

## Sample questions to ask your Mentor:

### Education/Preparation:

- How much formal education is needed in your field? What sort of special training or advanced degree is required?
- What are the important characteristics (personal traits/qualities) for someone entering this field?
- What kinds of experience do employers want?
- What kinds of extra-curricular activities and/or volunteer experiences would be beneficial?
- Are there minors/electives/special knowledge and skills that would be helpful in this field?
- What are the most important skills someone should have to find success in this occupation?
- What types of part-time, full-time or summer jobs should I be doing right now which may prepare me for this career path?
- What personal attributes/qualities do you think are important for career success?
- What specific skills or personal qualities are important?

### Working Conditions:

- What is your job title?
- Would you please describe your organization (It's goal, size, structure, etc.)
- What type of training did you receive when you started your first job?
- What is the typical career path in this field? What are the entry-level positions?
- How many hours per week are you expected to work? Do you put in additional hours?
- What other things are expected of you outside of working hours?
- What is a typical day on the job like for you?
- What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your work?
- In what ways can this job be stressful?
- How much variety does this job involve? What is the pace of work?
- What times of year are busiest/slowest?
- In what ways is travel a factor in this job?
- What are pressures that you contend with?
- What is the starting salary for an entry-level position?

### Industry/Advancement:

- How has the field changed since you first started your career?
- Where trends/challenges for this field do you see the future?
- What is a major challenge you face today?
- How is the job market for your field in this area of the country? Is it difficult to find an opening? Is there an area that's best for starting such a career?
- How long should I expect to stay in an entry-level position?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What would be the next step in a career path for a job like this?

### Networking:

- How did you find your first job after graduation? What avenues did you explore to find job openings in your field?
- What role does networking play, if any, to help break into this field?
- How important is it to know someone in the industry?
- What professional associations or organizations are useful to belong to in this field?
- What magazines, journals, web sites are important to read in this field?

### About Your Mentor:

- What is your background?
- Describe your career path. How have you progressed to your present position?
- Why did you get into this field? Did someone/something significant impact choosing this career?
- Do you belong to any professional affiliations?
- Do you read any field-specific journals or magazines?
- What are the things you find personally rewarding in your career?
- What are the things you find frustrating or disappointing?
- If you were starting out again, would you plan your career the same way? What would you do differently?
- If your job were suddenly eliminated what other kinds of work could you do?

### Advice/Other:

- What was the most surprising part of your transition from university to work?
- Do you have any additional information that might be helpful?
- What advice do you have for someone planning to start a career in this field?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges new graduates face when they enter your industry?
- What are some other jobs in your field that are similar to your own?
- Would you be willing to critique my résumé/cover letter? Can you offer any suggestions?
- Do you have any suggestions on how I should prepare for a job interview?