

Telephone Interview Top Tips

A recruiter may use a telephone or Skype interview to screen candidates as the first stage of an interviewing process before offering them a formal face-to-face interview. They are usually used to learn more about a candidate beyond their CV: they are an interviewer's first initial impression of what type of applicant you might be.

Telephone interviews are usually:

- Still professional like a face-to-face interview and are usually pre-scheduled, so that you have time to prepare.
- Interviewers look for a friendly telephone-manner, enthusiasm and an understanding of the role you've applied for.
- You might be asked about your CV, current situation, where you heard about the role, and where you have demonstrated your skills in past experiences.
- The length of telephone interviews differs from around 15 to 45 minutes.

Preparation

- Research the company and the role in case you are asked what you know about the business, e.g. the company size, products, reputation and when they were first established.
- Study your CV and application, highlight certain areas including your experiences and qualifications, and make notes on how to develop these points.
- Practice potential interview questions, so that you sound confident and can explain examples of your experiences and skills.
- Think about what makes you really want the job – your passion will shine through.
- Make notes of questions you want to ask to show you have a genuine interest.
- Make sure you are in a quiet area and ideally use a landline; if you do have to use a mobile, make sure it is fully charged.
- Make sure you have all the relevant documents in front of you, e.g. CV – but try not to rustle paper whilst on the phone and regurgitate robot-like answers. Prompts are good, scripts are not!
- Have a notepad and pen to take notes and jot down any information.

During the Telephone Interview

- If your call is scheduled, make sure you are prepared and expect the phone to ring at that time; treat it as any other interview and be punctual.
- Remain formal and avoid slang.
- Smile! Even though the recruiter won't be able to see you, they will be able to detect this with the way you are speaking and you will sound more friendly and approachable.
- Refer back to what the interviewer has asked by looking at your CV and notes.
- Don't be afraid of silence – the interviewer might be taking notes or if you are concerned that you need to say more, ask whether you have answered the question or if they would like you to expand.

- Be patient and try not to waffle, be concise and give appropriate information relating to the role.
- After each question, don't be afraid to take a short pause to think about your next response or ask for more information before answering straight away.
- Ask about what will happen next with the application process and express your interest by finding out if there is anything else you can do.
- Thank the interviewer and say you're looking forward to the next stage.