
How to Prepare and Perform during a Video Interview A Candidates Guide

Video job interviews are an increasingly common part of the hiring process over recent months. If you have one coming up, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with all the variables so you can be prepared.

In this guide, we'll walk you through the video interview process at Barnet Council, what you should wear, how to prepare your environment and helpful tips on body language and eye contact.

This guidance will give you the essential tips you need to get rid of your nerves and turn up for your video interview confident and well prepared.



Video Interviews are increasingly common over recent months

Video Interviews

All forms of video interview can be nerve-wracking, for many of the same reasons as other interviews, but also some unique ones. It can be harder to gauge body language and other conversational cues over the internet, for instance, which can make it feel a bit stiff and awkward.

Video interviews take place outside of the potential employer's office. In this case, you'll be responsible for finding a quiet location with a good internet connection and a computer, smart device or laptop with a webcam.

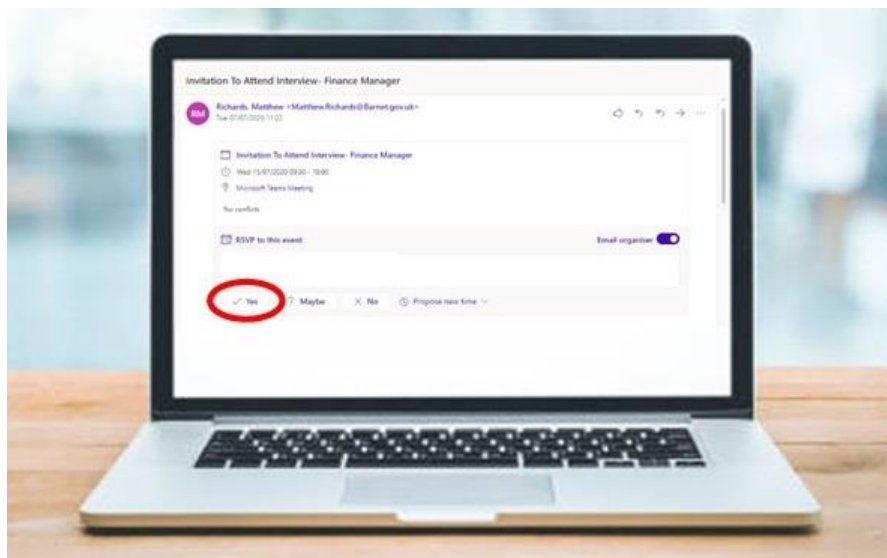
Invitation to Attend an Interview

Once shortlisted, you'll receive an email, inviting you to attend a video job interview via Microsoft Teams on a particular day and time. Within the invitation you should find the interview details, including:

- Day and time of the interview
- Position and department
- The interview panel members and their job titles
- The interview format
- Any items required e.g. photographic identification
- Any additional selection exercise e.g. presentations
- Any relevant attachments
- The contact information of the interview chairperson

If you wish to attend the interview, ensure you accept the invitation as soon as possible. You may also receive a telephone call from one of the panel members, to talk you through the process and to ensure you understand the format. If you do have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the interview chair.

Read the invitation in full and look out for any attachments. The panel may ask you to prepare a presentation or additional selection exercises that will help them choose the best candidate.



Accept your Invitation to Attend Video Interview

Preparing your Environment

Position your webcam so that you have a neutral background that's free from distractions. Avoid coffee shops and other communal spaces. Remove any objects in the room that could be a distraction or inappropriate. Clear your desk area and give it a clean, this will give the panel a good impression.

You may wish to have a note pad and pen handy to make any notes during the interview. Close all windows and doors before the start of your interview, this will reduce noise and prevent any gusts of winds to cause a door to slam or disturb any paperwork on your desk.

Prepare a glass or water in case the nerve gets hold of you. A sticky, dry tongue can make speaking difficult and may impact on your performance. Set your phone to silent before you begin the interview.

Ensure everyone in your household are aware you have an interview; it can be a distraction to the interviews when family members are walking in the background or making unnecessary noise.



Good camera positioning is essential

Practice and Set-up

When preparing, you will need an internet connection with bandwidth speed of at least 1 MB per second, a laptop or desktop computer with a webcam. In some cases, a tablet or smartphone may also be an option and headphones with a built-in microphone or headphones and a separate microphone.

To get used to the technology and the body language of a video interview, it's useful to do some practice video calls with friends or family members. Ask them to give you candid feedback about your appearance and eye contact. Run through it a few times until things start to feel natural.

