



Virtual Interviewing



55%

Employers conducting virtual interviews to hire candidates pre-COVID-19

86%

Employers conducting virtual interviews to hire candidates NOW



Virtual Interviews



A virtual interview is a type of interview that takes place remotely, sometimes over the phone, but more often using technology like video conferencing (ex. Zoom) and other online communication platforms.



Virtual vs. In-Person Interviewing



Everything you do for an in-person interview is needed for your video interview.

RESEARCH THE EMPLOYER

Research the company's website and speak to professionals that work for or are familiar with the company to figure out its culture, history, mission, structure, philosophy, and potential career paths.

PRACTICE & PREPARE

Identify and articulate how your experiences, strengths and skills, competencies, goals, etc., apply to the position you are interviewing for. You want to make sure you are able to demonstrate to the interviewer why you are a good fit for the position and what you can offer the company.

DRESS TO IMPRESS

A good rule of thumb is that it is better to be overdressed than underdressed. Speak with a professional in your field or schedule an appointment with Career Services to determine the most appropriate attire for your interview.



Virtual Prep



There are some things that you will want to make sure you consider for a virtual interview that you would not have to do for an in-person interview.



- Who is conducting the interview (will there be multiple interviewers)? What time zone? What will the format be?
- Synchronous (live interview) or Asynchronous (recording answers to questions)?
- Ensure you have access to good internet connection. Ask for a back-up phone number to call in case the video connection fails.
- You may reserve a room on-campus for your interview--contact Career Services for details.
- Be punctual! 5-10 minutes early is a good rule of thumb.



Choosing Technology



LAPTOPS/DESKTOP COMPUTERS

- Using a laptop or desktop computer for your interview is the best option and many of these already have built-in cameras for you.
- External webcams produce the best quality video and may be necessary to purchase if your laptop or computer does not already contain a camera.

TABLETS

- Not the best choice for a virtual interview.
- The video software on a tablet is known to be more temperamental, so there's a big risk of it not working correctly.
- The video picture is of lesser quality.
- There is a greater risk of lost connection and/or bandwidth-reliability than laptops and computers.

PHONES

- Not the best choice for a virtual interview.
- Phones have all of the same problems as tablets, but with an even smaller screen and less flexibility.
- Although phone cameras have improved a lot lately, the picture is still sub-par compared to a laptop or computer.



Setting the Scene



Setting the Scene



CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION

- Choose a quiet location with few disturbances (you don't want anyone walking in on you during your interview).
- Consider any possible distractions or inappropriate items that might show up behind you on camera. You may want to consider removing anything illegal or especially revealing about your views or identity that could be used against you in a discriminatory manner. Some video software (such as Zoom) also offer different background computer screens that you can use.
- A neutral background is best. Hang a solid curtain behind you or put up a screen if you have to.
- Have at least 2 feet of distance from the background behind you to avoid an ugly shadow that can appear if it is too close to you (the more distance, the more flattering).
- No mirrors!
- Try not to sit with a window in front of you or behind you, it can cause a glare.

