

**INVESTMENT** 20/20

*See your future in finance* /20

Part of The Investment Association

A large circular graphic with a green center and a ring of colorful buildings (blue, red, yellow, grey) around the perimeter. The buildings are stylized and arranged in a circular pattern. The background is a teal gradient with white clouds.

# PREPARING FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Telephone interviews are traditionally used as part of a recruitment process to help the employer decide whether a candidate will be progressed through to an assessment centre or face to face interview.

During COVID-19 however, telephone interviews are being used instead of a face to face interview, or as a step before video/skype interviews and virtual assessment centres

# Telephone interviews

## The basics

- Telephone interviews traditionally last 25 – 45 minutes. During COVID-19 however they may last longer as many employers are utilising telephone interviews as the main interview with candidates.
- Expect a series of questions that are competency based. See slides 5 - 7 for more information on competency based interviews.
- Most telephone interviews have one or two interviewers, generally the HR Recruiter and / or the Hiring Manager. The Hiring Manager is often the person who will be the line manager of the person being recruited.
- A telephone interview gives the employer an insight to your suitability to the role, AND an opportunity to experience your communication skills and ability to have a conversation on the telephone – a key skill in any role!

# Competency based interviews

- Most telephone interviews are generally competency based.
- Competencies are skills, such as communication, problem solving, team work, organisation etc.
- The questions will be targeted on the skills needed to do the job.
- Each candidate will be asked the same set of questions, although the HR Recruiter / Hiring Manager may ask additional follow up questions based on your answers if they need clarity or want to find out more. This is helpful for candidates as it provides a chance to offer additional useful evidence related to the skill area.

## Example competency based questions

- Tell me about a big decision you've made recently. How did you go about it?
- What has been your biggest achievement to date?
- Tell me about a time when your communication skills improved a situation.
- Tell me about a time when you showed integrity.
- Describe a situation where you were asked to do something that you'd never attempted previously.

Source:

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/competency-based-interviews>

# Before a telephone interview



## Research preparation: Job Description

- Make sure you know the Job Description (JD) really well!
- Thoroughly read the JD and highlight key parts – such as the skills that the employer is looking for from candidates.
- Prepare examples of your experiences that evidence that you have the skills that the employer is asking for. Make sure for each skill you have two examples. The employer may ask for another example if they feel your first example hasn't been comprehensive enough to fully demonstrate the skill.
- Make sure you focus not just on the 'how' part in your example, but also on the outcome/impact – how did the use of that skill enable a great outcome/result.

## Research preparation: Employer website

- Thoroughly research the employer. The more you know about and understand the employer, the better targeted your responses to interview questions will be.
- Review their website and look at their:
  - Values and statements about culture.
  - ‘News and press’ page - you’ll find information on new developments.
  - ‘Careers/working here’ page – it will give you insight what it could be like to work there
- Follow the employer on LinkedIn and other social media. You will be able to access latest news, updates and insights that could be useful in an interview.

## Practical preparation

- **Check the time!** Be ready to answer the phone.
- **Make sure you are somewhere quiet**, with good network reception. Check this first. Tell the people you live with not to come into the room or to make noise outside the room. You do not want to be distracted.
- **Set yourself up in advance.** Make sure you are at a desk with a plug socket nearby, so you can charge your phone easily if needed.
- **Dress smartly.** Even though the employer can't see you, it is helpful to make sure you are in a 'professional mindset'.
- **Sit up straight in a proper chair.** It really does make a big difference to your voice projection. Some people prefer to stand – it can help energise!
- **Read the paper/listen to the news** in the few days before the interview. You may be asked about a current new story.

## Make sure you have in front of you

- A note book and pen
- A glass of water
- Key facts about the company (you may be asked what you have found out about the organisation)
- The job description (JD)
- Examples of your experiences that correlate to the skills on the JD
- Your CV (you could be asked questions on your CV)
- A list of questions to ask the interviewer at the end of the interview (see slide 15 for tips)

# During a telephone interview

- **Answer the phone professionally – first impressions count.** Say “Good morning/afternoon. *<Insert your name>* speaking”. It is best to announce your name as it will give clarity to the interviewer who has answered the call.
- **Speak slowly.** People have a tendency to talk quickly when nervous. This can result in your words getting muddled and it makes it very difficult for the interviews to decipher what you are saying. The interviewers will be taking notes – make their job easier by speaking at a steady pace. The more they can hear of your response, and the more great notes they get to make – and the better it is for you.
- Give the interviewer sufficient time to complete the question before you respond. Do not speak over the interviewer. Give a couple of seconds at the end of the question to make sure they have finished before you respond.
- If you need to, ask them to repeat or clarify the question. You will never be marked down for gaining clarification.

It's important to ask questions. These should be insightful and interesting questions – along with any process questions about the recruitment process - see slide 17. Some example questions include:

- How does the culture and values of (firm name) reflect in how clients are managed?
- What are the biggest opportunities ahead for the (department name)?
- What are the drivers for change for (firm name)?
- How has COVID-19 changed investment strategies of (firm name)?

# At the end of a telephone interview



- Confirm the next step - will it lead to a video interview/virtual assessment centre?
- Find out who to contact if you require further information after the interview.
- During COVID-19, find out what plans there are for successful candidates to visit the premises before a start date.
- Ask if you could speak to a Investment20/20 Trainee or Apprentice before the next step in the process. It will help you get an insight into a 'day in the life', and shows you are keen.
- Thank the interviewers for their time, and finish off with saying 'I look forward to hearing from you'.
- Make sure you have disconnected the call properly.

# AND FINALLY.....PRACTISE!

Ask a friend to conduct a telephone interview for you. Make it as realistic as possible.

Ask another person to listen in and feedback on areas where you did well, and the ways in which you can improve.

There are three rules to getting great at interviews:

- Prepare well
- Practise lots
- Take on feedback to help you improve

# Good luck!

For further support please contact the  
Investment20/20 Careers and Talent team

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