This practice can make all the difference in your interviews. Set aside time in your schedule in the weeks and days leading up to your interview—you'll find your confidence growing as you become more comfortable in front of the camera.

Make sure that you have closed other apps or windows on your computer that could interrupt the conversation or slow the internet connection.

What to Wear for a Video Interview

You may be doing the interview from your living room, but don't let yourself get too comfortable. Wear exactly what you would if the interview were in person. It's tempting to wear a nice shirt paired with pajama trousers, but doing that will negatively impact your performance. Research the

organisational culture before your interview so you have a good idea of what's appropriate. If you would normally wear a uniform to work, dress formally.

To look your best on camera, avoid bright colours and patterns and opt for softer colours instead. If you are wearing a tie, wear a solid colour rather than a patterned one. If you wear glasses, adjust the lighting in the room to reduce glare from the lenses.

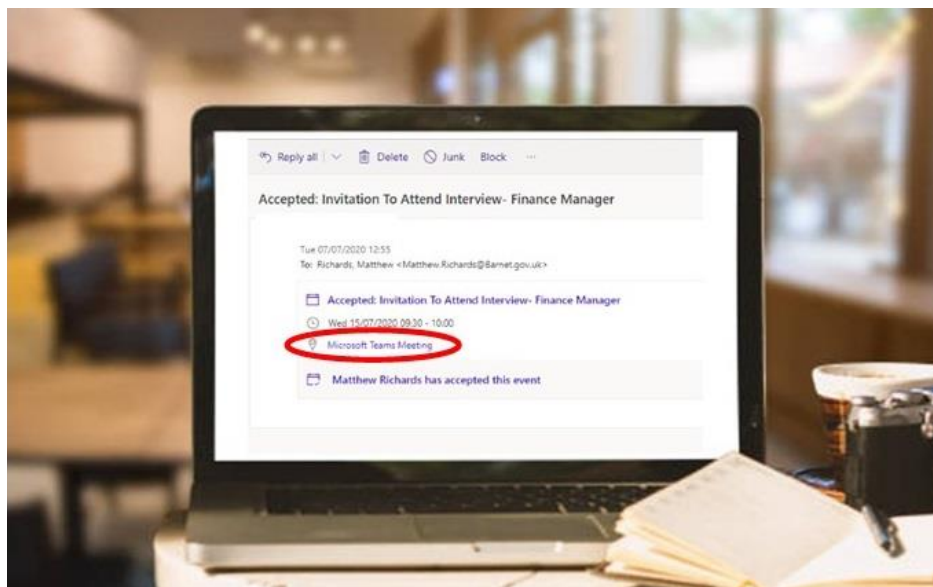
Position the camera so that you are looking up slightly and centred on the screen. While it is likely that the interviewer will only see your upper half, it's still a good idea to wear professional pants or a skirt in case you need to stand up for any reason.

Attending Your Video Interview

On the day of the interview, make sure to read the instructions carefully before you connect and have your CV beside you in case any of the panellists refer to it during the interview. Connect at least ten minutes before your interview. This will give you enough time to resolve any connection or technical issues.

When connecting, you will be placed in the 'Virtual Lobby', this is a holding area and the interviewers will invite you into the interview when they are ready.

Don't worry if there if the interviewers are not on time, they could be overrunning and still interviewing the candidate before you. Once connected with Microsoft Teams, you'll be able to see and speak with an interviewer on the other end.



Attending your interview using Microsoft Teams

Video Interview Body Language

Eye contact is very important during an in-person interview, and you want to convey that same level of connection during a video interview. Avoid the instinct to look directly at your interviewer on the screen or yourself while you're answering a question. Instead, when you speak, you want to direct

your gaze at the webcam. When you do this, your eyes are more likely to align with the interviewer's eyes on the other end. When you are listening, you can look back at the screen.

Throughout the interview, keep your mood upbeat and convey optimism with your body language. One way to achieve this is to have good posture. Sit in your chair with your back straight and your shoulders open. Feet can be planted on the floor and arms can rest in your lap or on the desk.

When you're listening, nod and smile when appropriate to communicate that you're giving them your full attention. Use hand gestures when it feels appropriate and keep your movements close to your body. Avoid fidgeting or letting your gaze drift away from the device.

You can't use notes in a face to face interview, so don't use them in a video interview. There's no way of using them discretely, no matter how hard you try. You'll be seen glancing away on the video, which makes it obvious to the hiring manager that you're reading from something. The perception will be that you aren't confident, aren't prepared, or aren't engaged – not the message you want to send.

