# How to organise your own Skype Interview

## Top tips for success!

## Establish a Skype interview appropriate environment

Firstly, think about where you are going to have your Skype interview – your home office? Your bedroom? Your kitchen? Once you’ve decided on the most appropriate room, think about what the interviewer will see in frame when looking behind you. Keep your background scene as clear as possible, as pictures on the wall or other objects can risk distracting the interviewer – their attention needs to be firmly on you. Also, make sure your surroundings are tidy and the lighting is good.

Once you have set up your ‘interview room’, make sure you’re not risking family, friends or even pets walking in when the interview is taking place. Let them know ahead of time that you have an interview, and then close the door to keep out noise.

## Learn about all the tools Skype has to offer

Skype has many functions that can be useful in an interview scenario. For instance, during the interview you might need to utilise the functionality to share your screen or other files with your interviewer. So, prior to your interview, take a look at this and familiarise yourself with all the tools Skype has to offer.

## Do a test Skype call the day before the interview

The day before your Skype interview is due to take place, it’s always a good idea to have a test run. Organise a test call with a family member or friend – this will ensure you feel confident using the technology, and that the camera and microphone both work. Run through some interview questions and answers and ask the family member or friend to provide you with any specific feedback.

## Practise speaking your interview answers out loud and record yourself

It’ll probably feel strange doing this. However, video recording yourself speaking your interview answers out loud is a great way to check for any points you may need to correct before the interview itself, such as looking down too much, poor body language, speaking too quietly or speaking too quickly. It also gives you a final opportunity to test your Skype settings, the lighting in the room and your body language. You won’t want to suddenly become aware of these issues during the interview itself, and risk looking ill-prepared and unprofessional as a result.

## Make sure your Skype account is professional

The first thing that your interviewer will see is your Skype profile photo and username, so ensure both depict you in a professional light. If you already have a personal Skype account, consider creating a separate account which you can use specifically for interviewing. You could even create a username associated with your profession, for instance, JohnSmithFinance.

## Have notes and questions prepared

Before the interview, print off your CV and prepare questions to ask at the end. Prepare individual points to put to one side to use as springboards for conversation, or prompts. This will help limit the risk of being tempted to look down and simply read from your CV,  thus not maintaining eye contact with the interviewer.

## On the day of your Skype interview…

**Log in and get set up ahead of time**

You wouldn’t turn up to a face-to-face interview seconds before it is due to start, and the same is true for Skype. Make sure you start the program up and have everything in place at least 10 minutes before the interview start time. This will ensure you are ready and waiting when the interviewer dials in – the last thing you want to do is keep the interviewer waiting, and risk being perceived as unorganised and poor at managing your time.

## Dress for success

Whilst you may be taking the Skype interview from the comfort of your own home, you should still dress as you would for a face-to-face interview. If in doubt, it’s always a good idea to dress as professionally as you can. Also, be aware of what clothing will be in the frame – for instance, if you decide to wear tracksuit bottoms and a shirt, you may regret it if you need to stand up!

## Set your Skype presence status

You may have noticed from your previous use of Skype that a green dot appears next to your avatar when you are online, indicating that you are active and available to contact. This happens automatically when you first sign in.

However, it’s also possible to manually set your Skype presence status to ‘away’, ‘do not disturb’ or invisible any time you want. This could be invaluable for ensuring you are not disturbed by other calls coming in during your interview. You can further help to avoid any mid-interview distractions by closing any background browser tabs on your computer and switching your phone off in case of notifications.

## Body language is crucial – even through the lens

First impressions are formed within the first seven seconds of somebody meeting you, so your body language has a powerful part to play in the opinion your interviewer forms of you as soon as they dial into the call. So, during your Skype interview, make sure you look directly into the webcam when you speak and not at the screen – this will help maintain eye contact as though you were in the room. Maintaining eye contact will show the interviewer that you are paying attention and will help you build rapport – making conversation flow more naturally. Also, remember to sit up straight and smile to show the interviewer that you are a confident communicator and are engaged in the interview process.

## Be engaged when the interviewer is talking

Remember that you are in a conversation, so you should show engagement when the interviewer is talking by nodding and agreeing. If you aren’t accustomed to Skype interviews, having to look through a webcam and at a tiny Skype window may feel unnatural at first. So, you should be careful not to come across as too static and unnatural in turn. Use hand gestures and animate your face and body in much the same way as you would in a face-to-face conversation.

## Be aware of any time lag

During the Skype interview, you may encounter a delay or time lag between the interviewer speaking and you hearing their words. If this happens, make sure not to speak over your interviewer and avoid speaking in long blocks. This will help the conversation to feel more natural. Stay calm if the technology goes wrong

Despite all the preparation, practice and precautions that you may take for your upcoming Skype interview, technology can always find a way to throw a spanner in the works. For instance, you may have issues with your internet connection or your microphone may start to play up. It’s important in these situations to stay calm. How you react when things don’t go as planned here can reveal to your employer your ability to calmly and proactively tackle difficult situations.

## Follow up after the call

This final step is no less important than it is after a ‘regular’ interview. After the interview, send a quick email via your recruiter to say you enjoyed meeting them and learning more about the role and the company. Conclude the email by saying that you look forward to hearing from them and reinforce your interest in the role.

As technology becomes even more prevalent in many hiring processes, video interviews are in turn becoming increasingly common. If you’re looking for a job, it’s almost a given that at some stage in the very near future you’ll be asked to attend a Skype interview. By following the above tips, and dedicating time to your thorough interview preparation, I’ve no doubt it will be a success.