Video
Interview
Handbook

cpl

Video interviews are typically live and done via a software platform such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or specific interviewing platforms such as Blue Jeans or Hirevue.

Your first video interview might seem a little daunting but once you've practiced, video interviews can often be much less stressful than a regular interview. They eliminate the need for travel, open up a greater variety of opportunities, and enable you to control the setup.

In general, the same rules and etiquette as in-person interviews apply, the main difference is the technology used. In this comprehensive handbook, we will guide you through all you need to prepare and the different technology elements you should test to have a stress-free and successful video interview.

Over 80% of employers have switched to remote video interviews

*Data taken from polls on Cpl LinkedIn page

Pre-recorded interviews

Pre-recorded interviews are automated and are often used for screening large amounts of applicants. They usually follow the below format:

- You will be sent a link with pre-recorded questions

- You will be given a set amount of time to answer each question - you are usually given a few attempts before choosing which answer to submit

- Questions are submitted and this is usually part one of the hiring process

- If you're successful you'll then be invited to the next round of interviews (often a live video interview)

Live video interview preparation tips

A good video interview is all down to preparation. Below are some specifics you should always test and trial to make sure you give a good lasting impression.

Software
Zoom, Skype, Google Hangout and Microsoft Teams are all common video software applications used for job interviews. There is no one standard, so always ask what platform will be used if the information isn't already provided.

If you haven't been provided with specifics, don't be afraid to ask as you might need to download something in advance. Once you know, download and do a few test-runs with a family member or friend so that you're comfortable and know how everything works.

Webcam

Check your webcam before any video interview. Most laptops will have an in-built webcam but if you have a desktop computer you might need to purchase an external one.

In general, **external webcams give you more control and are better quality,** but a regular laptop webcam is ok to use too. What's important is that the interviewer can see and hear you clearly. Again, testing is essential here.

Phones & tablets
It's not recommended to use a tablet or your phone for video interviews. The smaller screen gives less flexibility, video software is less reliable on a phone and your microphone will be less sharp.

Webcam placement

Whether you opt for an external webcam or your laptop webcam, the most important thing is making sure the interviewer can see you. Do a test and check your webcam placement shows your face, head and shoulders.

What you don't want, is for your camera to cut off your face or to skew your eye contact. You might need to place some books under your laptop to achieve this -play around with it and see what works best for you.

Position your webcam above your eye-line and angled slightly downward for the most flattering angle.
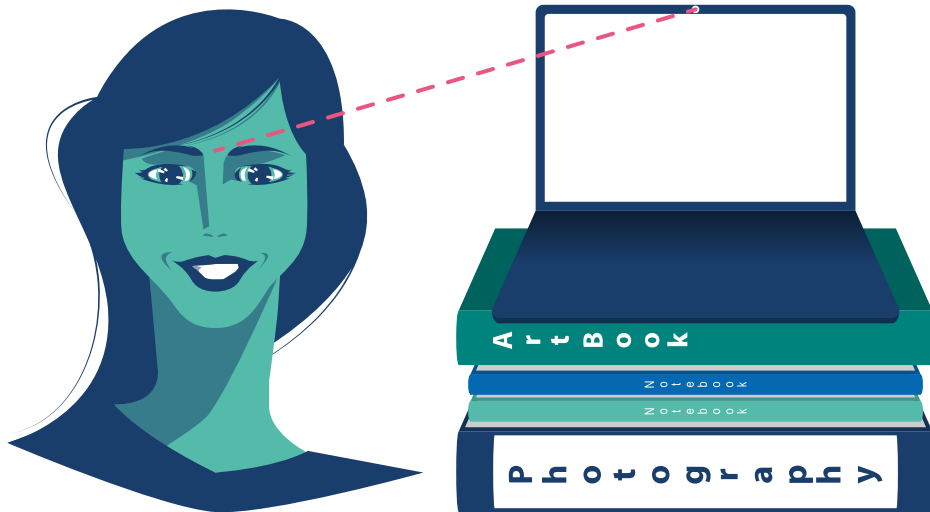
Lighting

Set up your laptop and webcam in advance and do a lighting test. Aim for nice, natural looking light and don't over-expose or over-saturate. If you're using an external webcam and you're given the option to adjust exposure and colour, avoid altering the settings too much. You want to look natural.

