



Australia Awards

Pre-interview Information Sheet No 6: Managing a virtual interview

Prepare

The key to a virtual interview is proper preparation – from checking that your technology is working to conducting research in advance and sitting poised and ready for any question. Here are some general guidelines for doing good virtual interviews.

Practice, and do not memorise

Prepare well in advance, make notes, and have them ready in the interview so that you appear focused and ready to answer the questions. Avoid memorising each response, but rather write down some high-level thoughts or place them on Post-it Notes and stick them to your computer. It is a good idea to run through a few practice rounds with a colleague, friend, or family member. Be clear and concise – do not give long answers if it is not warranted.

Test Your Technology

Always test your technology to ensure you are set up for success. Check your internet connectivity, and confirm your camera and microphone are working. On the day of, test your equipment and internet connection again.

Interview Tip

Virtual interviews offer the opportunity to speak in a relaxing, familiar environment.

Minimise Distractions

Determine where to take the interview. Find a room with optimal lighting, preferably at a window facing the natural light, or a blank wall.

Make sure you are the focal point of the conversation and that your background is appropriate for a business interview and that it is neat and tidy. Eliminate all distractions such as a TV, family, or pets. Silence your cell phone, and try to eliminate noise from neighbourhood traffic and neighbours. Avoid typing or clicking on your computer during the interview.

Monitor your body language and appear professional

Non-verbal communication clues in online interviews are more difficult to pick up, however, you should monitor your body language and present yourself in a professional manner. Communicate with confidence by sitting up straight, smiling, and keeping the camera at eye level.

Dress professionally

Dress as you would for an in-person interview. Professional clothing will show you are serious about the application and come over as authoritative, trustworthy, and competent.

Make a connection and build rapport

As you are one of several candidates being interviewed, it is important to make a connection. Try to stand out by using personal examples and drawing from your own workplace and home country experience and insights.

Be yourself, be authentic

Although it may be more difficult for the interview panel to pick up on your enthusiasm through the screen, however, virtual interviews offer the rare opportunity to speak in a relaxing, familiar environment and show the panel why you are a good candidate for an award.

Text adapted from Harvard Business School Online

Interview Tip

PREPARE:

- Practice answering questions in advance with a friend.
- Check that your technology works.
- Make notes of your most relevant thoughts.