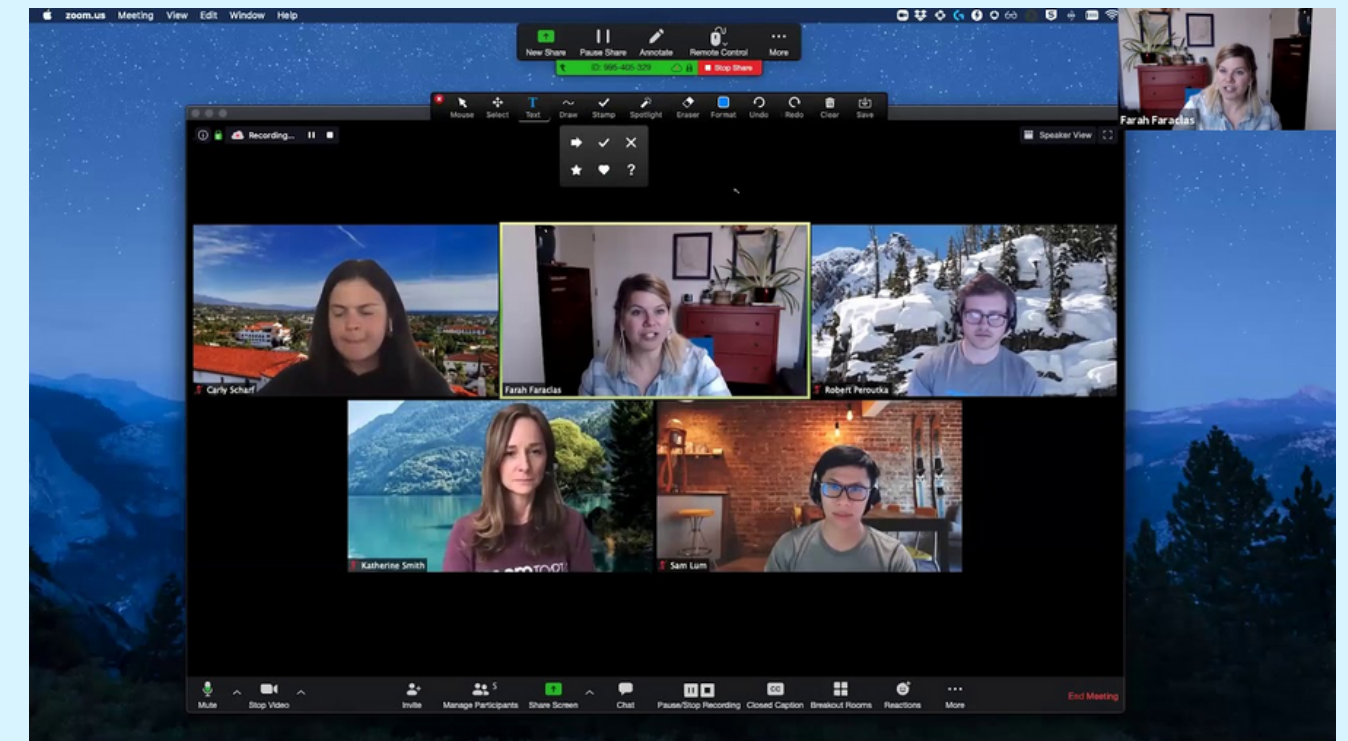


Setting the Scene



CHECK YOUR TECHNOLOGY

- Make sure your technology and internet is working prior to the day of your interview and again about an hour before your interview.
- You should have a camera and microphone on your device and should make sure you understand how to operate the software or system that the employer is using to interview you (ex. Zoom, Skype, etc.). Many of these programs require that you download them to your computer, so make sure you do this ahead of time.
- Check your internet connection, battery life, call information, etc.