Sharing a Presentation or Document on Microsoft Teams

If you are required to present during your interview or asked to share a document, ensure you have the document open and ready prior to connecting. When it is time, you will be able to share the document with the interview panel by clicking 'share' on the Microsoft Teams panel. If you experience any problems, offer to send the information via email. In this case, have a drafted email ready to prevent a delay.



Sharing a Document on Microsoft Teams

When Things Go Wrong

There's always a chance that things could go wrong. Here are some backup plans to have ready just in case:

- **When your video or audio stops working**

Before the interview, ask the interviewer for a phone number where you can reach them if you experience technical difficulties. If the video cuts out, call them at that number. Ask if you can continue the interview by phone or if you can reschedule.

- **When noise interrupts the conversation**

If noises (sirens, construction, etc.) interrupt your video interview, apologize for the interruption and ask for a few moments until the noise has subsided. You may want to mute the microphone if the noise is severe.

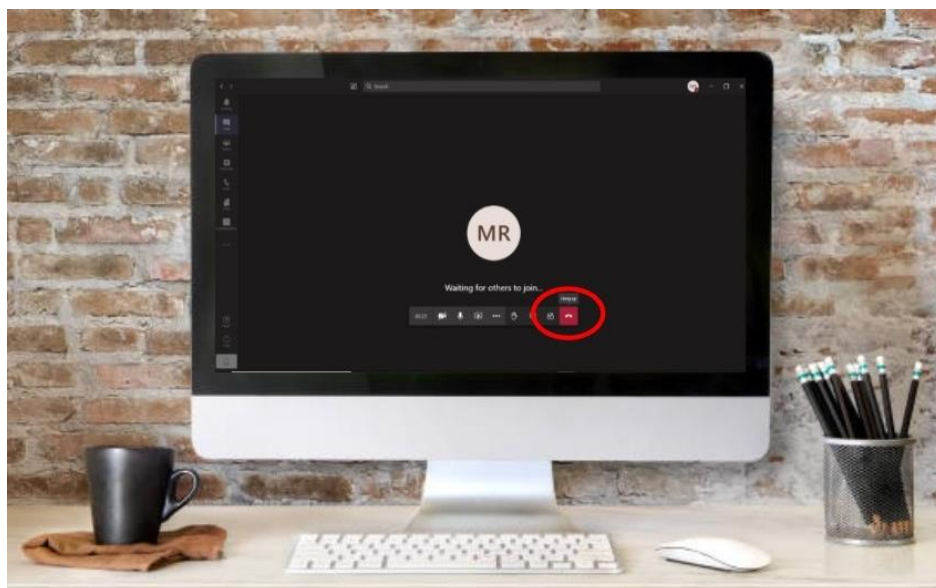
- **When someone enters the room unexpectedly**

If family members, housemates or pets enter the room while you're interviewing, apologise to the interviewer, ask for a few moments, mute your microphone and turn off your camera, and then step away to deal with the interruption. Make sure that the room is secure before beginning the interview again.

Ending Your Video Interview

At the completion of your interview, ensure you thank the panel for the opportunity and ask any questions you may have about the role. Once the panel has finished, they will end the video interview with 'next steps'. Once you have said goodbye, end the video by clicking the red phone icon located on the Microsoft Teams panel.

Send a follow-up thank you email later that day (or the next day if your interview was in the evening). This message may help build a stronger connection with your potential employer and help you progress to the next step.



Ending your Interview with Microsoft Teams

Video Job Interview Tips Summary

- Find a quiet, private, well-lit place, free from possible interruptions.
- Ensure your internet connection is stable.
- Check that your computer's audio is working.
- Test your computer's webcam.
- Close any unnecessary web browser tabs and applications.
- Dress professionally and avoid bright colours.
- Have a pen, notepad and copy of your resume on your desk.
- When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
- Use hand gestures when appropriate.
- Place your phone in silent mode.
- Ensure that you won't be interrupted, either by locking the door or by alerting others that you can't be disturbed (a note on the door of the room as well as the door to the outside may be helpful).
- Clear the desk space, except for a notepad and pen/pencil for you to take notes.
- Have a copy of your resume and any other notes ready for you to reference.
- Set out a glass or bottle of water for yourself.
- Check that your webcam is working.
- Check that your audio is working.
- Close any windows, tabs or applications on your computer that you're not using.
- Check your internet connection and make sure you're not downloading anything in the background.
- Set your phone to silent.
- Check that the background behind you is neutral and free from clutter.
- Adjust the lights in the room. If things appear dark or dim, you may want to bring in an extra desk lamp to brighten the space.