Phone and video interviews are often used as a part of the screening process for organizations before bringing candidates to conduct an on-site interview. However, some employers will hire based on a phone or video interview so it is important to prepare for these interviews just as you would prepare for a face-to-face interview. Preparing properly for the interview will help you determine if you really want the position. It is important to remember that you are interviewing them as well. Evaluate your skills, interests, and experiences with the position’s job description. Research the organization and have questions prepared for the interviewer. Anticipate questions they may ask you and practice answering them aloud. With any interview, preparation and practice are vital to mastering the delivery of your responses and practicing professionalism.

THE PHONE INTERVIEW

1. Be ready
   - Have your résumé and notes on the organization handy to refer to during the interview. Keep them simple and spaced out so you are not rummaging through the papers looking for an answer.
   - Answer the phone in a professional manner. “Hello! This is ______.”
   - Take notes. Write down everyone’s names as they introduce themselves to help recognize whose voice belongs to whom.
   - Practice! Schedule a Mock Phone Interview at the Career & Leadership Development Center

2. Eliminate distractions
   - Turn off call waiting, close applications on your computer, shut your window and your door – make sure people around you know not to interrupt!
   - Clear your space except for needed materials.
   - Do not chew gum, smoke, eat food, or ruffle papers. The phone will pick up these sounds on the other end of the line.
   - Take out your earrings to avoid scratching noises when you readjust the phone receiver.

3. Be positive
   - Smile! Smiling while you speak can add an inflection to the tone of your voice that projects a positive image – just as you would if you were there in person.
   - Watch a funny video or listen to your favorite song right before the interview to put you in a good mood. Your enthusiasm and confidence will ring loud and clear in your voice.

4. Make yourself heard
   - Stand up- your voice will sound stronger, more powerful, and clear.
   - Make a deliberate effort to speak slowly and enunciate words clearly to make sure that your answers are heard and understood.
   - Avoid fillers – like, ah, er, um, you know – as these will be even more noticeable over the phone.

5. Listen
   - Answer the question concisely and allow for silence. This pause will let the interviewer know you have completed your answer. Without visual cues, your nerves could get the best of you and you could end up talking excessively.
THE VIDEO INTERVIEW

1. Be Proactive
   • Download the program the employer requests in advance to become familiar with its technology and practice using it with a friend. If the program is not accessible to a friend, try using a free program such as Skype to test out your background, lighting, and sound.

2. Eliminate distractions…for you and the employer
   • Make sure that your background is neat. It does not necessarily have to be a blank wall, but does need to be clean and appropriate.
   • Similar to a phone interview, turn off your phone ringer, close all other applications on your computer, shut your window and your door – make sure people around you know not to interrupt!

3. The Look
   • Dress professionally. Avoid bright colors and patterns as they may be distracting on screen.
   • Avoid looking like you are taking a mug shot by angling your lower body away and turning your torso slightly to the camera, similar to taking a professional head shot.

4. Eye Contact
   • If there is a second screen that displays how you look to the employer, use it to make sure your upper torso and head are in the frame. Once you have done this, consider turning it off to avoid looking at yourself instead of the employer.
   • When the employer is speaking, make eye contact with them on the screen. When you are speaking, make eye contact with the camera. Try placing a picture near the camera to focus on.

5. Lighting
   • Practice using different lighting before the interview to avoid harsh lighting and shadows. Try placing the light source behind the computer/camera to avoid it bouncing off the computer screen.

For more information and to schedule a Mock Interview, visit the Career & Leadership Development Center web site.
From the Job Search section, click on Interviewing.