A Career Exploration Interview is a relaxed conversation where you ask someone working in a career field that interests you for information and advice. These interviews are powerful tools to help build your personal network and give you direction in your future career choices. Here are some tips on how to find, approach, and interview professionals.

**STEP 1: RESEARCH**

1. **Identify career paths**
   You can research a wide variety of careers using our career exploration tools at careers.byu.edu. Additionally, visiting with a mentor at the Career Studio at this stage can help you research and narrow down possible career paths.

2. **Make a list of questions**
   As you are researching different careers, you are likely to have questions. They can be about anything: future job growth, salary, schooling, a day in the life, etc. (The back side of this handout has a list of possible questions.)

**STEP 2: FIND A PROFESSIONAL**

This can often feel daunting. But don’t worry – there are many ways to find someone to talk to, and people are often willing to talk. (Many of them were once college students too!) A few possibilities:

1. LinkedIn Alumni Tool (linkedin.com/alumni)
2. Cougar Connect
3. Ask professors if they have any connections in the industry
4. Ask everyone you know

**STEP 3: REACH OUT**

When reaching out to professionals, it is important to make a good impression. Here’s an example of how to ask for an interview:

“Hello Mr./Ms. ________,

I am a student at Brigham Young University currently studying ________. I have been looking into career paths in ________ and came across your name on LinkedIn. ________ referred me to contact you to better understand the day to day activities of someone working in your field. Would it be possible to schedule 20-30 minutes with you at your convenience to ask a few questions?”

- Your Name

**STEP 4: The Interview**

Double check with them and confirm how much time you have before you start. To be courteous, this interview should typically last 30 minutes or less. Have a list of all the questions you would like to ask right next to you in the order of most important. Don’t worry if you don’t get to them all. You can always ask them later.

At the end of the interview, ask if you can connect with them on LinkedIn if you haven’t already and thank them. Also, ask for their work address or email so you can send a thank you note. This is very important. If you decide to go into that field, they could be a valuable asset to helping you enter the workforce and possibly get a job in the future.
STEP 5: THANK YOU NOTE AND FOLLOW-UP

1. Thank You's
It is important for the contact to feel your sincere gratitude for the time they took out of their day to help you. Within 24 hours, send the contact a thank-you email:

Date
Dear Mr./Ms. ____,
• Thank them for meeting with you.
• Include a thoughtful statement of impact/take-away/meaning for you personally. (For example, "I appreciated your frankness in discussing the schedule of a tax accountant in March-April. I hadn't considered that a 90-hour work week would be necessary during those times.")
• Thank them again for their time and what they did for you.
Closing
Your Full Name

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

Tasks and Responsibilities
• Describe a typical work day.
• What aspect of your job do you find most challenging/rewarding?
• Do you more often work individually or as part of a team?
• Can you describe the typical work/life balance in this field?
• Salary: What is the average salary for someone in this field?

Preparation for Career Path
• What do you think is the best academic preparation for this profession?
• How did you become interested in this field?
• How did you know this was the field for you?
• What are the qualifications you look for in a new hire?
• Is there anything you wished you knew before entering this field?
• What else should I know to make an informed decision about choosing a career in this field?
• Do you have any recommendations for other people I should speak with in the field to learn more? May I use your name when reaching out to him or her?

Industry Knowledge
• Is the advice you have passed on to me regarding this sector typical of the industry, or is it specific to your organization?
• Are there any professional associations that you are part of or suggest I join?
• Where do you see this industry going in the next 5-10 years?
• What industry publications would you recommend I read to help keep me informed of developments in this field?

Work-Life Balance
• What sacrifices have you had to make to succeed in this field, and do you feel the sacrifices were worth it?
• Do you have to put in any overtime or work on weekends?
• Do you ever take work home with you?
• How has this job affected your lifestyle?
• To what extent does this job present a challenge in terms of juggling work and family life?
• Is there flexibility in work hours, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?

Note: If these don’t work, try Googling Career Exploration Interview Questions and see what you can find.