

VIDEO AND SKYPE INTERVIEWS



A rising trend in interviewing candidates is the Skype or video-based interview. While it may seem that the organization is not taking the interview as seriously as a face-to-face interview, they are...and so should you. Some of us aren't comfortable on camera or know how to optimize this technology, so here are some tips to help you be more at ease and help you facilitate an effective interview.

- Choose a professional Skype **screen name and profile photo**.
- **Use a computer**, not a cell phone or i-Pad, if possible.
- **Practice**. Review commonly asked questions and plan your answers. Then Skypecast (record) a practice run and review it for areas of improvement. The internet is full of instructions on how to do this. The OPCD also offers a video practice platform, Big Interview.
- Make a trial run to **ensure audio and other technology are working optimally**. Keep the computer plugged in. Have your phone ready (on silent) for back-up.
- Use an **external microphone**, if you have one available. Your sound quality will improve.
- **Consider location**. Choose a clutter free, attractive location where you won't be interrupted. Remove all distractions. Turn off stereos and televisions. Be thoughtful about your lighting - no backlighting, instead use soft, preferably natural lighting on the side or in front of you. The OPCD is a great place to hold a video interview.
- **Position the camera**. Sit farther away than you normally sit from your computer. You don't want this to be just a head shot, rather an upper body view.
- **Close all other computer programs**. Be sure to also turn off all Skype notification sounds that might interfere with your Skype call.
- **Respond to the computer's camera**, not the interviewer's screen. If you make eye contact with the interviewer's face, you will seem to be looking down and to the side.

- **Dress for the interview.** Your first impression is very important. Wear the same interview suit you would wear in person - the entire suit, not just the top portion. What if you need to stand up unexpectedly? Solids in pale shades work best on camera. Bright colors, whites, and blacks do not do as well on the camera. Avoid patterns (herringbone, checks, stripes, etc.) and shiny fabric that can be distracting. Women should wear regular, light make-up. Men may want to consider powdering their nose and forehead with a translucent powder. Wear contacts or glare-free glasses, if you have and need them. Don't wear jewelry that will make noise, will dangle, or be distractingly large—on the small screen, these will look even larger.
- **Don't watch yourself** in the picture-in-picture in the corner. Your video stream may distract you; minimize this window, increase your screen size to push the PIP out of main viewing, or cover it with a Post-it note.
- **Posture really matters.** Sit up with shoulders squared back. Be comfortable, yet professional. Don't cross your arms.
- **Smile!** Exude warmth and an engaging personality.
- Have your **resume and cover letter** available for reference.
- Keep **important information** next to you: employer research folder, a notepad/pen to take notes, your calendar to schedule the next interview, a list of points/specific achievements you may want to mention, and questions to ask.
- When the employer introduces him/herself, **write down his/her name** and use it in your responses. Don't overuse it, but make the call personal.
- **Use active listening.** Try to remain relaxed, speaking exactly as you would in an interviewer's office.
- At the conclusion of the interview, **express your appreciation** for the opportunity and ask about the next step in the process.
- Follow up with a **thank you note/email**.



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