

# TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING

Many organizations use telephone interviews at various points during the hiring process. It is important for you to prepare for a telephone interview and communicate effectively with the interviewer.

## Why are telephone interviews used?

Employers use the telephone to interview potential employees:

- As a quick and inexpensive way of screening and evaluating candidates.
- To determine your skills for positions that involve extensive phone use.
- When a student attends a school that is not on a recruiter's campus interviewing schedule.
- To follow up with questions they neglected to ask in a previous interview.

## Preparation

- Practice in advance by having a friend or USD career counselor interview you on the phone.
- Prepare key points to make and questions to ask.
- Make sure the phone you are using has excellent reception, the battery is charged, and you are in a setting free of distractions and background noise. Ignore call waiting.
- Record a professional-sounding voicemail message.
- If roommates or family members answer your phone, remind them to take accurate messages.
- Have access to paper, pen, an appointment book, and a copy of the resume and cover letters you recently sent.

## The unexpected phone call

- Recognize that once you have applied for a position, you are officially in the job market. Often you will have no advance warning before you receive a call from an employer.
- If an unplanned call comes at a difficult time, say that you are eager to talk but cannot speak freely at that moment. Ask if you may call back in a few minutes. Record the person's name and number and return the call promptly.
- Calls may come on weekends, very early in the morning or late at night.
- Keep handy a list of organizations and positions to which you have applied.
- If you receive a voice message from a recruiter, return the call as soon as possible. If you get the message in the evening, return the call immediately and indicate that you will call back in the morning.

## The scheduled phone interview

- Answer the phone "Hello, this is Maria."
- Immediately express your pleasure when the caller states the company affiliation.
- Use good diction and avoid slang and phrases such as "you know," "uh," and "like."
- Do not chew gum, sip a drink, eat, or smoke.
- Ask questions and be enthusiastic. A smile can be heard in your voice.
- Because the caller has no nonverbal cues, it is particularly important to speak clearly and audibly.
- For more interview tips, schedule an appointment with a USD career counselor and review other Career Services interviewing handouts.

## Ending the call

- At the conclusion, the interviewer typically explains what happens next in the hiring process. If not, politely ask what the next step will be.
- Express your interest in working for the organization and thank the person for calling.
- Before the interviewer hangs up, get his/her full name, job title, email and phone number.
- Immediately send a thank-you letter or email and refer to topics that were discussed.