

Whatever the format, the goal of an interview is the same: to see if you are the best person for the job.

As you would for any interview, prepare well and you'll increase your chances of success.

So, depending on the interview format, which key questions you should think about?

**Is your telephone/video conversation part of a multi-stage process?** Bigger companies often ask candidates to pass several assessments during their application. Find out exactly what the company is looking for during your video or telephone conversation, so you can ensure you're giving them the most relevant information.

**Telephone interviews** are usually one-to-one conversations with an interviewer. These are often a "screening process" to pick the best candidates for the next stage of recruitment.

- ✓ Think about questions you're likely to be asked and make brief notes on your strongest answers. Have these set out clearly in front of you, along with other important details such as your qualifications or the interviewer's name
- ✓ You can make notes about what the interviewer says during the conversation – this may give you a question to ask *them*. It's also worth preparing 1 – 2 questions before the interview – you should have chance to ask these at the end
- ✓ Ensure you're somewhere quiet, with a good signal and minimum chance of distractions
- ✓ Set the tone for the chat by answering in a positive way: "Hello, [your name] speaking"
- ✓ Listen carefully. It sounds basic, but it can be easy to drift off if the interviewer is speaking at length. Concentrate – this is your chance to get offered a job!
- ✓ "Warm-up" before the call. For instance, if you usually talk quickly or have a quiet voice, aim to keep an even pace and volume. Similarly, some interviewers may be less familiar with different accents, so you may want to focus on speaking extra clearly
- ✓ Sit up straight, or stand and move your hands if it helps you feel more confident. Interviewers can "hear" if you're smiling and enthusiastic
- ✓ Maintain a professional tone throughout the conversation. For example, remember to thank the interviewer for their time/call at the end, rather than just saying "Bye"
  
- Don't read "word-for-word" off a page. This will make your answers sound less fluent, and you may be so keen to deliver your notes that you miss the point of a question
- Don't interrupt the interviewer: when they finish speaking, wait a second, then answer
- You won't be able to see the interviewer nodding or encouraging you, but you can still aim to sound confident. Keep your answers focused – don't ramble

**Video interviews** usually work in one of two ways. Some will take place “live”, where you sit at a computer and have a conversation with one or more recruiters. Less common is a version where you see questions on screen, then record and submit your answers. Either way, many of the following points apply to both. (Also, look at the telephone interview tips above. The first two apply to video calls as well.)

- ✓ Check that your internet connection is steady, and your speakers, microphone and webcam work on the platform that will be used for the interview (e.g. Skype; Zoom, etc.)
  - ✓ Let family/housemates know that you’ll be on an interview, so you won’t be [interrupted](#)
  - ✓ Ensure that the background behind you looks tidy and professional, and that the lighting is good so the interviewer can see you clearly
  - ✓ Dress as you would for an in-person interview (this can make you feel more confident)
  - ✓ Have your notes and any other required info ready in front of you. You could stick post-it notes of key points behind your screen
  - ✓ When speaking, look at your webcam – it will seem like you’re looking at the interviewer
  - ✓ Sit up straight; smile; nod. Maintaining positive body language throughout the chat will show the interviewer you’re interested and confident in yourself
- Don’t just read straight off your notes, and definitely don’t try to slyly Google an answer. The interviewer will be able to tell!

For video *and* phone interviews, one thing you should certainly do is **practise** beforehand. Ask a family member or friend to read some questions over the phone and give you some feedback on your answers. Alternatively, use video to record yourself answering a question and then watch it back to see where you could improve.

Practice is an easy and straightforward way to improve performance in the real interview!

And remember, interviews aren’t one-way conversations. They’re also a chance to learn if the organisation you’ve applied to feels like a good option **for you**.

### **Next steps:**

- Visit Sheffield Hallam’s website for more on degree apprenticeships
- If you know some companies you’d like to work for, visit their websites and see if they offer degree apprenticeships. If you’re unsure, try [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)
- If you have an interview coming up, research the company – and look back at your application so far – to see if you can anticipate likely questions
- Research the [STAR](#) technique to help you structure your answers for maximum impact
- If you’re unsuccessful with your interview, don’t get too disappointed and *always* politely ask for feedback. This could help you improve on something specific and give more chance of succeeding in a future interview