

INTERVIEW FORMATS

Phone Interviews

Phone interviews are used frequently nowadays to screen candidates to decide whether or not to invite them for an in-person interview.

Phone interviews rely on verbal communication. An employer cannot pick up on non-verbal cues such as eye contact, hand gestures and facial expressions. Your tone of voice can help to convey your enthusiasm and energy, and how well you prepare will demonstrate your skills and interest in the company and role.

- If you have been contacted without notice, and you feel unprepared or are not in the right environment to take a call, politely ask to reschedule the call.
- Some phone interviews are brief and their purpose is to verify or clarify some details. Others may be more in-depth and formal. When scheduling a phone interview, it is appropriate to ask questions such as:
 - Who will I be speaking with?
 - Is there anything I can do to prepare to ensure I can provide all the needed information?
 - How long should I schedule the call for?
- Listen closely. Because you can't see the interviewer's body language you need to pay close attention to the words and tone of the questions being asked.
- Consider speaking slower and be succinct in your answers. This is particularly important if you speak English with an accent.
- Avoid slang or casual expressions, and words such as "um, ah, like, so, sort of, you know, basically".
- Stand in front of a mirror so you can observe your own body language. Standing up with good posture can affect how you communicate verbally, i.e. laying on the couch in your sweatpants will not help you sound alert.
- Ensure that you are in a quiet location free from distractions to minimise outside interference.
- Dress smartly to get you into the right frame of mind and have some water close by.

Remember many of the tips for face-to-face interviews still apply over the phone, so be sure to research the company and role and practice some standard interview questions before the phone call. Refer to the [Interview Tips Handouts](#) for preparation strategies.

Video/ VOIP Interviews

There are typically two types of video interview formats:

1. On Demand – this is a pre-recorded interview that you do on your own time. You may be able to re-record as you wish and submit when you are satisfied.
2. Live Interview – This is like a face-to-face interview and you are interacting in real-time with the interviewer(s).

Avoid issues with technology

- If you have a computer or laptop, tablet or smartphone purchased in the last five years, you likely have the tech suited for a video interview.
- You may need to download the right software (Skype etc.)
- Test out the technology in advance to identify audio/video problems- get help through the Library or AV/Services
- Can you play YouTube video? If so, then your internet connectivity is strong enough for video interviewing.
- If you don't have a built-in camera, a 'webcam' can be purchased and attached to your computer.

Look and Sound Good on Camera

A is for ANGLE. The placement of your webcam contributes to your professional look on camera. Most webcams are either built into the computer or are connected via USB cable and mounted on the monitor. In either case, the height of the webcam should be roughly eye level. The best option for the angle of the webcam is pointing down rather than pointing up under your chin or nose. Be sure it's not too close to your face, or too far away: A head and shoulders shot is most appropriate.

B is for BRIGHTNESS and BACKGROUND: Have ample lighting in the room to ensure good picture quality and position yourself so your light source comes from behind the webcam to shine on your face. Be sure to practice in the lighting that will be available for your interview and adjust it accordingly, so you know exactly what the interviewer will see.

Be conscious of a distracting background, such as a window or open door where there will be activity. If you're interviewing via a mobile device, you must find a quiet space – you want the recruiter or hiring manager's attention focused on you. Separate yourself from distractions such as your phone, pets, etc.

C is for CLOTHING. Some types of apparel look better on camera than others. The clothing must not detract from you. Perhaps most important is to dress just as you would for an in-person interview, so you make a professional impression.

Do's & Don'ts

- **Do:** Wear solid colors. Red conveys power. Blues/natural tones convey calm authority.
- **Do:** Wear a blazer. Blazers make both women and men look put-together and prepared.
- **Don't:** Wear high-contrast clothing (bold suits/patterns like pinstripes, polka dots, and other patterns). These won't show well on camera.
- **Don't:** Wear large, flashy, distracting jewelry such as large earrings, loud bangles, or distracting necklaces.
- **Do:** Use your best judgement on clothing choices. Keep in mind the culture of the place to which you've applied and let that inform your decision.
- **Do:** Think about it and plan ahead: if you will be tempted to pull at your clothing because it's uncomfortable, play with your hair or earrings or tie, or the interviewer could be distracted from your interview by your clothing: Choose to wear something different.

E is for ENERGY: Whether recording your responses on-demand or interviewing live, be ready, be prepared and be lively! Your body language and your temperament show on video. Crossing your arms over your chest or wringing your hands will show that you are nervous and perhaps not fully sure you are a good fit for the role. Instead, place your hands on the table or in your lap, lean slightly forward into the camera and make friendly eye-contact with your interviewers. These cues signal you are self-confident, ready to share your story and eager to learn about the role and the company.

For more help with interviews:

- **Speak to a [Career Specialist](#) at BCITSA**
- **Attend a [Workshop](#) on interviews**
- **Read additional [Handouts](#)**