

# PHONE INTERVIEWS

## WHY PHONE INTERVIEWS:

- An employer may conduct a telephone interview as an initial screening of candidates.
- Often, phone interviews precede in-person interviews for a number of reasons; phone interviews are cost effective and save time for the interviewee and interviewer.
- Telephone interviews allow more than one individual (usually a search committee) to be involved in the interviewing process. You may have met with one recruiter during placement, but telephone interviews allow the entire committee to “get to know you a little better.”

## PREPARATION:

- Be sure that the message on your voice mail is professional – something a potential employer may want to hear. Eliminate any ring backs – employers will hang up before you have the chance to answer.
- If using a cell phone, be sure your battery is fully charged (have charger on hand just in case) and you are in a place with a strong signal.
- Always answer your phone in a professional way when job searching. Don’t assume it is your best friend calling with a new number.
- Keep a pen, paper, your resume, cover letter, and information on the employer (your research of the company/organization) on hand. Some recruiters will contact you to set up an actual interview time; other recruiters will call and ask “Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions regarding your interest in XYZ position?”
- Make sure that EVERYONE who answers your telephone understands the importance of the calls you will be receiving. Request these individuals to take COMPLETE messages for you (it’s important to verify interview times and clarify the time zone – in case it’s different than where you are currently living).
- Remove all visual and audio distractions from you, if at all possible. If there are any distracting background noises ask the caller for permission to leave the line while you close the door, turn off the iTunes, computer, Facebook, television, etc.
- Have questions prepared and written down ahead of time.
- Find out (if you can) the names of those conducting the phone interview before hand.

## DOING WELL DURING THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW:

- Respond positively and show enthusiasm – you need to focus on this through your voice. Your voice is the only way to convey enthusiasm and interest in a telephone interview. Try smiling; employers will hear this in your voice!
- Listen closely to everything the interviewer(s) says. Think through your responses as carefully as you would if you were sitting across the table from him/her/them. A little silence is fine. Don’t feel like you need to fill every second with words. There will be times in which the interviewer(s) will be silent (taking notes, thinking of the next question, etc.) – no need to panic. If you think you’ve been cut off by your phone, ask the interviewer if you are still connected (avoid repeating, “Can you hear me now?”)
- Take notes. Since the employer is not in front of you, you have this advantage.
- At the conclusion, the caller(s) will usually explain what you should expect to happen next. If the interviewer fails to identify these next steps, it’s a good idea to politely ask.
- Before terminating the telephone call, verify that you have the person’s name (and spelling), job title, mailing address, and telephone number. (To save time, as long as you have the individual’s name and job title, you can usually search for the remainder of the information online.)
- Thank the person/search for committee for contacting you.
- Follow up by sending a thank you letter/note to the recruiter/search committee.