Setting the Scene

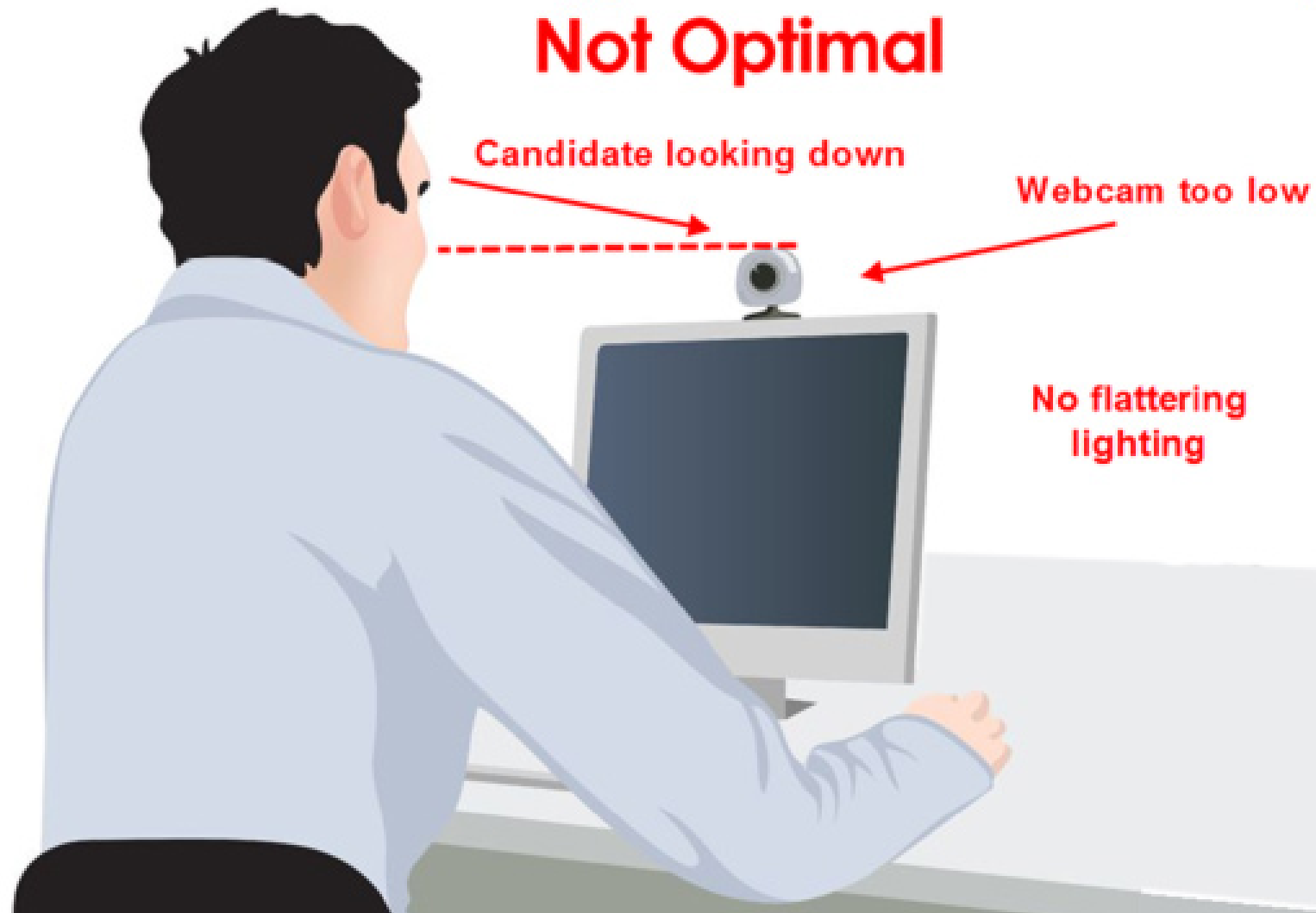


CHECK YOUR IMAGE AND LIGHTING

- Ensure that your camera and microphone are functioning properly by recording a video of yourself. This will also help you see how you appear to the interviewer and whether you need to adjust your clothing, lighting, camera settings, etc.
- For the interview, prepare lighting by using a 2-point lighting system. In this system, there should be two points of light in front of you and to either side.
- Make sure the lighting in the room shows you clearly and in an attractive manner. You may also sit yourself just slightly off-center on-screen which will allow the light to highlight your appearance best.
- For the best view vertically, try to:
 - Position your camera at eye-level This will also let you more easily look at the camera when you are interviewing—which you should be doing instead of staring at the computer screen when speaking.
 - Get from about your shoulder height to the top of your head in the picture screen.