For flattering lighting, place a lamp slightly behind your computer positioned on the side of your face you feel is best. If you are relying on natural light test to see if sunlight will interfere with your camera. If it does try a different location or shut your blinds.

Microphone or headset?

If your voice and tone can be heard clearly it doesn't matter too much whether you use your computers in-built microphone or a headset.

Do some tests with friends and if the audio isn't clear you might need to invest in a headset. Jabra, Logitech and Sennheiser all do good options.

Your video background

Your background should be neat and tidy. Bookshelves have become popular business call backgrounds, but it's best to aim for neutral.

Most video software allows you to blur your background which is a good option if you're concerned about family members or housemates appearing during your interview.

Your internet connection

Do a test run and inform anyone you live with that you'll be interviewing - If other people are streaming movies, playing video games or Skyping this might disrupt your connection.

You should also close any extra tabs you have open and make sure no updates or downloads are running on your computer.

Documents

Print your CV and have it to hand along with any notes. If you intend screen sharing a portfolio or presentation have this open and ready (close any other tabs).

Have a glass of water in case your throat gets dry or nerves kick in. You should also put your mobile on silent or 'do not disturb' to avoid distractions.
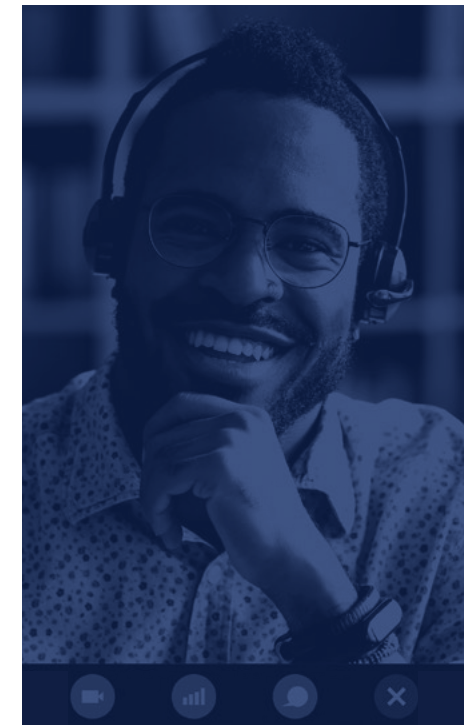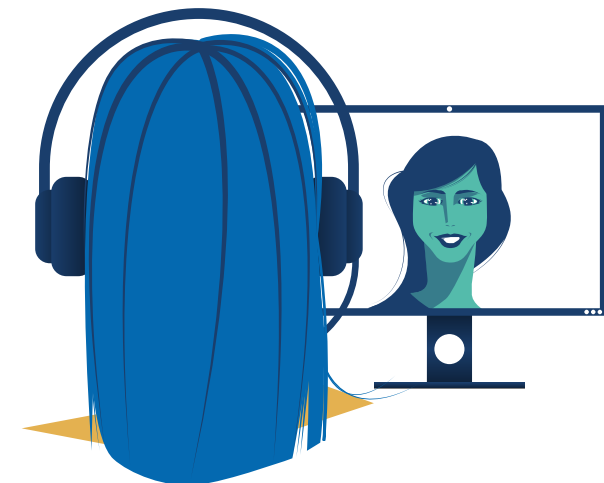
Video job interview questions

Most interviews, video or otherwise, are now open-ended competency-based questions. **Employers want to know that you have the skills to do the job along with strong soft skills that align with the company's culture.**

We've gathered a selection of some common competency interview questions for you below. When preparing answers use the STAR Method which is detailed for you on the next page.

