



SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR MENTORS

EDUCATION AND PREPARATION

- ◆ How much formal education is needed in your field? What sort of special training or advanced degree is required?
- ◆ What are the important characteristics (personal traits/qualities) for someone entering this field?
- ◆ What kinds of experience do employers want?
- ◆ What kind of extracurricular activities and/or volunteer experiences would be beneficial?
- ◆ Are there minors/electives/special knowledge or skills that would be helpful in this field?
- ◆ What are the most important skills someone should have to be successful in this occupation?
- ◆ What types of part-time, full-time or summer jobs should I currently be seeking that will prepare me for this career path?
- ◆ What personal attributes/qualities do you think are important for career success?
- ◆ What specific skills or personal qualities are important?

WORKING CONDITIONS

- ◆ What is your job title?
- ◆ Would you please describe your organization (its goal, size, structure, etc.).
- ◆ What type of training did you receive when you started your first job?
- ◆ What is the typical career path in this field? What are the entry-level positions?
- ◆ How many hours per week are you expected to work? Do you put in additional hours?
- ◆ What other things are expected of you outside of working hours?
- ◆ What is a typical day on the job like for you?
- ◆ What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your work?
- ◆ In what ways can this job be stressful?

- ◆ How much variety does this job involve? What is the pace of work?
- ◆ What times of year are busiest/slowest?
- ◆ Does travel factor into this job?
- ◆ What are the daily pressures that you contend with?
- ◆ What is the starting salary for an entry-level position?

INDUSTRY AND ADVANCEMENT

- ◆ How has the field changed since you first started your career?
- ◆ What are the trends/challenges that you see in the future of this field?
- ◆ What is a major challenge you face today?
- ◆ How is the job market for your field in this area of the country? Is it difficult to find an opening? Is there an area that's best for starting such a career?
- ◆ How long should I expect to stay in an entry-level position?
- ◆ What are the opportunities for advancement?
- ◆ What would be the next step in a career path for a job like this?

NETWORKING

- ◆ How did you find your first job after graduation? What avenues did you explore to find job openings in your field?
- ◆ What role does networking play, if any, to help break into this field?
- ◆ How important is it to know someone in the industry?
- ◆ What professional associations or organizations are useful to belong to in this field?
- ◆ What magazines, journals, websites are important to read in this field?

ABOUT YOUR MENTOR

- ◆ What is your background?
- ◆ Describe your career path. How have you progressed to your present position?
- ◆ Why did you get into this field? Did someone/something significant impact choosing this career?
- ◆ Do you belong to any professional affiliations?
- ◆ Do you read any field-specific journals or magazines?
- ◆ What are the things you find personally rewarding in your career?
- ◆ What are the things you find frustrating or disappointing?
- ◆ If you were starting over, would you plan your career the same way? What would you do differently?
- ◆ If your job were suddenly eliminated, what other kind of work could you do?

ADVICE AND OTHER QUESTIONS

- ◆ What was the most surprising part of your transition from university to work?
- ◆ Do you have any additional information that might be helpful?
- ◆ What advice do you have for someone planning to start a career in this field?
- ◆ What do you see as the biggest challenges new graduates face when they enter your industry?
- ◆ What are some other jobs in your field that are similar to your own?
- ◆ Would you be willing to critique my resumé/cover letter? Can you offer any suggestions?
- ◆ Do you have any suggestions on how I should prepare for a job interview?