A Recruiters Guide to Succeeding in a Virtual Interview Oxford Brookes

We understand that preparing for an interview is an exciting but nerve-wracking time. The recruiters at Give A Grad a Go have helped over 4,000 graduates through the interview process and helping them land their dream graduate jobs in the UK and worldwide. Nowadays, companies are starting to adapt their processes and recruit virtually. There are many advantages to recruiting from home as it saves time, cost and essentially gives you more time to prepare. However, employers are aware of this and will be expecting a higher level of presentation and preparation through the screen. We wanted to share some of our top tips on how to prepare for a Virtual Interview.

Top Tip No.1 Get in touch:

Find the person who will be interviewing you on LinkedIn and request to connect with them. Look into their professional history and see if there is anything you can build rapport on – did you both attend the same school or University? Have they been at the company for a long time? Have they recently been promoted? This can really make you stand out in an interview and also show that you've done your research beforehand, which is something that employers look very highly upon.

Top Tip No.2 Prepare your video interview software and technology:

This one might sound obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many people don't test their software, connection or platform before an interview or important meeting. You need to ensure things run as smoothly as possible. You want to be able to press accept on a video call as soon as an employer calls without any hiccups. It's important that they are able to see you and hear you clearly.

A few days before your interview, get your laptop or tablet set up with Teams/Zoom ready, you don't want to be holding up a phone during your interview. A company looking to hire IT staff won't be impressed if you're unable to get your interview software fully functioning. You can test this out by calling your friends and family, to test your call and also your WiFi connection – and don't forget to check that you have a professional username!

Top Tip 3: Find an appropriate setting for your video interview:

Some of the best video interview examples are those that take place in an appropriate and professional environment, you don't want the interview to focus on anything else than you and what you're saying (e.g. your dog barking in the background).

Make sure that you are in the right location that is bright and clear to the interviewer. One of the best virtual interview tips is to find a space that is well lit and set up your laptop so you are facing a window, this will make sure you have the most natural light and that you're not backlit – ensuring an employer can see you as clearly as possible.

It might be a good idea to run a test video call to see what your background will look like in a call, if it's too dark swap settings and when you are happy, set up your work station there. Your surroundings and what's in the frame will all play a part in how an employer perceives you, so make sure your background is as neutral as possible.

Top Tip no 4: Appropriate Dress Code

Key for how to impress in a video interview is to wear the same professional clothes that you would wear in a face-to-face interview. Be sure to read up on the company's fashion culture and what an employer has advised you to wear to an interview – and dress accordingly. Even if you want to [work for a start-up](#) where the culture is often more relaxed, it's better to be overdressed than underdressed for an interview.

While it can be tempting to wear something comfier and more laid back, you still want to give off the same professional persona and show that you are serious about the role. In particular companies looking to [recruit finance talent](#) or [hire business development staff](#) will be looking for candidates who can dress and present themselves well, as that candidate will need to look professional when they're on calls, client pitches and sales.

Top Tip No. 5: How you present yourself

Maintaining eye contact and open body language is essential during video interviews, employers will take note how you present yourself when talking. For example, if a company is looking to [hire a salesperson,](#) then you need to show that you are alert and interested in what they're saying. If you aren't engaging with them in an interview, then they won't trust you to engage with their potential clients or customers.

Eye-Contact: Make sure your camera or webcam is at eye level and try to look straight into the camera as often as possible, avoiding looking down or distant.

Posture: You want to sit up straight in your chair and maintain a good posture throughout the interview, as slouching won't help create a professional impression!

Be aware of: Avoid crossing your arms as this shows closed body language and creates an uninviting image. It's also important to reduce any fidgeting during the interview as this may be distracting for employers and draw attention away from what you're saying.

Why this is so important: Showing the correct body language is central to nailing the video interview, sitting up straight, not fidgeting and looking at the camera all show you're engaged in conversation and completely focused on what the employer is saying. Remember, it's not only what you say, but how you say it and present yourself.

Top Tip No. 6: Prepare example video interview questions and answers

Prepare for a range of questions: With any interview it's important to prepare answers for questions you may be asked. Video interviews are most often the stage before a face-to-face interview, this is an employers first chance to get to know you and find out about your ambitions, so they will most likely ask general [interview questions](#) followed up with more in-depth questions during a face-to-face interview.

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