

Preparing for Your Job Search



Find the comprehensive *Job & Internship Guide* on Handshake.

The Career Center is committed to help all students achieve:

CAREER CLARITY | CAREER COMPETITIVENESS | CAREER CONNECTIONS

Preparing for Your Search

Job & Internship Guide



It can be tempting to jump into the job hunt feet first, but stop and think... "What am I actually looking for here?" The most effective job/internship search starts with thoughtful preparation about the types of work/industries/positions you actually want to apply for.

Step 1: Research Your Interests, Strengths & Values (Who are you?)

- Explore the Career Center's self-awareness building resources; search "Know Yourself" on the Career Center website.
- Make an appointment to see a Career Counselor at the Career Center.

Step 2: Research Your Options

- Explore online resources; search "Research Your Options" on the Career Center website.
- Attend Career Exploration and Career Connection events at the Career Center.
- Check the Handshake calendar for a list of upcoming events.
- Use the LinkedIn Alumni Tool to explore the career journeys and current positions of Cal alumni who graduated with your major OR are working in fields of interest.
- Plan and execute informational interviews for career exploration with professionals working in an industry you would like to know more about!
- Explore the "Connecting Majors to Careers" page on the Career Center website to get ideas of common career paths students and alums with your major have pursued.



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS FOR CAREER EXPLORATION

One of the BEST ways to learn more about a job or industry is to talk to someone who is currently working in that industry or job.

[Informational Interview - noun: Informal conversation with someone working in an area of interest to you who is willing to give you information about a job, career field, industry, or work setting. It is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.]

If you are interested in doing an informational interview for the purpose of networking/job searching, see the Networking section (p. 9).

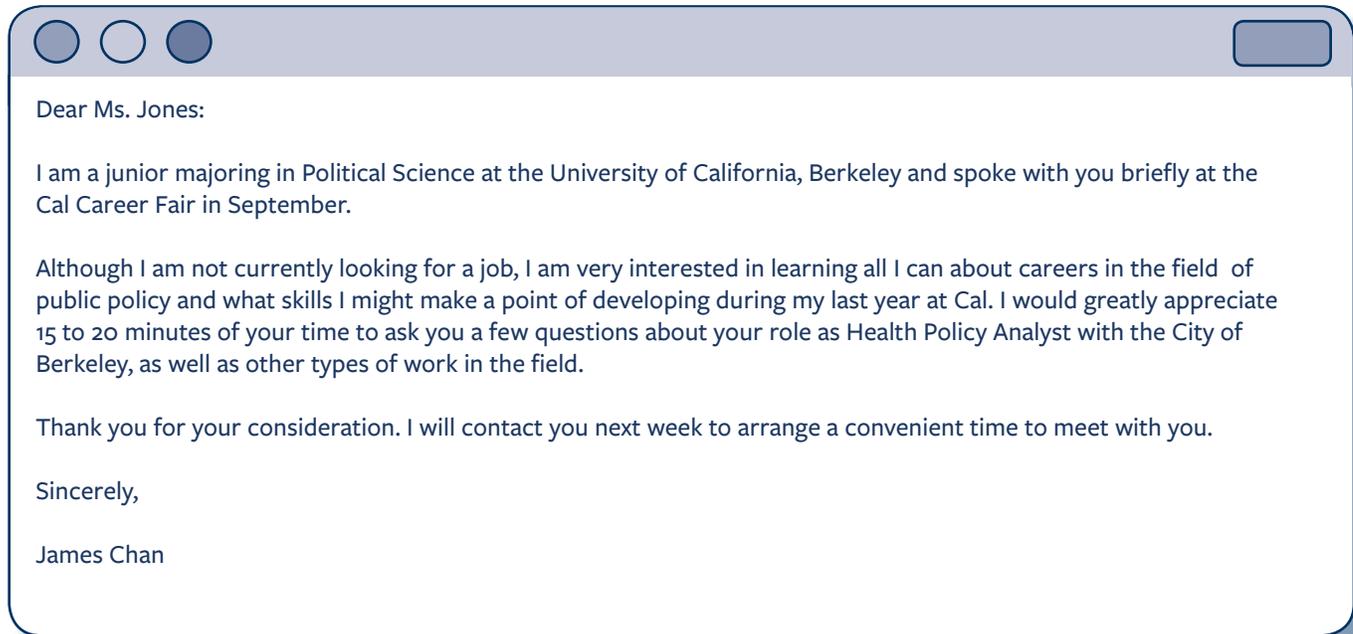
1. Identify People to Interview. Here's How:

- People you already know, even if they aren't in fields of interest to you, can lead you to people who are. This includes family, friends, peers, GSIs, professors, former employers/coworkers, etc.
- Search LinkedIn for professionals including alumni in a specific role, or in a specific industry you'd like to know more about.
- Use the @Cal Career Network to identify Cal alumni who will talk to you about their careers.
- Attend networking events and seminars to identify possible contacts.

2. Initiate Contact

- Contact the person by email, phone, or letter.
- Mention how you got their name (e.g., let them know if a mutual acquaintance referred you, Cal alumni network, LinkedIn, etc).
- Emphasize you are looking for information, not a job, and that are flexible with scheduling and time.

Example: Asking for an Informational Interview



3. Prepare for the Interview

Develop a 30 second overview to introduce yourself, including your reasons for contacting this person. Plan open ended questions to keep conversation flowing rather than questions that call for yes/no answers.

4. Conduct the Informational Interview

- Phone or in-person
- Dress appropriately if in person as you want to make a positive impression even though this is not a job interview.
- Restate that your objective is to get information and advice, not a job.
- Take notes if you like, ask for a business card, and ask for suggestions of other people to talk to.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

- What is a typical day like for you?
- What are common entry-level jobs in this field?
- Can you tell me about your career journey, and what led you here?
- What are the rewards/challenges/frustrations of your work?
- What tips or advice do you have for a college student interested in this company/industry/line of work?
- What are the most important skills or qualities necessary to be a successful entry level candidate at this field/in this industry?
- What steps should I take to prepare to enter this field?
- Where do you see growth or change in this industry?

5. Follow-up

- Send a thank-you note within 1-2 days to express your appreciation.
- Keep in touch. Mention that you followed up on their advice and tell them how things are going.
- This relationship could become an important part of your professional network.