

# Interviews : Phone Interviewing

**E**mployers use the telephone interview as a way of identifying and recruiting candidates for employment. Telephone interviews are often used to screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. They are also used as way to minimize the expenses involved in interviewing out-of-town candidates.

While you're actively job searching, it's important to be prepared for a phone interview on a moment's notice. While the majority of telephone interviews are pre-arranged and scheduled, keep in mind that a recruiter or a networking contact might call at any time and ask if you have a few minutes to talk.

## Be Prepared to Interview

Prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview. In addition, plan on being prepared for a phone conversation about your background and skills.

- Sit at a desk in a straight backed chair.
- Keep your resume in clear view so it's at your fingertips when you need to answer questions.
- Have a short list of your accomplishments available to review.
- Have a pen and paper handy for note taking.
- Turn call-waiting off so your call isn't interrupted.
- Clear the room of people and pets. Turn off the music and the TV. Close the door.
- Consider using a landline rather than your cell phone to avoid a dropped call or static on the line.
- Wear business attire, even though the interviewer cannot see you. It can help you feel and sound more professional.

## Practice Interviewing

Talking on the phone isn't as easy as it seems.

- Have a friend or family member conduct a mock interview and record it so you can see how you sound over the phone.
- Practice reducing the "ums" and "uhs" and "okays" from your conversational speech.
- Rehearse answers to typical questions you'll be asked.
- Contact the Pomerantz Career Center about using InterviewStream for practice.

## During the Phone Interview

- Don't chew gum, smoke, eat, or drink.
- Do keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Smile. Smiling will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.
- Listen to the questions carefully. If you are unsure of the question ask for it to be repeated or for clarification.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Use the person's title (Mr. or Ms. and their last name.) Only use a first name if they ask you to.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Take your time - it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
- Give focused answers.
- Remember your goal is to set up a face-to-face interview. After you thank the interviewer ask what the next step is in the selection process.

