



Interview Preparation for Lawyers

Interviewing over Videoconference

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When it comes to international recruitment, the option to interview over *Skype*, *BlueJeans*, or one of the many other online videoconference platforms, has revolutionised the hiring process. It is quicker, more cost effective and it enables you to attend an interview in the comfort of your own home, often outside of normal working hours.

It does of course also bring some challenges, the biggest danger being that the format distracts to the point that you don't perform, and the opportunity is gone. Fortunately, with a bit of preparation you can easily ensure that the technology is on your side.

TECHNOLOGY

- Wherever possible, use a good laptop or tablet – smartphones are not ideal for this format.
- Ensure that you have a sufficiently strong WiFi signal. If unsure, plug in rather than using wireless.
- Check your microphone and sound (consider using a USB headset if it is not optimal).
- Ensure that your skype/equivalent username/profile picture is professional as this is your first impression.

SURROUNDINGS

- Find a neutral, professional background and remove any mess/clutter.
- Artificial lighting should be pre-tested (it is likely to be best positioned behind the camera). Natural light is preferable if that is possible.
- Ensure that you are in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed (avoid coffee shops for example).

PRACTICE

- Set up a practice call with a friend or family member to allow you to check the technology, the surroundings and your responses as seen by the interviewer. Ask them for honest feedback.
- Consider recording the call if you want to review and improve your own performance.
- If all else fails, as a minimum, use the test call function to check the basic technology.

PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Remember to prepare as you would for any other interview, irrespective of format. See our advice on preparing for an international interview.
- Aim to position the camera as close to eye level as possible (you may need to raise a laptop) with your head and upper body in shot.
- Print off a copy of your CV/Resume, any key notes about the interviewers and the firm, and any questions that you hope to ask. Have these to hand but not in sight of the camera.
- Ensure that you have a contact number for the interviewers in case there are problems with the technology.

DRESS CODE

- Business attire (and yes, that includes the 'out of shot' bottom half!)

- Avoid strong or complicated patterns as they can become blurred over a video-connection.
- Try to wear contrasting colours – e.g. light background, dark suit and a light shirt. Beware the “floating head” impression of a white shirt on a white background.

BODY LANGUAGE

- There is a natural tendency to focus on the image on the screen but remember to look at the camera frequently to give the impression of making eye contact.
- Avoid fidgeting or gesturing heavily as what might seem natural can be exaggerated when viewed over a videoconference link.
- Speak calmly and ensure that the other party has finished speaking before responding.
- Try to use plenty of tone in your voice as this compensates for the artificial setting.
- Smile and don't let the technology inhibit your usual warmth of personality.

PROBLEMS

- Technical issues can occur despite your best preparations. If the faults are making it impossible to concentrate on the interview, make the interviewer(s) aware.
- If closing and redialling doesn't fix it, consider suggesting you continue the call over the telephone (perhaps keeping the skype connection on mute for visuals).
- Above all, remain calm, polite and don't get agitated...and remember, they may be able to hear you even if they can't see you.

WRAPPING UP

- Glance at your list of questions to check if there is anything that hasn't been covered.
- Try to summarise why you think you would be a good fit for the role and why you are keen.
- After the thanks and goodbyes, stay on interview mode until you are sure the connection has been closed.

OTHER RESOURCES

For more interview tips look at the resources page on our website where you will find articles on Interviewing for an International role; Interviewing for Senior Level Roles; and Interviewing by Telephone.

CONTACT

For more information on interview preparation or to discuss any aspect of your international job search, please get in touch with:

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