

Student Guide to Skype/Video and Telephone Interviews (July 2020)

Telephone Interviews:

What to expect:

- They are **STILL REAL INTERVIEWS** and should be prepared for the same way.
- Telephone interviews are more common with large companies and jobs overseas. They are also common in sales-related roles.
- Companies who still use phone interviews include: Tesco, Vodafone, HSBC, Shell, BT.
- Brief telephone interviews (or screenings) are very common in graduate programme applications before invitations to assessment centres.
- Telephone interviews can last anywhere between 20 minutes and an hour.
- For some sales roles, companies may use a telephone interview to carry out a role play.

Top tips:

Do:

- Do all the same research and preparation as you would for an in-person interview.
- Telephone interviews can move quite quickly so preparation is imperative.
- Brainstorm a list of your key skills / qualities / selling points and have it to hand for the call.
- Have your application form / CV/ notes in front of you for reference.
- Make sure your phone is charged and NOT ON SILENT. Turn off notifications for other apps so you don't get distracted.
- Have a glass of water to hand, you're going to be speaking a lot.
- Warn other people in the house that you are expecting a call so you don't get interrupted.
- If they call when you aren't expecting it – don't rush into the interview. Ask for a minute to go somewhere quiet, or if it's a very bad time, politely reschedule a call-back.
- Check your voicemail message – is it something you would be happy for a potential employer to hear? If not, re-do it.
- SMILE – smiling whilst on the phone has been proven to improve tone and the way you come across on a call.
- Consider sitting at a desk, it may help you feel more professional than sitting on your bed.
- ACTIVE LISTENING – a good way to show you are listening is to reflect the employer's words back to them. This also keeps your answer focused on what the question is actually asking.

Don't:

- Don't just read off your notes – it will sound stilted.
- Don't rush into your answers. Quality, not quantity – pause and reflect on your responses.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer - make sure they have finished speaking.

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- Don't forget that employers cannot see your face. Replace non-verbal cues such as nodding with interjections such as "yes" "uhuh" "I understand" where appropriate. Be positive – but not pushy. REMEMBER TO LISTEN.

Skype/Google Hangout Interviews:

What to expect:

- These are just as serious as face-to-face interviews and should be treated the same way.
- These are very common for jobs overseas.
- Companies will schedule a time just as they would for an in person interview.
- Not all companies will necessarily use Skype – check you understand the software and that it works on your device in advance.

Do:

- Treat this as you would an in person interview – do all the same preparation and dress appropriately. Dark colours work best and avoid patterns as they can be blurry / distracting on a screen.
- Consider having your notes / application to hand for reference – out of shot. Make sure it's not distracting for you.
- Maintain eye contact with the camera – consider turning off the view of your own face so that you focus on the interviewer.
- Make sure you don't have anything distracting in the camera frame and check the lighting.
- Choose somewhere quiet so you won't be disturbed – warn your housemates / family you are doing an interview.
- Get a friend to Skype you before the interview to check everything is working and looks good. Consider doing a few practice calls and recording yourself for review.
- Ensure you have alternative contact details for the interview in case you do have technical issues.

Don't:

- Don't do anything you wouldn't normally do in a face-to-face interview. Sit up, smile, and make sure you're prepared.
- Don't leave it to the last minute to test your camera and the video-call software.
- Don't mumble – make sure the mic is correctly positioned and that you are audible in advance of the call.
- Don't fidget – having the call in a familiar setting can make you less aware of your body language. Consider sitting at a desk or in a chair with a straight back.
- Don't accidentally interrupt the interviewer. Be aware of lag or disruptions in the call – this is also a good way to take a few seconds to think about your responses.
- Don't be embarrassed if you can't hear the interviewer – it's better just to admit it than to muddle your way through the interview.
- Don't get flustered by technical difficulties, sometimes they just happen. Try and resolve them calmly and move on. This is a chance to show your problem solving abilities.

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Video Interviews:

What to expect:

- Companies issue questions and you record your response.
- In some cases, the questions may be issued in advance, in others you may have 30 seconds to read the question and 2 minutes to answer.
- Some companies will let you record your answer until you are happy with the video.
- This form of interview allows companies to ask everyone the same questions and to review candidates' answers as many times as they need.
- Companies who use this style of interview include Diageo, Jameson, and the Civil Service.

Do:

- Dress as formally as you would for an in person interview.
- Use the given time to make sure you read and understand the question.
- Research the company and prepare bullet points as to why you are the right candidate for the job – have these to hand! BUT OUT OF SIGHT OF THE CAMERA.
- Review your CV or application form. Have it for reference.
- Watch any tutorials / read any notes or instructions the employer provides for how their video interviews work.
- Do a test recording to see how you come across on screen.
- Look at the camera – it should feel like you are talking directly to the interviewer. Eye contact matters.
- Pick a blank background for your recording. The focus should be on you – hang a sheet behind you if necessary.

Don't:

- Don't forget to check your lighting and sound. Generally speaking side lighting eg lamps, looks better than directly overhead to avoid shadows.
- Don't fidget or get distracted by your surroundings – pick a quiet place to do your recording.

NB Useful links:

<https://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/1252/job-interviews-by-skype>

<https://manunicareersblog.com/2014/01/30/skypevideo-interviews-dos-and-donts/>

<https://theundercoverrecruiter.com/video-interview/>

<https://www.grb.uk.com/careers-advice/graduate-telephone-interviews>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21334710>

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/interviews.html?tab=telephone-interviews>

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