



VIDEO INTERVIEWING TIPS FOR CANDIDATES

During this unprecedented time of dealing with a pandemic, you will likely be asked to interview at all stages of the interview process via video. We recognize that although video interviews are certainly not uncommon in normal circumstances, what is unusual is to conduct an entire search process, including finalist interviews, via video. Although these guidelines are more focused on the semi-finalist interview, many of the guidelines provided will apply to finalist interviews as well. We want to provide you with as much guidance and support to help you navigate the online interview process as effectively as possible. We hope that you find these guidelines helpful. We welcome your feedback, so please let us know what we can do to strengthen this document, particularly once you have traversed the online interview process.

General Advice and Interview Preparation

- Learn as much as you possibly can about the institution. Review the website, read the profile again, talk with friends and acquaintances (confidentially) who are knowledgeable about the institution. Remember, at least one of the shortlisted candidates will have done an excellent job learning about the institution. If your understanding is limited, it will show.
- If possible, have a sense of how like divisions at peer and aspirant institutions are structured.
- Understand how the current division at the institution is structured. Be familiar with the organizational chart – both for the specific area and the president’s cabinet.
- If the institution is religiously affiliated/special mission, understand the religious tenets of the institution, be familiar with the religious history of the institution, and think about how you would message these virtues if you were selected.

Advanced Video Interview Planning

- Familiarize yourself with the computer, camera, and/or microphone you will be using during your interview. You will want to be as comfortable as possible with the technology and hardware once the interview day arrives. Ask if you can test the equipment prior to the interview. Since many sites require a user/display name, make sure to input your full name.
- Set up your camera so it focuses on you. Position it at the same height as the top of your head, slightly above your hairline. This will help you maintain good posture while giving you the most attractive camera angle. If you can get a tight head and shoulders shot, this is best. If you cannot get a tight shot, try to keep other objects out of the shot and make sure the table or desk you are sitting at is clean and neat if they are in focus. Try not to sit in front of a white wall. Try and reduce distractions as much as possible, knowing that sometimes, things just happen. Plan the best you can.
- If you can, make sure the space is lit appropriately and no shadows are cast upon your face. Natural light from a nearby window can be flattering but beware of sitting directly in front of a window. Consider blurring your background or using a [virtual background](#) if you are concerned about your background.

- If committee members are not assembled in a single place, consider using Gallery View so that you can see each committee member. When one of them asks a question or otherwise speaks, the frame around the person speaking will light up, enabling you to identify that person. This is found in the upper right corner of the Zoom Meeting/Webinar.
- Make sure the microphone is near you. Be aware that the microphone picks up all the noise in the room so remove anything that may be loud, like a ticking clock. Silence all distractions such as cell phone ringers and email alerts, take your landline off the hook, and keep pets and children in another room, if possible. Make sure all other applications and programs on your computer are closed so nothing can pop up on your screen or make noise.
- Take a trial run: ask a friend or family member to videoconference with you and provide feedback. Continue to test the sound and quality and see how you look on screen. Academic Search is also happy to conduct a test run with you. Remember that if you plug in headphones they may make sounds to someone else, and not you. How loud you hear someone may not be how loud they hear you. If you can, make your test run at the same time as your interview to understand lighting, noises, etc.
- **Most importantly: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!**

What to Wear

- Dress professionally from head to toe, as you would for an in-person interview.
- Dress in lighter colors against a darker background and darker colors against a lighter background but try to avoid white. It can often cause a glare effect.
- Wear solid colors. Be aware that small stripes and busy patterns do not show up well on video and can cause the equipment to work harder to reconcile these patterns when you move, causing a delay.

Meeting the Committee

- Make sure to familiarize yourself with the list of committee members provided to you.
- Begin your interview by thanking the committee and the chair for inviting you to interview.
- Remember - the committee members want to see you succeed. They are looking for candidates who show poise, confidence, personality, and enthusiasm for the position. The committee understands that things may happen during the interview, so relax and enjoy the conversation.
- At the conclusion of the interview, thank the committee for meeting with you and once again, express your interest in the position in a well-structured and thoughtful manner. The committee wants to hire somebody who is going to be enthusiastic and dedicated to strengthening the institution.
- A thank you note to the committee chair thanking the full committee for its time and consideration is appropriate after the interview. Because the committee typically selects finalist candidates shortly after the interviews, an email may be timelier.

During the Video Interview and Helpful Reminders

- Make eye contact; pretend the webcam is the person interviewing you and look directly into it.

