Thank them for their time and ask if they're willing to follow up on the conversation in the future.

Follow Up

- Jot down what you've learned right after the meeting.
- Send a thank you email/card with details about what you gained / learned from the meeting.
- Stay in touch and let them know how their advice helped you (if they're open to staying in touch).

Pay it Forward

- Help your peers prepare for similar networking opportunities.
- Be open to networking requests now and as you move forward in your career. Be a mentor and a mentee at every stage of your life.

Questions to Ask

Younger Professionals / Professional School Students

- What initially drew you to this profession?
- What is your educational background?
- What is a typical week like for you?
- Which of your activities helped you be sure that you wanted to pursue your profession?
- Which undergraduate classes helped you the most in preparing for your program?
- How did you set yourself apart as an applicant when you were applying for schools?
- How did you know this was the right health profession for you compared to others?
- How did you choose your health professions school?
- How does _____ school differ from undergrad?
- How do you manage your time and stress?
- What do you wish someone told you before you started health professions school?

Established Professionals

- What do you find the most rewarding and this profession? What do you find the most challenging?
- What are some lifestyle considerations for this profession?
- What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are best-suited for this career?
- How did you choose your specialty?
- How do you see jobs like yours changing in the future?
- I'm worried about X—do you think this is realistic? Are there things I should thinking of in relation to it?
- What motivates you to continue in your career?
- How did you find mentors in your profession?
- If you could start over, would you still become a _____? Why / why not?
- Is there anyone else you recommend I speak with to learn more?

More Resources

Career Services Networking Tips: careerservices.princeton.edu/undergraduate-students/making-connections

Princeton LinkedIn Community: www.linkedin.com/school/princeton-university/alumni/

Princeton Alumni Directory: alumni.princeton.edu/tigernet/onlinecommunity/

Updated August 2018

