

Preparation Check list of *Career Conversation Meetings*

Research

- Review the website of the school/unit you are visiting to get a sense of its mission and size. You can find links by on these pages: <http://www.harvard.edu/schools> and <http://www.harvard.edu/about-harvard/administrative-offices>
- Review jobs that may be posted for that school/unit so you know what kind of skills are being sought for positions in that area – **but keep in mind that this meeting is NOT a job interview.**
- Review the key centers, departments and programs. If there is a particular center within a school that you are interested in, review that area’s webpage thoroughly.

Prepare

Based on your research, prepare good questions that will help you learn more about the type of work being done in each school/unit. Some *sample* general questions may include:

- What are the skills and qualities that make people most successful here?
- What is special about working at this school/unit?
- What has surprised you about the work that is done here?

As part of your preparation, you should also be ready to discuss your interests:

- Be prepared to tell them briefly about your specific skills and interests and generally be able to answer the question “Tell me about yourself and why you are here.”

Do’s

- Have a current resume available. Provide it when asked**
- Make sure you have a confirmed meeting time**
- Arrive on time
- Cancel or reschedule the meeting with as *much notice* as possible
- Dress professionally; you don’t need a suit, but dress nicely
- Respect time limits; plan on about 15-30 minutes for a one-on-one meeting
- Listen and take notes - This is your opportunity to gain new insights and knowledge about a school or unit and your notes may come in handy if you want to follow up later
- Send a follow-up thank you note to anyone you meet with

Don’ts

- Arrive without a confirmed meeting time
- Ask for a job** - you can ask about what skills are most sought after
- Expect your host to do all the talking; be prepared with questions
- Appear unfocused and unclear about your skills and interests

Additional tools and resources to assist with networking and informational interviewing:

- [How to Prepare as an Internal Candidate](#): online course, access via the Harvard Training Portal
- [Tell Me About Yourself Template](#): Helps you create an opening statement when networking
- [Networking: Presenting Yourself in the Best Possible Way](#) – Webinar/video
- [Tutorial on Informational Interviewing](#) – from QuintCareers