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PHONE/VIRTUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

What is a phone/virtual interview?

Phone or virtual job interviews are becoming increasingly common in the hiring process. These refer to a screening process that allows the employers to speak to you via a phone conversation or video conference before they meet you face-to-face. You may also be asked to do a recorded video interview, meaning you will need to record your answers virtually to a set number of questions. A video/phone interview may stand alone as the sole interview that will lead to a job offer, but more commonly, employers use video/phone interviews to screen candidates who are selected from the resume and cover letter review. Successful candidates from the phone/video interviews are often moved forward to an in-person interview at the organization.

Preparation Before the Interview

- Follow the same guidelines as you would for preparing for an in-person interview.
- Get prepared by researching the company, the position, and the people who will be interviewing you. Practice common interview questions, and prepare one to two questions to ask.

Interview Location

- Whether you will need to speak to the employer on the phone or via video conferencing, or record your answers, it is important to attend your interview in a quiet space without interruption. Virtual interviews may last from 20 minutes to a couple of hours. When you are offered the interview, you may be told how long the interview will be. If the information is important to you, you can always ask for your own planning purposes. To be safe, you should plan to reserve at least half an hour longer than the proposed interview length.

You may conduct the interview in your room or reserve a library study room, etc. If you choose the personal room environment, make sure you let other members who use the same space know. Arrange for a time you will not be interrupted. If you have pets or children, avoid being in the same room with them and arrange care if necessary. A quiet space not only shows your professionalism and respect, it also allows you to concentrate and be more comfortable during the interview.

For any interview that allows for video, here is a list of suggestions on what are appropriate in your interview space:

- No offensive or questionable objects in the background (ex. alcohol, inappropriate pictures, messy room, dirty clothes, etc.).
- A blank background (like an empty wall) may be too plain. Instead, choose a space with wall art, a healthy plant, a bookcase, or anything simple and professional.
- Consider your lighting. It is best to have the main source of light come from in front of you. Consider sitting in front of a window or using a floor lamp.
- Keep your desk area clean to prevent distraction.
- Consider a smaller room or a room with carpet or furniture: a room with objects in it can effectively deflect the sound and therefore lead to less echo.



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Technology

Most likely the tech device you will need to use for your virtual interview is your cell phone, your laptop, your tablet, etc. It should be a device you are already familiar with. However, still consider the following tips when it comes to using technology:

- Make sure that your device is fully charged or connected to a power source before the interview.
- Test your cell reception at your prepared location by asking a friend to give you a call.
- Get your device set up at least 10 minutes before the interview.
- Test your microphone, sound, and camera on your electronic device of choice. Download the chosen software whether it is Skype, Zoom, or something else. Ask a friend to download the same software and test it before the interview.
- Stack up your device using a box or several books so the camera is at eye level. Sit about one arm's length from your camera.
- Practice looking at the camera instead of your screen when speaking.

Additional Tips

- Practice! Schedule a mock interview appointment with Career Development.
- Treat the phone/virtual interview like a regular face-to-face interview.
- Keep your resume nearby so you can refer to it if needed, but do not rely on your notes. You do not want to appear to be reading from something or looking down all the time.
- Log in to the interview about 10 minutes early if it's virtual.
- For a video interview, dress professionally head-to-toe in case you have to stand up and move around.
- Sit up straight, and don't forget to smile!
- Send a thank you note to each person who interviewed you within 24 hours of the interview.