

Skype: top tips

For most people, interviewing is the biggest challenge in the job search process but using Skype to interview can be an even bigger challenge. There is no way to predict exactly what will happen throughout the course of the interview, but you can do several things to prepare and make the most out of a Skype interviewing experience.

Skype Interview Preparation

Just because the interview is done over Skype doesn't mean it isn't serious business. You need to approach it with all the seriousness and preparation you would give to a live, face to face meeting. In order to present yourself in the most professional manner, it is important to consider the following points:

- Select a quiet room and close all the windows and doors. The space behind you should ideally be a blank wall with no distractions. There needs to be sufficient light so the interviewer can see you clearly, so you may need an extra desk lamp.
- The webcam and computer screen should be level with your face, so that you're not looking up or down at an angle.
- If your web-cam is detached from your screen, be sure to centre the camera in order to easily look at the screen and monitor at the same time.
- Close all other applications on the computer to avoid distractions.
- Turn off your mobile phone.
- Use headphones if necessary but make sure the microphone isn't too close to your mouth as this will distort your words.
- Ask to set up the connection in advance so you can test the line.
- Carry out a test call, if possible, to check the sound quality and volumes are correct.
- Have a drink of water available in case your throat goes dry.
- Clarify time zone for the scheduled interview time.
- Have a copy of your CV, job description, prepared answers, questions to ask, pen & paper to hand.

Interview Attire

Dress professionally as you would for a face-to-face interview. Although the interviewer will only see your head and shoulders (unless you have to stand up for some reason!) dressing professionally will put you in the right mindset. Select a professional, appropriate outfit such as a collared shirt/tie or smart top. It is better to be over-dressed than under-dressed for this occasion.



During the Interview

Before signing on, check your appearance in a mirror and take a few deep breaths. Sign-on to Skype ten minutes early and be prepared for the video call at any time. Review your materials while you wait. When the call begins, smile and greet the interviewer and be sure to make eye contact (practice this as it can be difficult with a camera). Speak slowly and clearly and set the sound on the microphone so it's not too loud or it may create static. It can be easy to talk over people on a Skype call, so wait for the interviewer to stop speaking before you answer. This also gives you a few seconds to think about what you want to say before you speak. If you can't hear clearly, ask the interviewer to repeat or paraphrase to check you have understood correctly. Check the interviewer has understood your answer if the connection is poor.

Be positive and enthusiastic; Skype interviews tend to dampen your personality, so make an effort to smile and try to be yourself. Employers want to get to know the best of you and your abilities. Focus on the responses you have prepared without sounding rehearsed. Allow the conversation to flow, and be prepared for a few moments of awkward silence due to Skype but it can give you time to think! Ask questions and listen actively; don't over talk! Remember that you are interviewing them as well so learn what you can about the position and the organisation.

End the call courteously by thanking the interviewer for their time and for the opportunity. It's ok to ask when you might expect to hear back from them. Make sure you've definitely disconnected the call before you utter another word. After the interview is finished, take some time to reflect on what went well and what you can improve upon. Do not beat yourself up if the interview did not go perfectly. Learn from the experience and take those lessons to the next interview. Just getting an interview is a compliment in itself.