



CAREER CONVERSATIONS

What is a career conversation?

A short conversation with a working professional where you can ask questions about their career and gain advice. You'll learn about a professional's background, day to day work, career path, and share a little about yourself including your interests and strengths.

Why should I do a career conversation?

The immediate goal is to gain information about a career path and help you decide if it is the right fit. But if you have a great networking conversation with someone, it could lead to job or internship opportunities in your second or third year. About 70-80% of jobs are never posted anywhere, they are just filled through networking.

How do I set up a career conversation?

Start by identifying someone who is doing work that interests you. Tap into the personal networks you already have, share your interests on social media, or search for UW alumni on LinkedIn

Resources:

- <https://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-washington/people/>
- fyp.washington.edu/alumni

In your message to a professional, introduce yourself, show the things you have in common, and explain why you are reaching out. Here's an example:

Request for Career Conversation

Hello,

My name is Emily Woo and I'm currently a junior English major at the University of Washington. I'm interested in pursuing a career where I can work on equity and diversity initiatives and I would love to learn more about the work you do with the City of Seattle. I'm wondering if I could buy you a cup of coffee or arrange a short phone conversation and hear more about your career path and your first steps after graduating from the UW. I have a flexible schedule and could chat whenever is convenient for you. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Emily Woo
University of Washington / English Major
206.555.1234 / woo@uw.edu



Advice to use when Contacting Alumni:

- Plan ahead and reach out to alumni far in advance and do not expect a response within 48 hours.
- Send each person an individual email and make sure to personalize it. Reaching out to a large group of alumni in one email is not professional.
- If you haven't received a response, an appropriate amount of time to wait until you send a follow-up email is a week.

What should I do to prepare for my career conversation?

Learn as much as you can about the person you will be meeting with and the work they do. Look at their LinkedIn profile and research the company they work for. Create a list of questions to ask, knowing the conversation may flow organically. Be prepared to talk about your own strengths and interests as well.

What should I expect during the career conversation?

If you are meeting in person, show up a little early so you can find a table that is quiet and easy to hear. Thank the professional for meeting with you and share a little information about yourself and why you wanted to meet with them. For a phone/online conversation, call right at the time arranged. Stay mindful of time as working professionals have busy schedules. At the end of the conversation, always ask if they know other people in the field that you could talk to. This allows you to continue building your network.

How should I follow up?

Within 24 hours, send a thank you email. Thank them for taking the time to meet with you and mention a few things you learned from the conversation. In this email, you can address them as you did when you met them. Here's an example:

Thank you for your time!

Hello again Doctor Taylor,

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me yesterday. It was great to hear your career story and how you got your start working for the City of Seattle. I especially appreciated learning how you are using the skills you developed as a UW English major in your work now. I'd love to stay in touch through LinkedIn if that's okay with you. I hope you have a great rest of the week.

Best wishes,

Emily Woo
University of Washington / English Major
206.555.1234 / woo@uw.edu

Next steps for your first year at UW:

- Set up an account in Handshake to learn about opportunities and career events
- Attend a workshop put on by the Career and Internship Center
 - Career Launch
 - Resumes and Cover Letters
 - Networking Lab
 - LinkedIn Lab
- Find UW alumni on LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-washington/people/>