



Interview Tips: Video Interviews

A guide for students and
graduates



Video interviews are now a standard part of graduate recruitment, especially for large employers and graduate schemes. There are two main types: live video interviews, held over platforms such as Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet, and pre-recorded (or on-demand) interviews, where you record answers to set questions within a time limit, often with no interviewer present at all. The principles of good preparation apply to both.

Types of Video Interview

Live Video Interviews

A real-time conversation with an interviewer or panel over a platform such as Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet. This works much like a face-to-face interview, so the same conversational skills apply.

Pre-Recorded (on-demand) Interviews

You are shown a set of questions, usually with a short time to read each one and a time limit to record your answer, often with no interviewer present. There is usually no retake option once the real interview begins, so what you record the first time is generally what gets sent. Employers often let you complete a practice question first to test your setup, which does not count towards your interview.

Technical Interviews

Common for technical roles, these may include a coding challenge, case study, or problem-solving exercise, sometimes completed live and sometimes given a longer window of a day or two to complete.

Group Video Interviews

Several candidates are interviewed together in the same call, either answering questions in turn or completing a task as a group. Employers are watching how you collaborate, not just what you say individually.

A Note On AI-Scored Interviews

Many pre-recorded platforms now use AI tools to help analyse speech, tone, and delivery alongside a human reviewer. This is not something to be intimidated by. These systems are generally built to reflect the same professional standards a human interviewer would use, so there is no separate way to prepare for an AI-assessed interview. Good, clear, confident delivery works for both.



What Are Employers Actually Looking For?

Video interviews are used to assess more than just your answers. Employers and their assessment tools are generally looking at:

- Communication skills: how clearly and confidently you express yourself
- Body language: whether your posture and non-verbal cues signal confidence
- Behavioural traits: what your past experiences reveal about teamwork, initiative, and resilience
- Professionalism: how you present yourself, including your dress and setup
- Cultural fit: whether your tone and attitude suggest you would fit the organisation
- Technical readiness: how comfortably you use the platform and handle any issues
- Time management: your ability to give a complete, focused answer within a limit

Preparing for Your Video Interview

- Research the employer thoroughly, including their values, recent projects, and the specifics of the role.
- Review your CV and practise answering common questions aloud, so your delivery feels natural rather than memorised.
- Test your webcam, microphone, and internet connection well in advance, not minutes before the call.
- Choose a quiet, well-lit space with a plain, tidy background, and check what is visible behind you.
- Position your camera at eye level and remove obvious distractions from view.
- For pre-recorded interviews, make full use of any practice question offered. Your first real attempt should not be the actual interview.

Joining the Call Professionally

- Use a simple, professional screen name, ideally just your first and last name, not a nickname or old username from another platform.
- Join a few minutes early to allow time for any last-minute technical checks.
- Let housemates or family know the time of your interview, silence notifications, and turn off the TV or music nearby.
- If it's a group interview, arrive early, contribute meaningfully without repeating others, and give space for other candidates to speak.



Presentation and Body Language

- Give the interview your full attention. Do not check messages, browse other tabs, or look at anything else on your screen while you are talking. Treat it exactly like an in-person conversation, where looking away or fiddling with something else would be obviously rude, and stay focused on the camera and the question in front of you.
- Dress as you would for a face-to-face interview, from the waist up at minimum, in case you need to stand unexpectedly.
- Sit upright and look into the camera rather than the screen, so it appears you are making eye contact with the interviewer.
- Speak clearly and at a steady pace, and let your enthusiasm come through in your tone, not just your words.
- Keep gestures natural rather than excessive, and avoid checking your own image on screen instead of the camera.

