



# Handling Telephone Interviews

## Ready Reference ♦ G-10

College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology ♦ Career Services

At times, recruiters may wish to schedule a telephone interview instead of meeting face-to-face. They may do this if they are screening candidates or if they are unable to travel to an interview site. Phone interviews can be nerve-racking since you can't see the interviewer, but don't worry. With a little preparation and a few tips, you'll be on your way to interview success.

### Preparation:

- Place your resume in full view so it is easily assessable for the interview. It will be a reminder to help answer questions.
- Keep all employer research materials within easy reach.
- Have a notepad handy to take notes.
- Place a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door and turn off your stereo, TV and any other potential distraction.
- Warn roommates that an interviewer will be calling and to let you answer the phone.
- Warm up your voice while waiting for call.
- Have a glass of water handy.
- Take care of any "nature calls" before the scheduled phone call.
- Turn off call waiting, if you can. If you can't, do not take any other calls while you are interviewing.
- Make certain that the speaker phone is not activated. You do not want to run the risk of the interviewer hearing an echo or not clearly understanding you.
- Prepare yourself for potential questions, as well as those you would like to ask the interviewer. *Ready References G4, G5, and G6* can help you with this process.

### During the Interview:

- Listen carefully. Do not do anything else while the interviewer is on the phone. They will notice if you are distracted.

**HOT TIP:** Wear your interview suit. Prepare for a phone interview the same way as for a face-to-face interview. Wearing your suit will help you feel professional and it will reflect in your tone of voice.

- Speak clearly and smile. The interviewer will hear it in your voice.

- Be honest in your answers. Not being face-to-face with the interviewer is no excuse for being lying.
- Practice giving a brief overview of your work history and be prepared to describe everything included in your resume.
- Take notes on what the interviewer says and the questions asked. You will be able to refer to them later in the interview.

**HOT TIP:** Have a mirror handy. Look into it while you are on the phone and smile at yourself. This may sound cheesy, but it will improve your telephone presence by making you seem friendlier, more interested, and more alert!

- If you are to call the interviewer, be courteous to support staff. How you interact with them will have an impact on the impression you leave. Many supervisors ask their subordinates for advice.
- Don't be overly familiar. Refer to the interviewer as Mr., Mrs., or Ms. unless directed otherwise.
- Beware of giving only yes or no answers. They do not provide any significant information about your abilities.
- Close the interview strongly. A closing such as the following is appropriate: "It sounds like a very interesting opportunity Ms. Smith, and a position where I could make a definite contribution. My foremost question would be when could we meet?" You can also close with a question inquiring as to the next step of the selection process.

### Follow-Up

- Write a thank you letter aligning your skills with the position for which you interviewed.

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