



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

Virtual Interviews

A guide for interviewees



Virtual Interviews

The world of work has changed over the past few months and so has the way we recruit people at Clarion. Because we're currently unable to conduct face-to-face interviews, we're virtually interviewing applicants for all of our vacant positions.

Just like before when things were 'normal' we're inviting you to participate in a two-way interview between you and a panel of hiring managers, but now it's via video conference. Our preferred platform is Microsoft Teams; don't worry if you're not familiar with it, we can happily support you to install and use the software or we can arrange FaceTime, WhatsApp or Zoom if, for some reason, you are unable to access Teams. We will contact you with all the details you need before your interview.

Although they may seem unfamiliar and daunting, virtual interviews offer many benefits over traditional face-to-face interviews

- Many people feel more confident and comfortable in a familiar environment. A virtual interview allows you to present yourself from a location of your choice – whether that be at home or another suitable space
- They can reduce stress by removing the need for travel and eliminates the pressure of train delays or traffic jams, as well as saving you travel-associated costs
- They give you the chance to present yourself in full. Positive body language and a confident demeanour can increase your chances of progressing to the next stage.

Here are our top 10 tips for your virtual interview with Clarion

1. Before – Arrange Your Setup

- Ideally, use a desktop or laptop with quality audio and video capabilities (this is better than a smartphone)
- Test out your computer's built-in speakers and webcam to make sure you don't encounter any issues
- Choose a private and quiet location, as any external noise will be a distraction for both you and the panel. Ensure that your backdrop is suitable and the lighting is appropriate
- Be sure that you have sufficient internet capacity and, preferably, a wired connection, as this will decrease the chances of dropout
- Close down programmes or downloads running in the background as this can slow down your connection and disrupt the interview.

2. Before – Rehearse for the virtual environment

- A face-to-face interview would normally begin and conclude with a handshake which is not possible in a virtual one, so practice a professional greeting such as a slight nod or a subtle raising of the hand
- Practice talking into the camera instead of looking directly at the on-screen image of the interviewer. Virtual eye contact is a difficult skill to master, but if you can achieve it, you'll make a much better impression.

3. Before – do your research

- Make sure you conduct thorough research and be sure you understand the objectives, culture and values as well as being familiar with the specifics of the post and the team for which you are applying
- Prepare for any role-related questions you think you may be asked, and

rehearse answers for general competency-based questions.

4. Before – Prepare

- Make a checklist of everything you need to consider and make sure all actions are completed before the interview starts. Have a glass of water to hand
- Test your equipment and connection and double-check your surroundings. Make sure you'll encounter no unexpected disturbances
- Dress appropriately. Whilst it might be tempting to only smarten your upper half, dressing professionally from head to toe will put you in the right mind-set
- Turn off all laptop and phone notifications as part of your virtual interview preparation
- Unplug any other devices such as landlines and doorbells, and place a polite notice on doors.

5. Before – Plan your time effectively

- Be ready and waiting to join the call; clear your schedule at least an hour beforehand to focus your mind on the task at hand
- Use the time to go over your research notes, reread the role profile and review your application and CV.

6. During – Watch your body language

- Whilst attending a virtual interview from the comfort of your own home can make you feel more confident, it can also make you feel too relaxed. Be sure to constantly maintain a good posture and keep your body language professional.
- Try and keep your movement minimal but natural. Don't over-use any gestures but don't sit too rigidly either.
- Don't fidget. If you're particularly nervous, try holding a stress ball under the desk.

7. During – Maintain Your Focus

- Avoid any temptation to browse or check your emails or play around with things the interviewer can't see, like your phone. Just because the interviewer can't see what you're doing, doesn't mean they won't notice you're distracted
- Don't get flustered if technology fails you. Stay calm and attempt to reconnect.

8. During – Let the Interviewer lead

- Avoid the urge to fill gaps in the conversation and let the interviewer lead the process. They may be taking the time to jot down some notes, or there may simply be a delay in the transmission
- Be patient and wait for a prompt before you speak
- Don't forget to ask questions – treat it as you would a face-to-face interview and ask insightful questions that demonstrate your enthusiasm.

9. After – Follow up and ask for feedback

- Thank those involved for their time and for considering you for the role, and be sure to let them know you're open to providing further information should they want it
- If you're new to virtual interviewing, you could even ask for feedback specific to the virtual element to see if there's anything you could improve on. We're pretty new to it too, so some feedback to us would really help.

10. After – Review your performance

Take the time to assess what you think went well and what you could have improved on.

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