

## **Virtual Interview Tips**

### ***Samford University Career Development Center***

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#### **1. Confirm who will initiate the call prior to the interview.**

Make contact with the interviewer prior to the interview day to confirm who will initiate the virtual interview.

#### **2. Look at the camera, not the screen.**

It is very tempting to watch yourself or your interviewer during a virtual interview, but looking directly at the video camera is the only way to maintain direct eye contact with your interviewer. Master the **“Digital Handshake”**: Just like your in-person interviews, first impressions really matter. The first five seconds will make or break your digital interview. It is those few seconds, when the hiring manager sees you and you see the hiring manager, that the digital chemistry is created. That is when this person hopefully thinks, ‘I like what I see, I want to engage in this digital conversation. The first step to creating that digital chemistry? A “digital handshake.” Think a slow, confident, professional, firm nod with a slight shoulder bend and eyes forward—the other person should not see the top of your head. When you can’t physically greet the hiring manager, this simple gesture shows that you’re excited to be there and ready to get down to business. From then on, focus on keeping your eyes on the camera—not on the view from your screen. Your eyes need to look straight into the camera, so it appears on the other end you are looking right at the other person.

#### **3. Dress the part.**

When it comes to what you wear, treat your virtual interview like an in-person interview and dress professionally from head to toe (or at least from head to waist!). A professional dress code with virtual interviews is expected, not excused.

#### **4. Prepare your surroundings.**

Pick a quiet place to interview without an elaborate backdrop so that you can be the focal point on the screen. Remove anything distracting behind you and keep it neutral. Make sure the lighting is good. Don’t position yourself with lighting behind you, as it may cast a shadow over your face.

#### **5. Practice makes perfect.**

Doing a run through interview with a friend beforehand is helpful because your first few virtual interviews are likely to feel awkward, especially if you have to retrain yourself to watch the camera and not the screen. Play around with everything beforehand so that when it’s interview time, you can shine without being distracted by the program.

#### **6. Close other programs on your computer.**

Getting Facebook notifications during your interview is distracting and unprofessional. Before your interview, make sure all other windows on your computer are closed (especially if they make noise).

#### **7. Use notes.**

Don't be afraid to help yourself with post-it notes or a copy of your resume handy when you interview. A benefit of having a virtual interview is that you can have a cheat sheet in front of you so that you don't have to memorize everything you want to mention.

#### **8. But don't rely too much on your notes.**

Just make sure your notes are easily scannable so that you use them as quick reminders, not a script. While having notes is certainly a plus, relying too heavily on them can cause awkward pauses during your interview. An interviewer won't be impressed if they only see the top of your head during the interview, so while having notes is good, be sure to use them sparingly.

**9. Avoid interruptions.**

If you are interviewing in a house with multiple people or pets, be sure to let everyone in the house know ahead of time that you will be in an interview while securing any animals away from your interview space. Nothing is less professional than having to tell your potential employer to hang on while you shoo your dog away from the camera.

**10. Keep your profile professional.**

Unlike an in-person or phone interview, your first impression during a virtual interview doesn't actually involve you. The first thing your interviewer will see is your username and picture, so double check that they are both interview appropriate (or create a professional Video account — after all, they're free!)

**11. Watch your body language.**

Not all physical cues translate from in-person interviews to virtual interviews, which make the ones that do even more important. Be sure to have good posture and relax your shoulders to avoid stiffness.

**12. Avoid a "Can you hear me now?" situation**

Nothing is more frustrating than only catching every other word a person is saying, so be sure to tweak the audio ahead of time to make sure you can both hear and be heard without difficulty.

**13. Make sure the interviewer is engaged.**

Stop every once in a while and make sure your interviewer is engaged in what you are saying. Being aware of the interest level of your interviewer is crucial in a virtual interview since they may have interesting e-mails pop up that direct attention away from you.

**14. Follow up!**

A thank-you email or note is just as important after a virtual interview as it is in an in-person interview.

***For more information, stop by or call the Career Development Center  
217 Dwight Beeson Hall • 205-726-2980***