

Preparing for a Virtual Interview – Checklist

Your interview might take place over a virtual platform, or it might even be a video interview where you record your responses into the company's interview platform. Whatever the format, it's really important that you're as prepared as possible to present yourself in the best possible way.

PRE-RECORDED VIDEO INTERVIEWS If you're required to do a pre-recorded video interview, it might feel unnatural as you won't be able to see anyone. To help it sound and appear natural, try to imagine you're speaking to someone on the other side. Remember to smile where appropriate and maintain eye contact as much as possible (by looking directly into the camera/webcam). As with live virtual interviews, preparation is just as important for pre-recorded interviews.

- ☐ **Professional Username:** If you're using Zoom, Skype or a Google account, make sure you have a professional username. This will often be the very first impression.
- ☐ **Noise:** Make sure you find a quiet space with little distractions. If you live with others, notify them beforehand that you have an upcoming interview so they know not to bother you and to keep noise to an absolute minimum. If you have any pets, keep them in another room (ideally as far as possible so you can't hear them making noise).
- ☐ **Background:** Find a clear and clutter-free background. A safe option is a white or a plain colored wall.
- ☐ **Camera Positioning:** The positioning of your camera makes a huge difference to how you're perceived. To convey confidence, position the camera so your gaze is slightly higher than eye-level and centered on the screen.
- ☐ **Lighting:** Make sure your light source comes from behind your computer - this ensures you have enough lighting on your face so you can be seen clearly. Avoid having a window or light behind you as you'll appear like a silhouette and will be very dark. If you can also have a lamp or light either side of your camera/webcam, this will greatly help with lighting your face.
- ☐ **Microphone:** The quality of your audio will play a large role in your ability to persuade and convey competence. Test your audio beforehand. Built-in microphones often pick up a lot of ambient noise so might catch the sound of traffic or anything else going on around you. If you can, get a headset with microphone - it will make a huge difference.
- ☐ **Login:** Login to the interview platform at least 15 minutes before the start-time so you can make sure your audio and video are working and you can become familiar with the functionality (e.g. mute option, how to end the call etc.).
- ☐ **Eye contact:** During virtual interviews, most people will look at the interviewer's face on the screen, however this will appear as though you're not making eye contact. When speaking, try to look directly into the camera/webcam. When not speaking, you can look at the screen.

LESSON 2.2: BONUS Preparing for Virtual Interviews

- **Warmth & Body Language:** Actively listen to the interviewer when they're speaking and smile at appropriate times to convey warmth and confidence. Maintain a good posture - e.g. sit in your chair with your back straight and your shoulders open. Use natural hand gestures as you would normally.
- **Avoid Fidgeting:** It's common to start to fidget when feeling uncomfortable or nervous. Record yourself a few times before the interview as you practice some common interview responses, and watch the replay to see if you pick on any unnecessary fidgeting or behaviors.
- **Clothing & Hair:** Dress professionally, just as you would for an in-person interview. It helps to research the company culture beforehand so you know what is appropriate. Avoid wearing bright colors (including white), pure black, or patterns, and opt for solid colors instead. For virtual interviews, always wear appropriate bottoms in case you need to stand up for whatever reason. Regarding hair, keep it as neat as possible so it doesn't distract on the video.
- **Documents for Reference:** Have a copy of your resume, the job description and any notes you might like to refer to available on your desk. Make sure you have a pen close by in case you need it.
- **Close all Tabs:** For the interview, make sure all other tabs are closed (especially email - you don't want any distracting 'dings' to make you lose track of your thoughts).



What if something goes wrong?

If something goes horribly wrong, like if a screaming child stumbles into the room, a pet starts having a barking fit or something else unexpected occurs, you can mute your microphone or blank your webcam for a moment to address it. When you return, sincerely apologize and move on. Maintain your confidence and composure - It's not what happens that matters, but how you respond to it.