



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Online Interviews

Tips for Applicants



Human Resources Department, University of Lincoln

Due to the current climate, the University is moving online with their recruitment and selection methods, and for the foreseeable future, only online interviews will be taking place. This presents new challenges to both our applicants and panel members and is something that we all have to adapt to. We understand that this can add to the strain of the interview process, so we have created some guidance that will hopefully ease some of this pressure, and help you to perform your best.

Your interview will take place on one of two video conferencing providers; Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business. Your Invitation to Interview email will confirm which one will be used on the day. Depending on the role that you're applying for, you may face multiple selection methods within your online interview – details of these and necessary preparation will be highlighted on your Invitation to Interview email.

Prepare your technology (and your own understanding of it)

Understanding technology on the first attempt can be difficult for the majority of us, never mind in a pressurised interview situation.

It may be useful to familiarise yourself with the features involved in Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business at least a day before your interview - the below links provide detailed user guides for you to do this:

- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Skype for Business](#)

A key point to note is that if you do not have an account for either, you'll have to join the interview via a link in your invitation request. This will be sent to your email address from a member of the department – make sure you have received this email prior to the interview. If you are experiencing any technological issues on the day, please get in touch with a member of the panel or HR as soon as possible, so we are aware.

We recommend that you also dedicate some time to deciding which device you want to use for the video interview. Test the camera and microphone quality by making a call to a friend or family member, and ensure the device that you choose has a consistent internet connection. Not only this, but make sure it is fully charged and the charger is

nearby in case you need it. Try to avoid using a smartphone, and if you're using a tablet, find a secure way to keep it stationary.



Take time establishing the best location

A few days before your scheduled interview, it may be a good idea to prepare your interview location. Make sure the area is quiet, tidy, and if you can, use a simple background so that the interviewers are able to focus solely on you.

You might need to review your camera's image in various different lights, to discover which gives the clearest view of you – if you can, face towards a window to reflect natural light. If you are wearing glasses, remain conscious to potential glare onto the lenses.

Limit distractions

Notify all members of your household that you'll be interviewing, to avoid any unnecessary distractions – this may be difficult if you have caring duties, however try to limit the interruptions as much as you can.

Close any other software on your device that may make sounds and pop-ups. Turn your phone to silent and ideally, move it from view so you're not tempted to lose concentration. It may be worthwhile using headphones to improve the sound clarity.

Consider your resources

Try to think about what resources you might take to a normal, in-person interview and have these on hand; a drink, a notepad and pen, a physical copy of your CV and the job description, and any other preparation notes or talking points. In normal face-to-face interviews, the panel are usually open to you bringing in some notes – so, as long you're not regularly reading from these, having them nearby can limit the inevitable nerves. If your interview consists of multiple selection methods, double-check for anything else you may be required to provide or send over in advance (via your Invitation email).

Try to mimic how you would act in an in-person interview

We understand that your new interview settings differ quite substantially from, perhaps, your previous experiences, but that doesn't mean your physical actions have to replicate that change. It can be easy when you're in your home environment to slip into a more relaxed, informal mode – so, dress how you would to any other face-to-face interview, taking into account that strong colours and patterns are much more accentuated in video calls. Try to remain aware of your body language throughout.

When responding with your answers, it can be very tempting to look at the panel member that posed you the question, or even at yourself to see how you are coming across, but, do try to direct your gaze into the camera rather than at the screen, so you appear to be maintaining eye contact. Aim to keep your camera at eye level so this seems slightly more natural.

Mitigate the impacts of technological issues

Unfortunately, as much as we can try to imitate an in-person interview, the inevitability is that technological delays might present themselves. Try to speak clearly so your answers don't become muffled to the panel, and if a question isn't clearly heard, respectfully ask for it to be repeated (as many times as necessary) – it is much more important to address this than ignore a potentially valuable part of the question. The panel have accommodated for potential delays in their scheduling, so try not to feel rushed.

Also, be careful to only talk when you are sure the interviewer has finished speaking, so you don't interrupt them or have your first few words cut out; leave it a few seconds longer than usual to check that there isn't a technological time delay.

If you are not particularly confident with video interviews, or just talking on camera, it might be worthwhile practising a video call beforehand, either by getting a friend or family member to act as an interviewer on the other end, or by recording yourself and evaluating how you come across. This will allow you to double-check that your technology is in working order, as well.

And most importantly

The interview panel understand the challenges that this new means of interviewing will bring, and will account for this when reviewing your performance – so, try not to worry too much and utilise your available resources to prepare as much as you can.

