

HOW TO DO A GREAT INTERVIEW ON ZOOM*



All first-round interviews for 2023/24 have been remote. That is a real plus since you won't have to run from hotel to hotel; you won't have to worry about missing your flight or having to get to the 22nd floor when elevators are clogged. Remote interviews are similar to "live" interviews in most ways, but they involve a slightly different set of skills and will be different in various ways. We are here to help you navigate this new (and more convenient) first-round interview method.

First off, the academic and some non-academic interviews will have a similar format on Zoom relative to their "live" analogue. (Tech interviews are generally different and we will comment on that later in this note.) The Zoom interview team may be more tailored to your field, and it may be larger than one than had to be assembled live at the meetings. Prior to your interview, ask the admin in charge who will be in the "room." Do your homework and figure out who these people are and what their research interests are.

Make certain you are in a private, quiet place with a reliable internet connection. The Department will have rooms available with Ethernet connections. Brenda will have signups for them. In January, various faculty members will be away and will make their offices available. It is best not to use fake backgrounds (particularly the one with a rolling tide on the sand) but you can blur your background if your room is an uninteresting white wall.

- (1) Your interview will begin with "Tell us about your JMP"
 - Prepare a 2 minute and 5–7 minute version of your job market paper. It is a good idea to write out *and memorize at least the 2 minute version*
 - Do *not* use notes in your remote interview (it will be obvious that you are reading).
 - Make Eye Contact with your *camera* at all times!
 - Avoid gesticulating (as on Zoom it is distracting)
 - The flow of the interview will typically be: "tell us about your job market paper" then other items. You may preview you are going to do a short summary followed by more in-depth summary e.g., "first I'll give a brief overview and then I'll dive into more details"
 - Outline for the 2-minute version
 - What is the puzzle/question you are trying to address and necessary relevant background for interviewers to become interested
 - Do not launch into a description of your theoretical model, empirical strategy, or empirical estimation before you have described the puzzle/question and any essential background.
 - What did you do (theory/empiricals)
 - Brief description
 - Head off any common critiques of your paper e.g., why it's robust to the assumption etc.

- Highlight why it's a contribution without being pompous. Don't say "I am using novel hand-collected data" (a hackneyed phrase) or "I am the first to do X" (there is always someone who did it before and may be in the "room").
- Know your audience, you might need slightly different 2-minute versions depending on the group.
- After the 2-minute version, pause briefly to allow time for questions (you want the interview to be as conversational as possible)
- Then, if you can, seamlessly shift gears to the longer version
 - Be as organized as possible.
 - Expect to be interrupted. When asked a question, the answer can come from your paper but you can also demonstrate that you know the literature *or* you can say "that's a great question and something I need to think harder about"

(2) Other Questions You May Be Asked

- How do you define your area of future research?
- What are the big research questions in your area?
- What do you want to teach / what is your teaching experience
- Is this research indicative of what you will do in the future
- What is your research agenda?
- Can you teach a particular type of student (e.g., MBA)?
- Do you have any questions for us? In other words, do some research about the institution and be prepared to ask one or two meaningful questions about their seminars, students, graduate program, relationship with other parts of the university, teaching style for liberal arts colleges.

(3) Non-academic interviews: Tech and Data Science

- These are more idiosyncratic. Some will describe a problem or a set of data: "What would you do if faced with this problem or data?"
- Each company will have their own particular questions. Our students from last year reported that, for example, Amazon was fairly general but Uber was more specific.
- No one in the room read much beyond the abstract of the person's JMP,
- First-round interviews were done by the lower-ranked members of the firm's data science or economics team. The second round was more specific in terms of the research that group was doing.
- If you have an interview with a particular company, use your network and Harvard students from the last few years to learn more about the interviewing style of that firm.

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