

Accelerated MBA Informational Interview & Reflection Essay

Informational Interview Requirements:

All junior Accelerated Degree Program (ADP) MBA applicants must complete an informational interview and submit a reflection essay as part of their degree applications. This essay is due by May 1 along with all other application materials.

You must arrange an informational interview with an employee who is working in a position or industry of interest to you. The employee you interview should be a mid-level employee with a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field/industry. The interviewee cannot be a family member or close friend, and cannot be a Clark employee. You should conduct the informational interview with a U.S.-based employee.

While we strongly encourage you to make new connections through this process, if you are currently working at a company where you would like to pursue a long-term career, you may interview an employee at that company. The employee should not be your supervisor, and should work in a different department/area of the company than the one where you are employed.

We also strongly encourage you to conduct your informational interview in person. You will get a more meaningful learning experience from this exercise than if this were to be done via phone/Skype.

You should conduct research into the industry *you* are interested in prior to the informational interview. Resources for this research are provided at the end of this document.

Informational Interview Questions

We encourage you to ask the questions below as a starting point for the informational interview, but please add more based on your own interests and research. This is not an exhaustive list.

- How and why did you decide to pursue a career in this field?
- When and how did you first enter this field?
- What do you enjoy about working in this job/industry?
- What are current career challenges that you face in your work?
- According to my research, current challenges in the industry are ... (you should name the challenges they identified in background research on the industry). Do you agree? In what ways do these challenges affect your work or organization?
- How is your academic background related to this field/industry?
- Can you explain some regular, daily responsibilities in your current position?
- What advice do you have for a college student interested in pursuing a career in this field?

Reflection Essay Requirement

After researching the industry and conducting the informational interview you should prepare your reflection essay to submit with your application.

Your essay should be written in an essay/narrative form suited to the reflective nature of the assignment. It should not be written in a question/answer format or in bulleted form.

Connections to your research and the informational interview are expected in your essay. You must include a reference page with the assignment. You should use American Psychological Association (APA) style for your reference list (see <https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA/DocAPA.html>).

Your essay should not exceed 3 pages (not including your reference page). In addition to the 3-page reflection, please also include a cover sheet with the following information about the person interviewed.

- Name of person
- Title
- Organization name
- Length of time in position and/or at company
- Educational background
- Date of interview
- Phone number or email address of person interviewed

Self-Reflection Questions to Address in Essay

In what ways did this exercise confirm or change your perception of and interest in this particular industry or type of job?

Do you think that this field is a good match for your skills, abilities, and interests? Why or why not?

To what extent is an MBA important in your field of interest?

What could you do during your graduate program to help you best prepare for the position/industry you are interested in?

Why do you feel like GSOM should accept you into a graduate business program? How will you personally contribute to the learning environment in your classes and in the larger GSOM community?

Evaluation

Your reflection essay is a critical part of your accelerated degree application. The evaluation criteria will include ability to follow directions; connections made to industry research and the informational interview; quality of writing; level of detail (depth); connections made between industry and your own skills/interest; connections to how the graduate program you are applying to will facilitate your pursuit of this career; and reflections on implications for future personal development.

Industry Research Resources

You should use the links below as starting points in your research and find additional resources as your work through your interviews and self-reflection. You are encouraged to meet with the reference librarians at Goddard Library Reference Desk to obtain assistance in identifying other resources. As noted above, your essay should include a list of the sources you used.

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Careers in Business: <http://careers-in-business.com/>

Good start to understanding careers in Accounting, Consulting, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Human Resources, Management, Marketing, Non-Profit, Operations Management, and Strategic Planning with related linked resources within each industry section.

Data Analytics Career Starter:

<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/Data-Analysis-Skills.pdf>

Sports Management Careers:

<https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/career-resource-center/careers-in-sports/>