

quick tips Telephone and Virtual Interviews

Telephone Interviews

Telephone and virtual (Skype) interviews are a common practice companies use to narrow down the amount of candidates they bring in for an in-person interview. Both should be treated as a formal interview and you should prepare just as you would for an in-person interview. For tips on how to prepare for an interview and to learn about common questions asked, please see our [Quick Tips: Interviewing Basics](#) guide.

Represent yourself professionally

Make sure you have a clear, professional voicemail message recorded before you begin the job/internship search process. Be prepared to answer the phone in a professional manner at all times (e.g., "Hello, this is [your name]") and after identifying it is the recruiter/company representative calling you, thank them for this opportunity (e.g., "Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today"). If you aren't sure who is calling you and you don't have a previously scheduled phone interview, let the phone go to voicemail. You want to ensure you are prepared for a phone interview. Therefore, do not conduct one if you are not.

Find a quiet location

Ideally, you want to conduct your phone interview in a quiet space with no distractions. Avoid taking these calls if you are outside where traffic/passersby could be a distraction, or in a noisy place such as your residence hall. If you cannot secure a quiet space, you may reserve a room in the CPDC Interview Center (CUC Lower Level) by emailing recruit@andrew.cmu.edu.

Show confidence

Although your interviewer cannot see you during a phone interview, there are many things you can do to convey confidence. Dress professionally as if you were going to an on-site interview, smile during the conversation (it actually changes the tone of your voice!), and try standing vs. sitting down during the call. It also helps to practice being on the phone so enroll your friends or family members a few days before to practice a mock-phone interview call with you.

Best practices

- Speak slowly and wait 1-2 seconds after the interviewer asks a question before answering
- Don't smoke, eat, or chew gum during the interview
- Don't interrupt the interviewer
- Remember to breathe
- Take a moment to collect your thoughts before responding to questions
- Send a thank you email to your interviewer(s) after completing the phone interview

quick tips Telephone/Virtual Interviews (cont.)

Virtual Interviews

Prepare your space

Ensure you have a quiet space with no distractions. Pay attention to what your interviewer will see behind you when you're on screen and be sure to clear any clutter or distracting items. Avoid any bright lighting directly behind you, as this may cause a shadow on the screen and prevent the interviewer from seeing you clearly. Sit an arm's length away from the camera and make sure your face is in line and level with your webcam (you don't want to be looking down at the camera or the interviewer may have an awkward view).

Practice

Prior to your interview, set up a practice call with someone to make sure your microphone and sound work as well as troubleshoot any issues. This will give you time to become more comfortable with this type of interview setting. If you get disconnected during your interview call, do not panic. Simply take a deep breath and call the interviewer back (people understand that technical difficulties happen). You may have notes or your resume near you for quick reminders, but do not read directly off of them during your interview.

Open strong

Dress professionally and be prepared to take the call. Greet your interviewer with a smile and a simple nod to acknowledge them, and open strong (e.g., Hi [interviewer's name], thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. It's very nice to meet you"). Don't forget to smile throughout the interview and make sure to look at the camera while you're speaking so you appear to be looking directly at your interviewer. It is OK to use hand gestures, just make sure that it's not so much that it's distracting.



Additional Help

Meet with your Career Consultant to help you get ready for your telephone interview