

Interview a Researcher

You will interview a current researcher about their perspective on research and the research process. The researcher can be either a faculty member or a graduate/undergraduate student from LTU or any other university.

Before the interview:

First, you will need to identify a researcher to interview. Consider professors you know from previous classes, research faculty on your department's webpage, or student researchers you have met at campus events. Faculty often have collaborators at other universities that are also good potential interviewees. Once you have chosen a researcher, please reach out to them, asking to schedule 15–20 minutes to interview them about their research and their perspectives on scientific research.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Be flexible. Your interviewee is busy, so work with their schedule to find a convenient time. This may include using a phone or video call instead of an in-person meeting.
- Arrive on time and end the interview promptly. Your interviewee will appreciate your respect for their time!
- If you are meeting in person, dress professionally.
- Prepare your questions in advance. This will help you feel confident and be mindful of the interviewee's time, but feel free to modify questions or let the conversation flow naturally too.

During the interview:

Below is a list of possible questions for your interview:

1. How would you define “research”?
2. Why do you think research is important? What are the most and least satisfying aspects of research?

3. How did you first get interested in research?
4. Tell me about an interesting research project you are currently working on. What spurred this project or research question?
5. What is something in your field that you're curious about? What questions would you like answers to?
6. Have you made any unexpected connections or been involved in multidisciplinary projects in your research career?
7. What are some of the ways that your research (or research broadly) can impact everyday people? How is your research valuable to the world?
8. What are the top 3 traits or skills you would use to describe a researcher?
9. What traits help someone succeed in research? Do you have any advice for students interested in getting involved in research?

Feel free to use or modify these questions. You should also generate at least one question of your own.

You may want to take notes during the interview to help with your reflection later. Bring a notebook or a few sheets of paper along with your interview questions. If you would like to record the interview, remember to ask your interviewee for permission.

After the interview:

Take 15-20 minutes after the interview concludes to reflect on your experience. Answer the following questions:

1. Did the interviewee's definition or description of research differ from your perception of research? Did it differ from the definitions included in the video?
2. How did this interview influence the way you think about research (if at all)?

3. Did this interview make you feel more confident about participating in research? Why or why not?
4. Do you identify with any of the traits of a successful researcher named by your interviewee? Were you inspired by any of the projects you discussed?
5. What surprised you most about this interview?

Don't forget to send your interviewee a thank you email!