

Video Interviewing

A Guide for Successful Residency Interviews

October 2021

Residency Interviews for 2021-2022

Residency interviews, traditionally conducted as a daylong in-person event, will occur remotely for the 2021-2022 application season. This change, made to protect the health and safety of applicants and programs alike, clearly represents a major shift in the way applicants and programs interact to learn more about one another in anticipation of rank list decisions.

This guide is designed to provide MCW students with information to aid them in successful completion of remote interviews. To begin this process, there are a couple of basic considerations to address.



Use a computer with a webcam and microphone. Use of mobile phones to conduct interviews is strongly discouraged. You need a computer with a good

webcam and microphone to ensure quality video creation. Phones present the possibility of being interrupted by a call, something you do not want to encounter during an interview.

Prepare your environment. Create a space in which you are comfortable and relaxed. Have a glass or bottle of water available in case you need to take a sip during the interview. Sit in a place that allows you to practice good posture, such as a desk chair. Have a pen or pencil and notepad available so you can take notes as needed throughout the interview.

Interviewing Preparation

Pay attention to the setting in which you will be conducting your interview. Choose a room with good lighting (natural is better) that is free of clutter. Provide a clean, neutral background for your interviewer to see. Ensure that you are in a private space where you will not be interrupted by other members of the household, pets, or loud noises. Close windows to keep outside noises to a minimum.



Make sure you have a strong, stable internet connection for your video interviews. A connection with a bandwidth of at least 1 megabit per second is essential. Use a computer with a quality webcam and microphone. You may want to invest in a headset with a built-in microphone to ensure audio quality during your interviews. Position your webcam so you are looking up slightly and are centered in the screen.

Completing the Interview

[USA Today](#) provides Tips for Successful Video Interviews.

- **Look at the camera, not the screen.** While it may be tempting to look at the interviewer's image (or your own) on the screen, looking directly at the camera allows you to have "eye contact" with the interviewer.
- **Dress the part.** Wear a professional outfit just as you would with an in-person interview. Dress professionally at least to the waist, but don't avoid dressing head-to-toe for success. This will help prevent any embarrassment should you have to stand or move around during the interview. Also, avoid bright colors when you are selecting your interview outfit.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Solicit the help of friends and family to practice your technical and interview skills before your actual interviews occur. Practice making eye contact by looking at the camera, have them ask you potential interview questions, etc. Record your practice sessions so you can review and refine your responses and mannerisms.
- **Close other programs on your computer.** Don't risk being distracted by social media and e-mail notifications. When you are interviewing, the video conferencing platform should be the only thing open on your computer.
- **Use notes.** Keep your CV handy and don't hesitate to have sticky notes or index cards available with reminders of skills and experiences you want to highlight during the interview.
- **Don't rely too much on your notes.** Notes are reminders – not a script. Have them available to quickly scan but do not rely on them for structured talking points.
- **Avoid interruptions.** If you are in a house with other people or pets, make sure they know you are interviewing and are not to be interrupted. Shut pets out of the room so they do not disturb you.
- **Keep your profile professional.** Your profile picture and user name are the first things an interviewer will see – keep them professional.
- **Watch your body language.** Maintain good posture and relax your shoulders. Sit up straight in your chair and avoid the appearance of casually lounging.
- **Avoid a "Can you hear me now?" situation.** Test your technology settings with a friend or family member before the interview so you do not run into a situation where your settings need to be adjusted in the interview itself.
- **Make sure the interviewer is engaged.** Stay in tune with the attention level of your interviewer. Make sure you are holding their interest by keeping your answers succinct and focused.
- **Follow up.** Just as you would with an in-person interview, be sure to follow up with a thank you message after your interview. Remember to keep this communication professional as well.



Be Prepared

Technical problems are sometimes unavoidable. Fully charge your laptop prior to the interview to ensure you aren't at risk of losing power during your session.

Be sure you have alternate contact information, such as a phone number, in case you experience loss of audio or video feed during your interview.

If you are interrupted by unavoidable noise, such as police or fire sirens, apologize for the disruption and ask for a moment until the disruption subsides.

Handle the situation calmly and with poise.



Basic Interviewing Skills

Proper preparation for your interview doesn't change because they are being conducted virtually. Here are some basic interviewing skills to be mindful of in your preparations.

- **Research the program.** Educate yourself about the program and its unique aspects. Be prepared to share what makes the program interesting to you as an applicant.
- **Prepare questions to ask your interviewer.** Remember, you are interviewing the program just as they are interviewing you. Be prepared to ask questions of your interviewer to demonstrate interest and obtain information you need to help you make decisions for your rank list.
- **Arrive early.** Just as you want to with an in-person interview, join the video conference a few minutes early to ensure you are settled and ready to begin on time.
- **Be mindful of your speech patterns.** Try not to speak too fast or loud during your interview. You can check this by recording yourself going through a practice interview. Listen to your intonation and enunciation and be aware of those during the actual interview.
- **Be mindful of your expressions.** Keep your expression positive and relaxed. Smile and nod in response to interviewer statements.
- **Let the other person finish speaking.** Especially in a video conference environment, take care not to speak over your interviewer. Even short expressions of agreement, such as "Yes" or "I agree" can inadvertently cut off your interviewer's microphone. Give them the chance to finish speaking before you provide a verbal response.
- **Don't be overly enthusiastic.** While some excitement is appropriate, be careful not to come across as too eager-to-please. A well-placed smile or nod reads much better than nervous giggling during the interview. Stay calm, read social cues, and respond appropriately.