Telephone Interviews

There are three main types of telephone interview:

**Unannounced telephone interview**

Following submission of your application form or CV someone from the company will ring and often ask you very similar questions to a normal face to face interview.

**Prearranged telephone interview**

Similar to the unannounced telephone interview and usually involves typical interview questions. You will be contacted and normally fully briefed on what will happen next and are often advised that your interview will be recorded. Questions are based on competencies for the job and your responses are normally analysed by a trained interviewer.

**Sales telephone interview**

Following submission of your application you will receive a telephone call asking you to sell something to the interviewer. These are used in particular for jobs involving selling and frequently for call centre staff or telesales staff.

You may also experience an interview via Skype or pre-recorded video.

**How should I prepare for a telephone interview?**

**Prepare your environment:**

Always keep a clear record of your applications preferably in a file next to the telephone. Inform your flatmates that you have applied for jobs and that you may get a call from a company.

If you have a call out of the blue and you are unable to locate your file then try and arrange a more suitable time to take the call. You are not obliged to speak there and then.

First impressions do count and if the interviewer can hear inappropriate remarks and noise in the background, that may adversely affect their judgement of you.

**Prepare for the interview**

See the section on interviews for further advice on preparing for interviews.
**Tips for during the interview:**

Telephone contact means that there are no visual clues unlike a face-to-face interview, therefore the tone and rhythm of your voice become more important. If you speak in a monotone voice this will be more apparent on the telephone as there will be no facial expressions to distract the interviewer from your voice!

Smile! Amazing as it might sound, smiling whilst you talk really helps. You will come across as more friendly and confident. Try it! Use gestures as in normal conversation and be enthusiastic where appropriate.

One advantage of a telephone interview is that you can have notes and information with you such as prompts for possible answers. However, don't over prepare. You'll get flustered if you can't find the bit of paper you're looking for, and rustling paper could be heard by the interviewer over the phone.

Be organised - have a pen and paper to hand and your diary ready in case they like the sound of you and want to invite you to a meeting.

Try not to be put off by pauses from the interviewer - they may be taking notes. Also don't worry if you don't get much feedback from the interviewer; this happens in face-to-face interviews too.

Remember a telephone interview is a precursor to a face-to-face interview and very few companies, if any, will offer jobs based only on a telephone interview. However, creating a good impression at this stage will certainly go a long way towards helping at the face-to-face stage.

**Skype Interviews**

Skype interviews are becoming more common, not only for students who may be unable to attend a face-to-face interview (for example during a year abroad), but also in lieu of a telephone interview.

You can treat a Skype interview much like a telephone interview, and should prepare in the same way, however here are a few extra tips:

- **Dress appropriately** – Remember they can see you! Dress as you would for a face-to-face interview. Think about your surroundings. Piles of empty glasses, an unwashed plate from your lunch or posters with comedy slogans on the wall behind you may not make the best impression. Try positioning yourself in front of a blank wall or bookcase. Also, check that the lighting isn’t unflattering and you can be seen clearly.

- **Test Skype** – even if you’re familiar with it, ask a friend to call you before and make sure your microphone, speakers and camera are working correctly on the day. If your bandwidth or internet speed isn’t great, you may want to ask your housemates or family member to avoid downloading films, or streaming online games, during the call.

- **Practice where to look** – Some recruiters may not use the camera, but regardless it is easy to be distracted by the screen. Try to look into the camera to replicate eye-contact. Also, consider turning off the ‘preview’ screen if you find yourself getting distracted by the image of yourself in the corner of the screen.

- **Be aware of time-lag delays** – Although in day-to-day conversation we sometimes speak at the same time as a person we are talking to, it's nearly impossible to communicate this way using Skype. So if the other person is speaking wait until they have finished before you say anything, otherwise both voices become muffled and unclear.
Help:

Talk to an adviser: Our careers advisers can give you tips on and carry out mock telephone interviews.

Information:

If you have a Skype or video interview coming up, the Career Development Service may be able to provide a room for you to conduct the interview in if you don't have a suitable space at home. You will be able to book one slot in any one week, check MyCareers for availability! Please note the usual 3 strike policy applies for missed sessions, read our cancellation policy for further details.

For more information contact the Careers Development Service:

Career Development Service
University of Leicester
Percy Gee (Students’ Union) Building
Ground Floor

t: +44 (0) 116 252 2002
e: careershelp@le.ac.uk
w: www.le.ac.uk/careers