- **Tell me about a time when you felt it was particularly important that you adapted your behaviour to suit the situation.**

- **Give me an example of a time when you had to accept a change initiative which came from higher up in the organisation.**

- **Describe a time when you had to deal with an ambiguous situation at work.**

- **Tell me about a time when you had to have a conversation with a co-worker or customer with whom you had a language barrier?**

- **Give me an example of how you keep others informed of issues, recurring problems, or suggestions for improvement.**

- **Describe a talk or presentation that you recently gave.**

- **Tell me about an occasion when you had to work hard to meet the needs of a customer/client.**

- **Tell me about a time when a customer or co-worker made unreasonable demands on you. What steps did you take?**

- **Describe a situation during which you had to deal with an angry customer or co-worker.**

- **Describe a situation when you recognised a potential problem as an opportunity.**

- **Describe a situation in which you identified a controversial issue within your organisation.**

- **Give me an example of when you had to work to a tight deadline.**

- **Describe a time when you had to plan a project.**

- **Tell me about a time when you solved a difficult problem.**

- **Describe a situation in which you recognised a problem & devised a solution to it.**

- **Describe a situation where you were working under a lot of pressure.**

- **Tell me about a time when you were given unfair feedback.**

- **Tell me about a time you achieved a goal.**

- **Tell me about a time you improved the way things were done on the job.**

- **Describe something you have done to improve the performance of your team.**

- **Give me an example of a time when you had to be particularly supportive to others.**

- **Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to work more effectively in a team.**

For more details on interview questions and how to answer them, visit our article on **competency based interview questions.**

Answering interview questions using the **STAR** method

The STAR method enables you to demonstrate your relevant experience with the interviewer in a methodical manner.

By using this step-by-step method, you will be able to answer each question in an effective way without forgetting anything important.

How to use the STAR method:

Situation	Explain the situation by setting the context and be clear and informative with your information. Where were you working, how many people were on your team, who the client was, why it was important and so on.
Task	Explain the task/objective of the project. What were you trying to achieve? Why? Who else was involved and what specific aspects of it were you personally responsible for?
Action	Explain what YOU did and HOW. Describe the steps you took to complete your task; what were the barriers and how did you get around them; what negotiations you had; who else was involved or impacted; what innovations did you think of and what skills you drew on to achieve the task.
Result	Explain what the result was. Were things better because of what you did; Any quantifiable improvements or gains; What did you accomplish and what did you learn? What feedback did you receive; What would you do differently next time; What did you learn from this.

What to do if something goes wrong

If something goes wrong apologise, address it briefly and move on. Over the past few months most people have gotten quite used to unexpected video meeting interruptions so don't panic - your interviewer will understand.

Questions to ask the interviewer

Video interviews tend to be quicker than traditional job interviews, but you should still have an opportunity to ask some of your own questions. Here are some useful things to ask:

- What's the company culture like and how have you maintained the culture when working remotely?

- Do you expect this role to be remote full-time? Or do you expect work will return to being office-based long term?

- What's your favourite thing about working here? How have you found the move to remote working?

- How will the rest of the interview process run?

Find more questions you can ask in our article on **5 Job Interview Questions you Should Ask.**

What to wear

Wear what you wear to a normal job interview. Choose an outfit you feel comfortable and confident in and always dress fully – pyjama bottoms and a shirt won't come across well if you need to stand up unexpectedly.

Handy tips to look good on camera

- **Avoid loud prints or patterns**

- **All black or all white can be unflattering on camera**

- **Studies have shown wearing shoes can make you feel more 'together'**

43% of job seekers would like video interviews to be the norm

Body language tips

Body language, or non-verbal communication, is really important in video interviews – i**n fact 70% of communication is non-verbal.** This includes eye contact, smiling, nodding or head shaking and fidgeting such as playing with your hair and touching your face or neck. As you're front and centre of the screen, all these things can influence an interviewer's perception of you.

Our body language also impacts how we feel about ourselves. If it's strong and confident, we tend to feel more confident. Whereas if you're hunched or cross your arms and legs this can make us feel less powerful.

The goal is for your body language to be subtle and to go unnoticed in a job interview for all the right reasons.

You want to appear passionate, confident, and comfortable. Use simple power dynamics to help you achieve this – smile, place feet on the ground, don't hunch and avoid touching your face. If you haven't already seen it, this **viral video** by social psychologist Amy Cuddy has some great, practical body language advice.

Eye contact tip: To achieve good eye contact in a video interview, look into your webcam, rather than at your screen or yourself. Practice is key here. Record yourself or call a few friends and after a few test-runs you should ease into a natural gaze.

Overall, once you've practiced and are comfortable with the technology, video interviews open up more opportunities and allow you to broaden your job search. If you need any more advice or are interested in learning about job opportunities visit the Cpl website or get in touch info@cpl.ie.

cpl