- Make sure your responses are audible to the interviewer. Speak loudly and clearly into the microphone.
- Do not wave your hands around; unnecessary movements distract.
- Watch your posture. Because the interview will likely be done in a place you are comfortable, it is easy to forget that it is a formal interaction.
- Use the picture-in-picture feature so you can see how you appear. If you are concerned about your body language, the picture-in-picture can help you monitor it.
- Remember to be mindful of the microphone and its ability to pick up all noise. Do not tap your pen or shuffle papers for instance.
- Remember to be mindful of the chat feature within Zoom. With the exception of when chat may be helpful in resolving technical issues, please avoid using this communication forum to allow focus on the conversation itself.
- Keep your cell phone handy and turned on approximately 30 minutes prior to the interview if the search consultant or the search chair needs to reach you. Make sure to turn your phone off once the interview commences so that you are not disturbed during the interview. If there are connectivity challenges during the interview and the consultant or chair needs to reach you, have your phone handy so that you can receive the call.

Questions

- Your interview with the committee is scheduled for 60 minutes. The committee has prepared a list of questions to ask during the interview. Refrain from spending a significant chunk of time on any one question. Remember, a committee member may want to ask a follow-up question or may ask that you clarify or provide additional information. At the end of the interview, you will be allocated a few minutes to ask any questions you have of the committee.
- It is important that you answer the questions being asked! Often candidates (many of whom are outstanding) do not pay attention to the questions. If you are not sure that you have answered a question to the satisfaction of the committee members, ask if they would like further detail.
- Be prepared to answer at the very least why you are interested in this particular position at this particular institution with the stated priorities identified in the prospectus.
- When providing an example or sharing an anecdote, keep it simple. The committee members do not need to know all the details. They simply want to know about your experience and the lessons learned as a result of that experience.
- Prepare questions in advance that are insightful, show careful thought, and demonstrate that you have given care to framing the questions. Some of your questions will be answered during the interview, so ensure that you have a few extra questions in the event that this happens.
- The rule of thumb is that you do not ask questions where the answers are available publicly. We have seen committees rethink a candidate that they considered average and move that individual forward because they were impressed with the level of preparation and thought that went into the questions. So, recognize that the quality of your questions can make a difference.
- Avoid saying anything negative about past or current employers. If you must explain why you left a particular position, present a balanced viewpoint. If you have questions on how

to present a particular situation, reach out to the senior consultant and work it through with them.

- As a candidate it is perfectly acceptable for you to ask questions about issues or concerns that you may have about the institution and the position? You can ask questions about challenges that you may be aware of or that you suspect, and you can ask why those challenges have continued to persist if it is a longstanding challenge. An excellent question is to ask if the local newspaper did a feature article on the institution, whether the article would likely be favorable or critical; or if the newspaper did an expose on the institution, what would they learn?

Helpful Video Hints

1. How do I change the video layout? There are 6 different options: Full Screen, Active Speaker, Gallery View, Mini Window, Layout when Screen Sharing, and Hide Non-Video Participants.
 - a. **Full Screen:** You can take any of the layouts except Mini Window into full screen by clicking on the icon with four arrows at the top right corner of your Zoom window. You can exit full screen by pressing Exit Full Screen in the same location or using the Esc key on your keyboard.
 - b. **Active Speaker:** Active Speaker is the default video layout. It will switch the large video window between who is speaking. If it is a one-on-one meeting, it will display your video at the top, and the other participant's video below.
 - c. **Gallery View:** You can also select to view your video layout in Gallery View. When using Gallery View, you will be able to see up to 49 participants at a time and will have an arrow to scroll through the remaining participants.
 - d. **Mini Window:** Mini Window allows you to minimize the Zoom video but keep it on top of any other applications you have open on your computer. You can move the window around your screen as needed or hide the video entirely.
 - e. **Layout when Screen Sharing:** When you are viewing a screenshare, you can view the screen share with Active Speaker or Gallery View at the top of your screen or in Side-by-Side Mode. [Read more about Side-by-Side Mode.](#)
 - f. **Hide Non-Video Participants:** When you are in Gallery View, right-click on any participant that either has their video off or dialed in via telephone, or you can click on the 3 dots at the upper right of their participant box. Choose Hide Non-Video Participants to hide all users with their video off.
2. It is best to use the provided Zoom dial-in phone number rather than computer audio when you know you are going to have poor internet connection during the meeting/webinar. Zoom is heavily reliant on internet connection and dialing in reduces that demand.