

Writing an Approach Email

Information interviews are interviews with individuals who work in a role, field, or organization that you are interested in learning more about. It is very important to note that this is not asking for a job, but you are asking to learn from them. Through these meetings you are able to show your interest in the field, your initiative to reach out, and your personality fit. The goal is to build a lasting professional relationship to help you expand your knowledge and networks.

Information interviews can be conducted over the phone, through email, or most preferably in person. An 'approach email' refers to the initial email you may be sending out to a professional when requesting an information interview. Be sure to send the email from a professional email address such as your Carleton account, and to include a concise subject line.

Below is an example of how you can structure an approach email.

Hi _____,

The greeting. You want to personalize your greeting to be addressing someone specific.

First section. Briefly introduce who you are such as your name, your education, and key professional interests or experiences you have. Provide some context as to why you are reaching out to this professional or how you came to learn about them (e.g., you met at the conference, found them through LinkedIn's Alumni Search Tool, etc.). If someone else had referred you or recommended that you speak to this person, ensure you have asked for permission to mention who referred you here. This section is usually quite brief, 3-4 sentences in length.

Second section. Demonstrate that you have researched the organization and are familiar with who they are and what they do. You then want to highlight why you are contacting this person specifically (e.g., their role in an organization, their publications, a workshop they facilitated, etc.) State your request for an information interview as clearly and as specifically as possible to increase the likelihood of follow-through. Instead of writing that you would like to meet with them "sometime" try to specify a date within a few weeks of this initial contact. Regarding location, try to meet in a public location that is professional (e.g., coffee shop or their office) and offer to meet in a spot that is convenient for them.

Third section. Thank the professional for taking the time to read your email. You can also mention here that you will follow-up in a week or that they can contact you at any time at your email address.

The closing.

Sincerely yours,

First Name Last Name



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