

**California State University, Sacramento**

**Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration**

**RPTA 21:**

**Freshman Seminar: “Becoming an Educated Person”**

**Writing Assignment 1–Interview Report:**

Purpose:

An appraisal report on an interview of a professional practitioner of your choice within a variety of settings that reflect your intended discipline/career/major. You will contact the practitioner of your choice. Upon reaching an agreement with a practitioner, you will send them a cover letter to confirm the details of your visit (include in report). This assignment is an excellent opportunity for you to explore a career field that you might be interested in, plus it will give you the opportunity to network in your field of interest.

Informational interviewing is a great way to learn first-hand about career possibilities that interest you. It involves setting up an interview with a professional who currently has a job in a career you might be interested in. The interview must be done in person, but follow-up information can be obtained via telephone, Skype or email. When setting up the interview, it is important that you are clear that you are not seeking a job; that you are completing a class assignment where you are asking for information and advice only. A side benefit of informational interviews is that you will be familiar to potential employers and they might remember you if an internship or job becomes available. You will be pleasantly surprised regarding how many people will enjoy taking with you about what they do and how willing they are to offer advice to an interested student.

**Step 1: Decide who you want to interview.**

In choosing the practitioner, consider which career areas interest you the most. Use the internet, professional organization membership lists, etc. to locate a practitioner you are interested in. Choose a professional; para professionals do not count (ie. No skydiving/rafting/exercise instructors, no recreation Leaders – instead, arrange to talk to their supervisors). Do not interview personal/family friends or family members. Use this as an opportunity to network; a chance to meet new people in the field.

**Step 2: Prepare for your interview and tour.**

It is important that you be clear about your objective before you contact the professional. Write a brief script that explains why you are calling.

Once you have arranged a meeting date, send a cover letter thanking the practitioner for agreeing to meet with you (include a copy in your report). Use this as an opportunity to send the practitioner a list of questions and items you will need (ie. Business card). Before your meeting, familiarize yourself with the list of questions you need to answer. Beyond the list of questions, you may want to learn additional information.

**Step 3: Schedule and conduct the interview/tour**

* Once you have the meeting date/time set, DO NOT BE LATE. In fact, it is a good idea to show up 10-15 minutes early.
* During the interview/tour, dress professionally/conservatively. Be professional/businesslike, polite, and positive.

Be prepared with the questions your plan to ask. Have a notebook/pen, so you can take notes. Stay on task; avoid wasting the practitioner’s time. Questions 1-9 are required; additional questions can come from the list provided.

1. Name/Title of Practitioner (Include Business Card)

Address and Telephone/email:

Date/Time of visit:

1. Practitioner’s/ job responsibilities.
2. Practitioner’s Education and work experience.
3. Skills, behaviors, knowledge and/or attitudes required to succeed in this career.
4. Practitioner’s analysis of career opportunities in his/her career field (future projections).
5. Does this career work with diverse groups in our society? If so, how? If not, why not? (Remember, culture/diversity is not solely about ethnicity, but it is very broad to incorporate LGBT, special needs, socioeconomic differences, and more).
6. Major concerns, challenges, issues/problems of the agency/industry.
7. Additional questions asked
8. Personal reactions and comments.

Below is a list of additional questions to consider:

Questions about the career field:

* How did you get into this career?
* What do you like most about your job? Least?
* What are the biggest challenges you face in your job?
* How do you make a difference in people’s lives?
* What advice do you have for someone preparing for a career in this field?
* What kind of formal education do you recommend?
* What experience is necessary to get an entry level job in this field?

Questions about the organization/Industry:

* How did you get into this organization? What other organizations have you worked for?
* What would you say is unique about your organization?
* What is your work environment like?
* When there are job openings or internships, where are they advertised and how are they filled? Is this typical of other similar organizations?

Questions about future opportunities and salary:

* What are the employment prospects for entry level employees?
* Are internships common in this industry? What do interns typically do?
* What is the growth/promotion potential in this field?
* What areas are growing/changing in this field?
* Are there some regions that have a higher demand than others?

Follow-up questions:

* Can you recommend other professionals in this field with whom I should speak? May I use your name when I contact them?
* Is it okay if I contact you again if I have further questions?
* Which professional organizations/publications and other resources do you consider relevant?

**Step 4: Thank the practitioner.**

* When the interview is concluded, be sure to thank the practitioner for his/her time.
* ALWAYS send a thank you letter by mail after your visit (DO NOT USE EMAIL!). Attach a copy of your Thank You letter to your assignment.

**Step 5: Preparing the report:**

* Do not type in essay form. Follow the template provided, using question/answer format.
* Before submitting your assignment, be sure to proofread for format/structural/content errors.