

Telephone Interviews

Organisations are using telephone interviews more and more, this form of interview is daunting for both the candidate and assessor. Below are some hints and tips from **John Rigden**, an experienced interviewer for BP.

- Prepare in the same way as you would for a face-to-face interview (see Interview Preparation Checklists). Have your questions ready, you will be given the chance to ask them, and give some thought to the events in your education and/or career that you will use to illustrate your answers.
- Try to arrange a landline connection into a room where you will not be interrupted. If you are unable to arrange this, let the interviewer know the situation. I have conducted phone interviews with people on mobiles in the street and on landlines in public rooms of hotels. It is easier for both sides if the interviewer understands the situation.
- Have pencil and paper available, along with your diary, CV and application form. The interviewer will have it in front of them and may well refer to it. The one advantage of a telephone interview from the candidate's point of view is that you can refer to notes. A glass of water is essential.
- A telephone interview will probably take 20% longer than if it were conducted face to face.
- Accept that telephone or video interviews are more difficult than face to face interviews.
- There is a good chance that misunderstandings will occur. Try to accept this possibility (probability?) and do not panic when it happens. Stay calm and let your interviewer manage the situation.
- Take the time to reflect back to the interviewer what you think you have heard as the question. Ask for clarification if anything is unclear or ambiguous. Technical interviews are more difficult than competency/HR interviews, it is hard to frame questions or answers without the aid of diagrams.
- Take your time in answering, but keep your responses fairly brief. Ask the interviewer if you have given sufficient information in response to the question. Speak slowly and clearly.
- The interviewer will be taking notes, try not to be disconcerted if there is a silence when you finish responding to a question. Telephone interviews are more difficult for the interviewer as well, and they are probably trying to keep up with their notes.
- You may well find it helpful to have a practise interview on the phone with a friend. They are different from face to face and take a little getting used to. It is important to come over as enthusiastic and not talk in a monotone.