

Networking Interviews Prompt Sheet

Questions to ask about organisations and individuals

Aims of this sheet

Before meeting with a contact as part of a networking process, you must find out some information about their organisation – this will ensure that you come across as interested and well prepared. It is also important to give some thought to the questions that you will ask your contact when you meet them. You will want to find out more about their organisation and also seek out advice they can give you as a result of their own experience. This sheet will provide the following starting points:

- Questions you need to start asking, prior to any meeting, about your contact's organisation
- Questions you need to ask individuals about their career and what they have learned from it

Questions about organisations

Prior to meeting with your contact your research should enable you to find out as much as possible about their organisation. Listed below are some of the broad questions which you should be aiming to find answers to, through your research:

- *"What does this organisation do?"*
- *"How is this organisation structured?"*
- *"How successful is this organisation; what does it regard as its major achievements and strengths?"*
- *"What recent press coverage has this organisation received (including scandals!)"*
- *"What is the attitude, within the organisation towards this publicity?"*
- *"What sort of work culture exists within this organisation?"*
- *"What sort of person fits in well into this organisation?"*
- *"Do you have any knowledge, skills or experience which is particularly relevant to this organisation?"*

You may not find answers to all these questions at this stage so your research should also help you to:

- Think up questions you will need to ask your contact about their organisation when you meet them

Key questions to ask networking contacts

The following questions provide a starting point for any discussion with a contact where the key objective is to get advice and information on getting into a career:

- *"Can you describe your current role?"*
- *"What are the most and least satisfactory aspects of the work for you?"*
- *"How have you reached your current position? What are the typical career paths in your field?"*
- *"What are the main lessons you have learned?"*
- *"Would you have done anything differently?"*
- *"What skills/qualifications and experience are vital for getting in and getting on in this career area?"*
- *"What is the range of salaries and rewards available at different stages in your profession?"*
- *"How would you describe the work culture of your organisation? Is this typical in your work field?"*
- *"How is your profession changing?"*
- *"What advice can you give me on ... (getting into this career, further research etc.)?"*
- *"Do you know of any opportunities, in your firm or elsewhere, for ... (work placements, jobs etc.)?"*
- *"Is there anybody else it might be useful for me to speak to?"*

These checklists will get you started but neither is exhaustive – also try to think up your own questions.