

# VIRTUAL INTERVIEW TIPS

## Virtual Interviews

A virtual interview is an interview that takes place while the interviewee is off-site using telephone, video, instant messaging, web-conferencing, or another form of virtual technology.

## Reasons Organizations Use Virtual Interviews

- *Expand applicant pool* – using virtual software allows candidates to interview from anywhere in the world, which greatly increases the scope of who can apply/interview
- *Eliminate the need for schedule coordination* – allowing candidates to complete the interview on their own time and employers can listen to/watch whenever they're available avoids many scheduling conflicts
- *Foster collaboration around hiring decisions* – multiple interviewers can work together to make hiring decisions, even if they're remote, and nobody will forget an interview because there's always a record for reference
- *Save money and time* – investing in virtual interviewing software will ultimately be more profitable than flying in candidates and eliminates the need for recruiters to travel

## Types of Virtual Interviews

1. *Phone interview* – Telephone conversation between one or more interviewers and one interviewee. During a phone interview, the only interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is hearing each other's voices.
2. *Online, two-way interview (AKA live interviews)* – Live, face-to-face conversation between the interviewer(s) and the interviewee using video.
3. *Online, one-way interview (AKA automated interview)* – Interviewer pre-selects interview questions for the interviewee to answer on their own time. All candidates are asked the same pre-selected questions, and there are no follow-up questions. Some platforms that offer this feature are timed, so the interviewee only has a certain amount of time to answer each question.
4. *Online, one-way interview with re-record option* – The same as an online one-way interview (#3), but allows the interviewee an opportunity to re-record an answer if they were not happy with it the first time. The employer will only see the final recording(s).
5. *Non-video online "interviews"* – Some recruiters are using online interviews that do not involve video or voice. These are formatted more like online exams and involve responding to multiple choice, short-answer, case-based, and/or long-answer questions.

## Organizations Using Virtual Interviews

Virtual interviews are particularly popular among larger companies that have to review a high volume of candidates for each open position. Some graduate schools are also using virtual interviews as part of the application process. Some specific companies using virtual interviews include: Disney, NBC Sports, Warner Bros, Berkshire Hathaway, United States Postal Service, Ikea, Volkswagen, Loves, Honda, FMC Technologies, Johnson & Johnson, Dell, Lincoln Financial, and Willis Towers Watson.

## Virtual Interviewing Tips

### Technology

- Make sure you know how to use the platform ahead of time that you will be using for your interview. Take advantage of any trial run opportunities available to you.
- Practice! Video/call a friend or family member who has audio/video capabilities to test your image quality, sound, outfit choice, etc.
- Be prepared for technical difficulties and other interruptions, such as fire alarms or outside noises.
  - Have a plan for getting disconnected. Get the interviewer's contact information ahead of time or at the beginning of the interview. Inquire what they would like you to do if the interview gets disconnected or interrupted.

### *Environment/Appearance*

- Choose your location wisely. Make sure there is no background noise such as people talking, echoing, wind, music, etc. Make sure others know you are using the room for an interview, close the door, and leave your cell phone elsewhere, unless it is how you are being interviewed. If you are doing a video interview, you should also:
  - Set up in front of a plain background so there is nothing the interviewer will get distracted by behind you. A solid-color wall is recommended as a good option.
  - Choose lighting that will highlight your face but not wash you out.
  - Align your camera so it is level with your face. You should not be looking up or down at it.
  - Frame your face as a close-up in the screen without cutting off the top of your head or your chin.
  - Consider whether or not you will need to use headphones. If you do, choose headphones that will stay in place and not need to be adjusted frequently during the interview, which could be distracting.
  - If you are interested in reserving a space in the Center for Career Development to conduct your virtual interview, please call the Corporate Partner Relations Coordinator at (860) 486-6156 or email [recruiting@uconn.edu](mailto:recruiting@uconn.edu) with the date and total time you would like to reserve, including set up.
- Dress as you would for an in-person interview from head to toe. The employer may ask you to get up to complete a task during the interview, so be sure to wear professional bottoms. Even for phone interviews, dressing professionally can help you get in a professional mindset.

### *Interview Practices*

- Practice your digital handshake, or your introduction, that you will use during your virtual interview in lieu of a real handshake.
  - A digital handshake is typically a 30-second pitch including a mention of why you are interested in the specific company/program or position you are interviewing for and a statement of enthusiasm about meeting the interviewer and getting started with the interview.
- Making a good first impression is key. In contrast to an in-person interview, if an employer can tell early into the interview that a candidate is not a good fit, they can stop giving the candidate their undivided attention and instead focus on other tasks.
- If you're using video, look towards the camera rather than at the computer screen itself. This may feel awkward at first, but looking at the camera regularly will make it look like you are making eye contact with the interviewer.
  - It may be helpful to tape a small photo of a person's face right next to the camera and make eye contact with the photo instead; it will still seem like you are making eye contact with the interviewer, but you don't have to stare directly at the camera the whole time.
- Make an extra effort to speak clearly because poor connections can sometimes interfere with speech during virtual interviews. It is okay to occasionally check in with the interviewer to make sure they can still hear and/or see you well.
- Watch your time. Some platforms have time limits built in, and even if they don't, make sure your answers are not too long. If they are, employers watching a one-way video interview can skip ahead, and employers participating in a two-way interview can check their cell phone or other paperwork outside the screen.
- Keep in mind that the interviewer may not have the chance to ask you follow-up questions, especially with a one-way interview, so make sure you give them all the information you think they will need/want in each of your initial responses.
- Take advantage of the re-record option if it's available to you, so you present your best self.
- Send each interviewer a unique thank-you note via email within 24 hours of the interview.
  - With a one-way interview, you won't have the chance to ask the interviewer any questions on the spot, so be sure to write your questions down and send them as a part of your thank-you note.