



## VIRTUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

You've been offered an interview for a great internship/job opportunity! There's just one catch: It's virtual. While virtual interviewing has become more common, there are still ways to ensure you leave a lasting impression with a hiring manager, even if it's done online. Here are some tips to help you navigate the virtual interview, from how to prepare to follow-up practices.

A reminder you may need to hear: **Don't psych yourself out.** Although the setting is different, it is best to prepare for a virtual interview much like how you would prep for an in-person interview. That includes researching the company, reviewing the position description, practicing question responses *and* questions to ask the employer, and dress professionally. For more detail about these best practices and sample questions, please check out our [Guide to Interviewing](#). Don't forget: the Career Development Center offers mock interviews—go to your Handshake account to schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor.

Once you identify and are comfortable with the basics of professional interviewing, consider the following tips to help you master the art of the virtual interview:

### 1. Test Your Technology

After you *carefully* read the instructions sent by the recruiter—including the time of the interview and how to access the meeting—it's important to get comfortable with the technology you're using. Check your internet connectivity, and confirm your camera and microphone are working. It's a good idea to do a "trial run" video conference with someone a few days before your interview with the employer, especially if it's your first time using the required software. Technical savvy is one of the top 10 traits employers are looking for, so don't procrastinate! Take the time to familiarize yourself with the audio and video functions for the interview.

**NOTE:** Recruiters have recommended that students ensure they have their contact information **before** the interview. That way, should you experience any technical difficulties on the day of the interview, you can contact the recruiter and let them know. If you do not have contact information prior to your interview (i.e. a phone number to call), it would be a good idea to ask for it in advance.

### 2. Set Up Your Space

After testing your technology, determine where you will take the interview. Find a room with optimal lighting, and eliminate all distractions (silence/turn off phone, close doors and windows, etc.). It's also good to be aware of any surrounding decor, artwork or other visuals in view—be sure they do not distract either you or the employer from the focus of the interview; guarantee **you** are the focal point of the conversation. With all this in mind, it's imperative to settle into a “professional” spot for the interview (such as a home office); sitting/resting on your bed or across the couch **will not** convey the right message to a potential employer.

In addition, you want to sit down well prepared at the time of the interview—print out a copy of your resume to reference, have access to the questions you will ask the employer when appropriate, and use a notebook/pad to jot down quick notes, especially after you've researched the position and company to avoid clicking around the internet.

### **3. Rehearse, Don't Recite!**

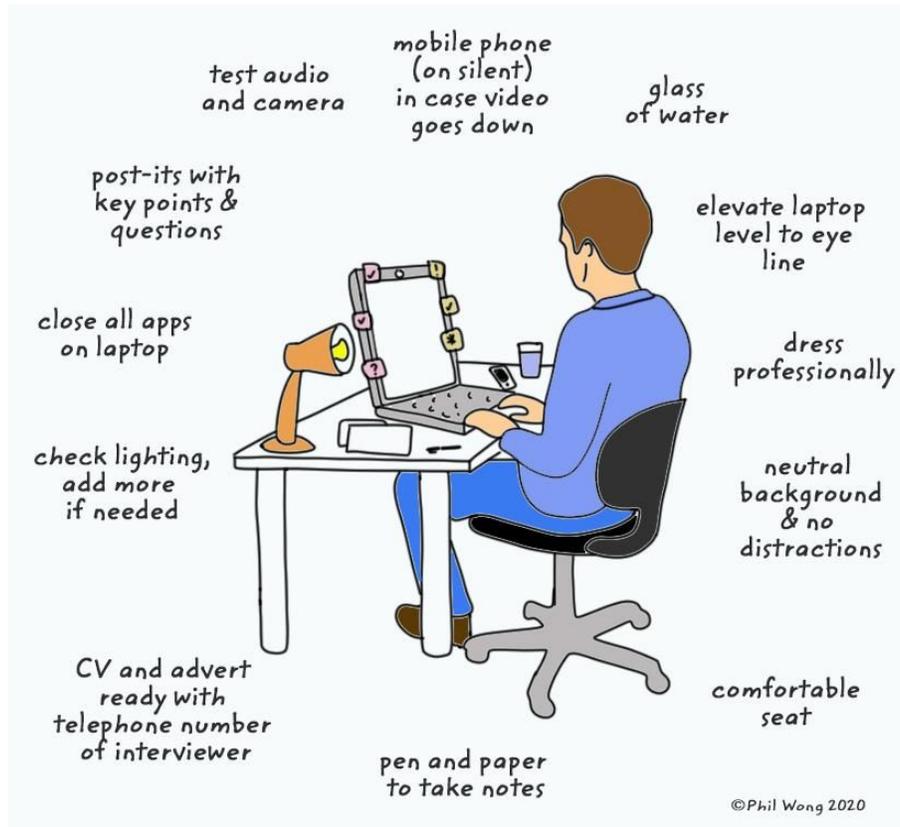
Once you've prepared your environment, participate in a “practice run” to not only test the tech, but to make sure you feel comfortable with your set-up. During this time, you should **rehearse** some answers to mock interview questions to simulate the real thing when you connect with the hiring manager(s). Be mindful, though—you can have a couple of “talking points” based on your employer/position research and questions to ask them, but try to avoid memorizing each response, so as to not sound like you are reciting your responses. It's easy to tell if you aren't being genuine; a potential employer will know whether or not you are engaged and “fully present” with them. This [resource](#) highlights some common Behavioral Interview Questions; it is beneficial to rehearse answers to these before your interview.

