

Virtual Interview Tips

Preparation

- Download the [Skype](http://www.skype.com) (www.skype.com), [Zoom](http://illinois.zoom.us) (illinois.zoom.us), MSTeams, or other software prior to the interview
- Create a professional username
- Ensure you have quality speakers and a microphone
- Practice using the platform with friends/family before interviewing to learn the program and make sure the technology is working well
- Test your link, camera, and microphone the day of the interview to verify all equipment is working

Set the Scene

- Control outside noise (silence cell phone, TV, pet, friends/family)
- Select a clean clutter-free room for the interview or hang a roll of seamless, neutral-colored paper behind you
- Make sure your background is clean and neat and further reflects your personality and professionalism
- Choose clothing without patterns and use appropriate colors
- Use a room/space with light; a lack of light will create shadows; use warmer hues & diffused/softer light
- Select a good camera and microphone
- Set your camera so it is at eye level...don't create a double chin or make the interviewer look up your nose...the camera should also be far enough away to provide a good view

Interview Preparation

- Look professional, avoid shirts with patterns or that show too much skin; solid colors are recommended...deeper blue tones are better than reds for the camera
- Be cautious and dress professionally on top...and bottom...as sometimes employers will ask you to stand up, just to see what else you have on!
- Avoid distracting jewelry and accessories (no sunglasses); don't wear shiny jewelry that might catch the light on the camera
- Be freshly shaven and/or wear conservative make-up
- Prepare interview answers and questions...
- Put notes on cards that you can 'hide' from the camera and refer to only if you need to jog your memory

Dealing with the Technology during the Interview

- It is still an interview! Smile, make eye contact (watch the camera, not the screen!!), take notes, and prepare ahead of time
- Master your 'digital handshake' (a slow, confident nod with a smile)
- Look directly into the web cam when speaking, rather than at the screen (download a photo of the hiring manager, print it, and make a hole in the picture just big enough to allow the camera lens to see through...then tape it where your camera is to direct your eyes)
- Keep your voice at a medium volume, and don't let your pitch get too high so that it comes across well
- Use engaging body language (e.g. lean forward) and move enough that the interviewer doesn't think the screen is frozen, but avoid excessive hand gestures or other large movements
- Delays can occur so let the interviewer finish speaking before you respond

Acing the Telephone Interview

- Practice! Using a telephone to convey points is very different from doing so in person. You are unable to use your nonverbals to emphasize or make a point, so your verbal language must be clear, concise, and comprehensive. In addition, familiarize yourself with using speaker phones so that you are comfortable with them.
- Anticipate the dialogue: Write a general script with answers to questions you might be asked. Focus on skills, experiences, and accomplishments. Practice until you are comfortable. Then replace the script with cue cards that you keep by the telephone.
- If the interview is with more than one person, write down the names and abbreviated titles of each interviewer. Then, when you have an opportunity to ask questions, seek to include all of the members of the group by asking them directed, individual questions.
- Keep your notes handy: Have any key information, including your resume, notes about the company, and any cue cards you have prepared, next to the phone. You will sound prepared if you don't have to search for information. Make sure you also have a notepad and pen so you can jot down notes and any questions you would like to ask at the end of the interview. (see first page for more details)
- Be prepared to think on your feet: If you are asked to participate in a role-playing situation, give short but concise answers.
- Avoid salary issues: If you are asked how much money you would expect, try to avoid the issue by using a delaying statement or give a broad range with a \$15,000 spread. At this point, you do not know how much the job is worth.
- Push for a face-to-face meeting: Sell yourself by closing with something like: "I am very interested in exploring the possibility of working in your company. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you in person so we can both better evaluate each other."
- Try to reschedule surprise interviews: You will not be your best with a surprise interview. If you were called unexpectedly, try to set an appointment to call back by saying something like: "I have a scheduling conflict at this time. Can I call you back tomorrow after work, say 6 PM?"