

Video Interviewing

A Guide for Successfully Interviewing Applicants

October 2021

Applicant Interviews for 2021-2022

Program applicant interviews, traditionally conducted as a day long 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.

This guide is designed to provide MCW faculty, staff, and students with information to aid them in conducting remote applicant 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. Remember, applicants are learning about you and MCW programs too, so be sure to represent the institution well!

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 interviewee to see. Ensure that you are in a private space where you will not be interrupted by other people or loud noises. If applicable, 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 caution when using connections such as hotspots that may have variable connectivity. 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.

Conducting the Interview

- **Practice makes perfect.** Solicit the help of friends or colleagues to practice your technical skills before the actual interviews occur. Be comfortable with whichever software platform your program uses to conduct applicant interviews (WebEx, Zoom, BlueJeans, etc.).
- **Be punctual.** Join the video meeting a few minutes before the scheduled start time. This will allow you to quickly troubleshoot minor issues as needed and not delay the start of the interview itself.
- **Look at the camera, not the screen.** While it may be tempting to look at the applicant's image (or your own) on the screen, looking directly at the camera allows you to have "eye contact" with the interviewee.
- **Close other programs on your computer.** Don't risk being distracted by social media and e-mail notifications. When you are interviewing an applicant, the video conferencing platform should be the only thing open on your computer.
- **Avoid interruptions.** If you are in an environment with other people, make sure they know you are interviewing and are not to be interrupted. Shut pets and children out of the room so they do not disturb you.
- **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 each interview session so you do not run into a situation where your settings need to be adjusted in the interview itself.
- **Pay attention to connectivity.** Be prepared for and pay attention to any apparent lag that may occur during the interview. Pause and ask the applicant if they need to have anything repeated for them.
- **Follow the dress code.** Just as the applicant should be, you need to dress professionally for any interviews you conduct. Follow whatever dress code you normally follow in the office – more formality than usual is not necessary. However, be sure you dress from head to toe to avoid any awkward or embarrassing situations.
- **Set expectations.** Ensure the applicant knows what to expect from their interview with you. This can occur through communication prior to the interview or at the start of the interview session. If you communicate before the interview, allow time at the start for any questions the applicant may have.
- **Be prepared for technical issues.** Be sure you have alternate contact information for the applicant, such as a mobile phone number, before or at the start of the interview. This will allow you to continue conducting the interview even if one or both parties experience technical problems.
- **Go "low tech."** Print out copies of any documents you may need during the interview (CV/resume, personal statement, question guide, etc.). Do not rely on flipping into other browsers on your computer to access this information. Doing so takes your focus away from the applicant and can be distracting to both parties.
- **Be steady.** If using a laptop, make sure it is on a stable surface so your video feed doesn't bounce during the interview.
- **Silence is golden.** Mute your microphone whenever you aren't speaking to avoid unnecessary noise distractions.