



# Virtual College Interview Guide

Check and keep track of which schools that you are applying to require an interview. You will find that some schools require interviews and some do not. Preparing for your interview will, in a lot of ways, be very similar to how you would prepare for an in-person interview with certain tips to keep in mind. Use this guide to help you prepare for your virtual interview.

## Preparing for your interview

- **Do your research.** Look into the school to understand what they're looking for in a student or employee. And look up the admissions counselor to get an idea of the person who will be interviewing you.
- **Practice your responses to potential interviewer questions.** Based on your research, think about what kinds of questions you may be asked—and prepare some well-thought-out answers. You may be asked questions like:
  - Why are you interested in this particular college?
  - What strengths could you add to our campus community?
  - What are your career and personal goals?
  - If you could read the evaluation your counselor has written about you, what might it say?
  - How accurately do your grades and test scores reflect your true abilities?
  - What do you do in your spare time?
  - What have you read lately?
- **Create a list of questions for your interviewer.** Come up with specific questions about campus life and academics. You may ask questions like these:
  - What makes this college unique?
  - What clubs and student groups exist?
  - How are student housing decisions made?
  - How does the academic advising process work?
  - Does the school have internship programs? How do they work?
  - What percentage of graduates find employment within six months of graduating?
  - Are tutoring and other support services available?
  - If you could offer one piece of advice to an incoming student, what would that be?
  - In what ways has the college adapted to needs based on COVID-19?
- **Use the space below to come up with your own questions:**

### TIP

Turn off our cell phone. You don't want texts from friends to interrupt your interview.

## TIP

Project confidence and attentiveness. It's natural to be nervous, but do your best not to let it show. Sit up straight and try not to fidget.

- **Dress for success.** Business casual is the way to go. Even though your interview is virtual you should try to be as prepared as possible. Pick out your interview attire ahead of time and make sure you have everything clean and ready to go. The goal is to appear mature, professional, and well-groomed—while still feeling comfortable and like yourself. Something to consider: solid blues, greens, and purples show well on the screen.
- **Backdrop matters.** Make sure you take time to think about what the interviewer will see behind you. If possible, pick a quiet, private space, away from distractions that is a low to no trafficked area by other people in your home. Make sure your backdrop is tidy and appropriate. Depending on the virtual platform you are meeting on you may also be able to blur your background but you'll need to figure that out beforehand. Something to consider: place a lamp behind your computer so that your face is visible.
- **Plan your timing.** Again, even though your interview is virtual make sure you know where the link to the meeting is, be sure you have a good Internet connection and log on before your scheduled interview time to show that you are prompt. Do a virtual test run ahead of time if you can with a friend, or parent to test logistics and to practice answering and posing questions.
- **Gather everything ahead of time.** Get all your clothes together and laid out the night before. Have your questions printed or written down, a notebook/paper, and a writing utensil next to your computer for the interview. Also, plug your computer in the night before to make sure you have a full battery when you log on for your interview.

## Tips for a smooth interview

- **Make a positive impression from the start.** From the moment the interview starts to the moment it ends, be positive, friendly, and professional. You may try to position the camera on your computer at eye level so that you are giving the impression of eye contact. Make sure your name on the virtual platform is your full name and not a nickname.
- **Be concise, but thorough.** Think about the questions the interviewer is asking and try to answer them completely. The goal is to share enough details of your skills and experiences to help the interviewer make a good decision—while keeping your responses as short and sweet as possible. Perhaps use sticky notes to write down talking points that you can stick on your screen instead of looking through papers or having to navigate to another screen.
- **Be honest.** If the interviewer asks a question and you're stumped on the answer, that's okay. Don't try to fudge it. Just express that you don't know, but you'll consider the question carefully for future knowledge.
- **Ask questions.** Remember the questions you prepared—and work them into the interview as appropriate. As the interview comes to a close, show your interest by asking about next steps and when you expect to hear from the interviewer about his or her decision.
- **Follow up.** Always send a thank-you note after an interview to show your appreciation for the interviewer's time. Handwritten notes always stand out, but email is okay too. And be sure to provide any additional information (such as school transcripts or professional references) requested right away.