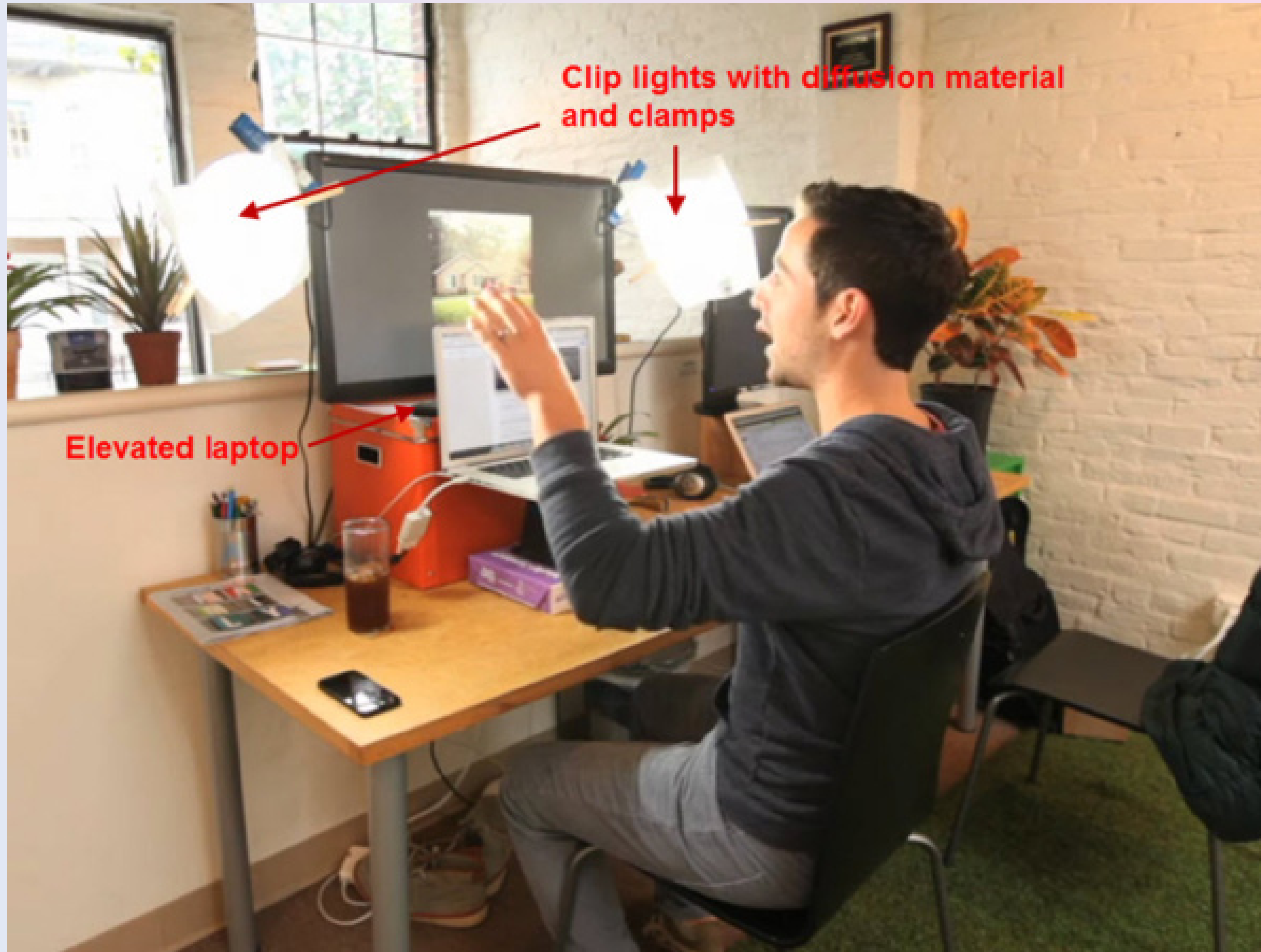


Typical Webcam Set-up Not Optimal



Optimal Webcam Set-up





Clothing Considerations



Beginning the Call



- Start the call on mute, but don't forget to unmute yourself once the interview begins.
- Begin with a greeting--a simple hello, smile, and wave is fine.
- Usually the interviewer will take the lead. If they don't, or if given the opportunity, you can thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview before beginning. Express enthusiasm for the interview (without sounding too desperate).
- Prepare a brief, 30 second introduction of yourself. You may not use this in the beginning, especially if the interviewer starts asking questions right away. Similarly, the interviewer will likely ask about you, so better to have something prepared than not.
 - Name, Major, Year in School,
 - What you have done that would benefit the employer; your competitive edge; skills or attributes that would set you apart; why you are interested in working for the employer, etc.
 - Career aspirations, things about you that will connect you to the employer/interviewer, etc.



Establish Presence



DON'T FORGET YOUR PANTS!!

- Look directly at the camera to establish eye contact. Looking at the screen is NOT looking at the interviewer.
- Use positive body language, smile often, and do not overuse your hands to gesture.
- Sit up straight with good posture. Place both feet on the ground, and avoid doing things like slouching or holding your head up with your hand.
- Pause briefly after each question before your response and nod to let the interviewer know you heard their question.
- Speak clearly in a conversational tone. Use your voice to convey humor or emotion, but keep your answers specific and to the point.



Mastering the Interview



What do employers look for when interviewing a candidate?

- Knowledge of the employer, industry, and position you are applying for.
- Oral and written communication skills, and the ability to interact well with others.
- Qualifications for the position.
- Professional appearance.
- Mature behavior and judgement.
- Enthusiasm for the company and position you are interviewing for.
- Flexible and pleasant demeanor.
- Leadership potential and ability to work in a team with others.
- Self-confidence and realistic appraisal of self.
- Work ethic.
- Problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- Motivation and demonstrated patterns of accomplishment.



