

How to Guides

HANDLE A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Telephone interviews are often used at an early stage of the student/graduate recruitment process to filter applicants and decide who to invite to an interview or assessment centre. The questions during a telephone interview are likely to focus more on your general competencies and skills, and it's a good opportunity to show your enthusiasm and commitment in a short conversation.

Research and plan your telephone interview

Be prepared. Make sure you find out as much as you can about the recruiter. Read the job description carefully and think about how you match the selection criteria.

Practise before the interview

Practice makes perfect. Any experience you have of using the phone in a professional context will help, for example a temporary telesales job, research during work experience or voluntary fundraising.

Control your environment

Turn off the telly. Let your housemates know what's going on and ask them to leave the room and give you some peace and quiet. Only use speakerphone if you're sure there will be no interruptions and you are comfortable with this way of using a phone.

Some people like to dress formally; if you feel professional you're more likely to sound professional. When the time of your interview comes round, make sure you are somewhere with a good signal and that your mobile is charged, topped up and switched on. Check that your answerphone message is appropriate and will help to create a professional first impression.

Stay calm

Answer clearly and at a reasonable pace. If you're asked a tricky question, take time to think – you can always say something like, 'Let me just reflect on that for a moment,' to buy time .

Be professional

Answer the phone professionally: 'Good morning, Joe Bloggs speaking' should do the trick. Address your interviewer as Miss, Mrs or Mr unless invited to use his or her first name.

Take notes

If you can, jot down notes during the interview, or write down what you can remember about the questions and your answers immediately afterwards, while it's still fresh. It will be a useful record to refer to when you go through to the next stage.