Tips for conducting interviews at a distance

Sometimes it’s simpler to conduct interviews over the phone, SkypeTM or via video conference to save travel expenses and time.

We offer our students some tips on making the most of these “at-a-distance” interviews. As an employer, here are some tips you may find useful.

**A few handy tips**

✦ If using Skype or a similar video conferencing software, **use a professional or organizational username** and make sure you’ve provided the correct username to the interviewee

✦ **Test out the technology**, including software, microphones and cameras BEFORE the interview to work out any bugs and troubleshoot possible issues (make sure you have a strong interview connection)

✦ **Smile** (if it’s a phone interview, smiling will give your voice a friendlier quality)

✦ Be aware of the **camera position and what the camera can see**, and if possible, make direct eye contact by looking right at the camera

✦ For video interviews, **wear a solid colour** if possible (patterns and black and white can look distracting on screen)

✦ For phone interviews, tell the interviewee how many people are on the panel, and **introduce yourselves** at the beginning of the interview

✦ Make sure that all the interviewers, and the questions, can be **heard clearly** by the interviewee

✦ Take a look at **what appears behind you on your webcam**. Are you backlit? Is there a lamp or plant in the way?

✦ **Stick to a script and be consistent**. Ask the same questions that you pose during in-person interviews and give interviewees the same amount of time to answer

✦ **Keep a notebook handy** to jot down responses and follow-up questions

✦ Remember, this may be the first time the interviewee has done an interview at a distance and you may run into a glitch or two.