Interview Questions



Although you will never be able to guess exactly what you'll be asked in an interview, there are some common questions that most employers generally ask some variation of. These are good questions to practice answering.

Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- Why did you choose this career field?
- Why do you think you will be successful in this career?
- How do you spend your free time?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe something you have accomplished in your work or personal life.
- What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- Describe a challenge you had to overcome and how you did it.
- Why should we hire you?
- What will you bring to our company?
- How do you work under pressure?
- How do you work with a team?



Interview Questions



Common Categories of Interview Questions

- Questions related to the job description.
- Questions related to your resume.
- Tell me about yourself questions.
- Describe your strengths and weaknesses questions.
- “Why are you interested in our organization?” questions.



Interview Questions



Common Categories of Interview Questions

- Behavioral questions. Behavioral questions ask you to describe a situation and how you responded. Usually starting with, “Tell me about a time when...” or “Give me an example of a time when...”
 - ...you were faced with a challenge and had to overcome it.
 - ...you had to work in a team to meet a tight deadline.
 - ...you were in a stressful situation. How did you handle it?
 - ...you had to work with someone you didn’t get along with.
 - ...you were successful in reaching your goal.
 - ...you accomplished something you were proud of.
 - ...you were faced with an ethical dilemma.

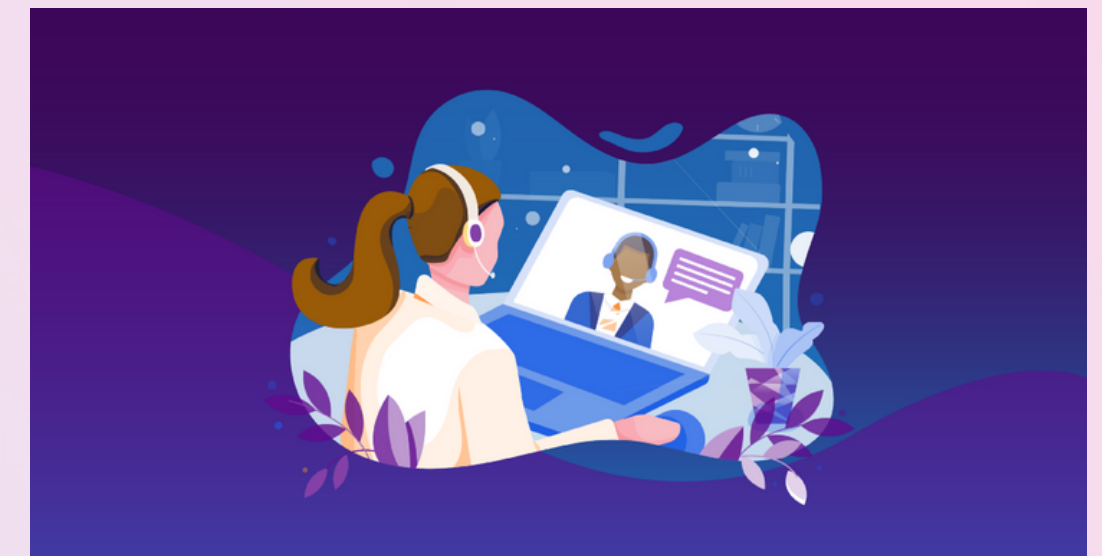
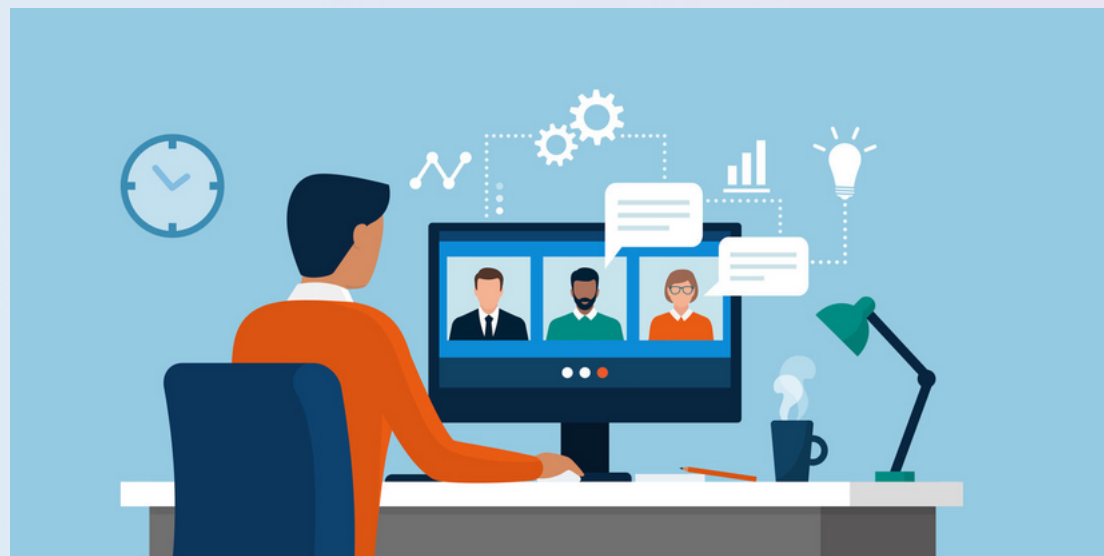


