

Phone Interviewing Tips for Internships

Overview of Phone Interviews

Telephone interviewing has become a popular method of refining the applicant pool because it allows interviewers to interact with a high number of applicants in a very short period of time.

Although not as formal as a face-to-face interview, telephone interviews should still be treated with equal seriousness. An interviewer can tell a lot about your style and personality just by your approach during a phone interview. Interviewers will be listening for your enthusiasm, technical interest, and knowledge. Taking time to lay the groundwork is essential for a successful experience.

Preparation Is Key

Prepare just as you would if you were meeting your interviewer face to face. Treat this as a formal meeting.

- Research the organization that you are interested in joining.
- Complete a list of your strengths and weaknesses.
- Create a short list of your accomplishments and supportive “talking points” for how these accomplishments will contribute or relate to the position for which you are applying.
- Create a well-thought-out list of questions regarding the position, your learning goals, and current opportunities that may be available to you. Consider the interview as a two-way street—an opportunity for you to discover if this position is a good fit to meet your needs and goals, as well as an opportunity for the interviewer to assess how your skill set fits in with their organization.
Some suggested questions are:
 - Should I expect training or an orientation before beginning my internship?
 - Would I have regular meetings with a mentor?
 - Could you list some tasks and projects I could be involved with?
- Practice interviewing. For example, have a friend or a family member conduct a mock interview, or use. Anticipate what types of questions will be asked and rehearse your answers.

Pre-Interview

- Keep your resume/CV in clear view.
- Have a pen and paper close at hand for note taking.
- Turn off call-waiting so your call is not interrupted.
- Clear the room of distracting people and pets.

- Turn off other distractions such as the stereo or television.
- Consider using a land line as opposed to a cell phone so the call doesn't get "dropped."

During the Interview

- Be enthusiastic. The first 15 seconds of the interview are crucial, and the level of interest in your voice is key.
- Take your time. It's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts. You may need time to carefully consider an answer before responding; preface your conversation with the fact that there may be pauses in the discussion as you do so.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Demonstrate a clear and concise career plan. The interviewer may start with the question, "Tell me about yourself?" This is not an invitation for you to detail your personal life. Bring hobbies to light only if they contribute to your overall career goals and objectives.
- Smile. Even if the interviewer is unable to see you, your smile can be heard. Some people find it helpful to have a mirror close at hand so they can monitor their facial expressions.

Closing the Call

- Thank the interviewer for her/his time and reinforce your interest in the position.
- Ask the interviewer what the next step is. (You're looking for actions and time frames so you will know what you can anticipate.)
- It is perfectly acceptable to let the interviewer know that you are considering another position if that decision has a bearing on your acceptance of this position.

After the Interview

- Before you hang up, make sure that you have the name of your interviewer and their office and/or email address. Follow up with a note thanking them for their time and the opportunity to discuss the position. This is also an ideal opportunity to cover any additional strengths that you neglected to emphasize during the interview. A handwritten note is most desirable, but you must get it in the mail by the following day so that it is timely. If that is not possible, an email message is a good alternative.