Action Point

Record yourself answering one question on your phone before the interview, then watch it back. Body language and tone carry more weight in a video interview than most people expect, because the interviewer or the assessment system has very little else to go on. A single practice recording will show you things you cannot notice while you are speaking, from where you are looking to how quickly you are talking. Ten minutes of this will do more for your delivery than another hour of research.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Looking at your own image on screen instead of the camera, which can come across as distracted, nervous, or even vain.
- Slouching or sitting too casually. You have not had to travel anywhere, so there is no excuse not to sit upright and stay focused.
- Letting a messy or cluttered room show in the background. Take a moment to check what the camera actually picks up, not just what you can see yourself.
- Forgetting to warn housemates or family, so a call, a knock, or a barking dog interrupts you mid-answer.
- Relying too heavily on notes. A few bullet points to prompt you are fine, but reading directly from a script is easy for an interviewer to spot and comes across as rehearsed.
- Multitasking during the call, such as glancing at messages or other tabs. Give the conversation your full attention exactly as you would in person.

Lighting, Setup, and Using Prompts

Natural light in front of you, rather than behind you, usually gives the clearest picture. If natural light is not available, a simple desk lamp facing you can make a noticeable difference. Position your camera at eye level, using books or a stand if needed, rather than looking down into a laptop camera.

It is fine to have brief notes nearby, such as a few key points on a sticky note near your camera or a bullet-pointed prompt sheet just out of shot. Use these sparingly and glance rather than read, so the conversation still feels natural rather than scripted.

Blurring Your Background

Most major video platforms allow you to blur or replace your background if your surroundings are not ideal. This can be a useful option if you cannot find a plain space, though a genuinely tidy, well-lit room is still the safer choice where possible.

Common Video Interview Questions

- Tell us about yourself and your background
- Why are you applying for this role, and why this company?
- Describe a time you worked successfully in a team
- How do you prioritise tasks when working under pressure?
- What activities or tasks energise you most at work?



The STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) is a reliable way to structure answers to competency-based questions like these, keeping your response concise while still showing real evidence of the skill being asked about.

After the Interview

Treat a video interview like any other. If you spoke with someone live, send a short thank-you email afterwards. For pre-recorded interviews, you may not have a direct contact, but you can still follow up by email to confirm your interest in the role.

Reflect on your performance while it is fresh in your mind. Note down what went well and what you would change, since this will help you improve for the next stage or a future interview.

Managing Time Limits in Pre-Recorded Interviews

Pre-recorded interviews usually impose a strict time limit per question, often between one and two minutes. Practise giving structured answers within similar limits beforehand. Finishing far too quickly can look unprepared, while running over risks being cut off mid-sentence.

Handling Technical Issues

- If a live interview is disrupted by a technical problem, stay calm, explain what has happened, and ask to continue or reschedule.
- Have a backup plan in case of connection issues, such as a mobile hotspot or a second device.
- For pre-recorded interviews, check the platform's requirements in advance and complete any test recordings offered.

Do and Avoid

DO	AVOID
Test your camera, microphone, and connection in advance	Waiting until the interview starts to check your tech works
Choose a plain, tidy, well-lit background	Sitting somewhere cluttered or poorly lit without checking first
Look into the camera rather than the screen	Watching your own image instead of making eye contact
Give the interview your full attention	Checking messages or other tabs while you are talking
Use the practice question if one is offered	Treating your first real attempt as a practice run
Dress the same as you would for an in-person interview	Assuming video interviews call for less effort on presentation
Use a simple, professional screen name	Joining with an old nickname or a shared family device login
Keep prompts brief and glance at them occasionally	Reading answers directly from a full script
Structure answers with the STAR method	Rambling without a clear structure and running out of time
Stay calm and explain any technical issues clearly	Panicking or disappearing without a word if something goes wrong

Checklist Before Your Video Interview

- ☐ Researched the employer's values, recent projects, and the role
- ☐ Tested webcam, microphone, and internet connection in advance
- ☐ Chosen a quiet, well-lit space with a plain background
- ☐ Set a simple, professional screen name for the call
- ☐ Positioned lighting in front of you and camera at eye level
- ☐ Planned to give the call full attention, with no other tabs or notifications
- ☐ Practised answers aloud using the STAR method for structure
- ☐ Completed any practice question offered before a pre-recorded interview
- ☐ Dressed as you would for an in-person interview
- ☐ Planned a backup option in case of technical issues
- ☐ Prepared a short thank-you or follow-up email for after the interview



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