Answering Interview Questions



A solid way to respond to interview questions is to use the STAR(L) method:

- Situation—describe the situation by providing a short description—the who, what, where, when, why and how. Keep it brief!
- Task—describe the task (or dilemma) you worked on in more detail.
- Action—explain what you did, your specific role, and the steps you took in the situation.
- Result—describe what happened as a result of your actions.
- Learned—describe what you learned from the situation and what you will do again in the future when faced with similar circumstances. If the outcome of the situation was not necessarily positive, you can share what you would do differently next time.



Answering Interview Questions



Example of the STAR(L) method at work: Describe a time when you were faced with multiple deadlines and how you handled it.

- Situation: A couple years ago, I took the initiative to apply for funding to pay to bring in a professional speaker for one of our UAS Club events.
- Task: I researched different funding options and found several opportunities, however, each had different requirements, but similar deadlines.
- Action: In order to make the varying deadlines and make sure I fulfilled all the funding application requirements, I created a database to organize their deadlines, purposes, requirements, and other important application information such as how and where to submit it.
- Result: By breaking down the different funding applications into smaller steps and keeping all the information organized in a database, I was able to submit all of the applications for funding. We received two out of the five applications submitted and ended up with extra money left over even after paying for the speaker to come in.
- Learned: When juggling multiple deadlines, it is important to stay organized and break down each task into smaller, more manageable ones.



Inappropriate and Illegal Questions



These are questions that are not relevant to your professional qualifications or that ask you a question in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age or marital status, which is illegal.

It is also illegal for an interviewer to ask questions related to your medical history, pregnancy, or plans for children.

If you are asked one of these questions, a good way to respond is by telling them that you are happy to share helpful information about your qualifications for the position in which you are applying, but that you are having trouble understanding how this particular question relates to the job requirements.

If they still insist on you answering the question, politely decline. You want to remain professional, but also protect your rights as a candidate.

If you are faced with one of these types of questions in an interview, please notify the Director of Career Services.



Ending the Call



- Craft a short "sign-off" statement that includes thanking the employer for the opportunity to interview, and that you hope to hear from them in the future about a hiring decision. Expressing that you enjoyed the interview and would love to work for their company is also acceptable.
- Mute yourself immediately.
- Wait for the employer to end the call (if possible).
- Reflect on your experience--what are your impressions of the company? Is this somewhere you still want to work? How did you interview? What (if anything) do you need to improve on for next time.
- Do you still have any lingering questions about the job or company? It is completely appropriate to follow-up with the hiring manager with questions or if you don't hear back from the employer within a month and want to know about the status of the position. BUT do NOT continuously hound the hiring manager about a decision. One follow-up email is appropriate. Keep in mind some employers may take several months to make a decision.



Interview Resources



- Schedule a career advising meeting for personalized feedback or to obtain resources for improving your interviewing skills
- Practice with Big Interview
- K-State Polytechnic Interviewing 101
- LinkedIn Interview & Professional Development Courses





Practice & Practice Again

- One of the benefits of practicing for a virtual interview is that you don't necessarily need another person to practice for one. You can start by recording yourself answering practice questions and critiquing your own performance.
- If you want additional feedback, ask a staff member from Career Services or a professional mentor for their critique on your practice interview.
- There are also several online tools that can offer feedback, including Big Interview which is free for all K-State students.



Contact



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