### **4. Present Yourself Professionally**

Feeling prepared, you've now made it to interview day: but what's the protocol for the attire of a virtual interview? As you likely heard before, you want to **dress for success**—dress as you would for an in-person interview. Refer to the [Guide to Interviewing](#) for professional attire recommendations.

**NOTE:** Don't assume you will only be seen what's in the camera frame; wear a *full*, professional outfit for your interview!

How you present yourself goes beyond just your attire—non-verbal communication is an important aspect of any interview. Employers will pick up on a person's body language, and they are more likely to remember what you said if you maintain eye contact. Maintain confidence and demonstrate your interest by sitting up straight, smile, and keep the camera at - or slightly above - eye level. Take a look at the included infographic for a visual on how to present, and the best ways you'll want to prepare for a successful interview:



## 5. Be Yourself

Remember when we mentioned, ***don't psych yourself out?*** Whether or not you are someone who thrives during in-person interactions, you want to be sure that you are authentic to who you are in your responses and questions. Because of the physical disconnect, it can be difficult for employers to determine if you would be a good fit for the company's culture. That's why it is important to let your personality shine as you would during an in-person interview: ***emote*** your passion for the work and ***express*** how you can help meet the needs of the organization.

## 6. Follow-Up

After your interview, plan to send a well-timed follow-up—within 24 hours is a good rule of thumb. Not being in-person with the employer might mean you cannot obtain a business card, but you still should be sure to get an email address of the person/people who conducted the interview. Thank that person for their time, and share something that was particularly compelling in your discussions, if applicable. Keep the email concise, and reiterate your contact information should they need any additional resources from you moving forward.

## 7. Bottom Line: Preparation is Key

Despite any uncertainty that may surround the “virtual” component of a virtual interview (e.g. technology errors, failed internet connection, etc.), if you’ve dedicated an appropriate amount of time and energy to prepare, you will put yourself in position to succeed right from the start. When you take time to prepare—from testing your tech, to rehearsing questions, to feeling comfortable (and *professional*) in a certain space—it helps for maintaining your composure and confidence during the interview. With this in mind, it can’t be overstated: ***don’t psych yourself out!*** Treat your virtual meeting like an in-person interview. If an employer or hiring manager gathers that you are just as engaged connecting virtually as you would be face-to-face, it will stand out to them, and help set you apart from other applicants.



The Career Development Center is here to assist you with mock interviews, job or internship search, and more. Schedule an appointment with a counselor via Handshake, and check out our website ([www.sju.edu/careers](http://www.sju.edu/careers)) for additional career-related resources.