

Telephone Etiquette

Proper telephone etiquette is extremely important to your professional success. The impression you make via telephone will last.

Be prepared: Paper and pen should be within easy reach. Think about what you want to say in advance.

Answer promptly: A phone should be answered as soon as possible.

Be pleasant and clear: Smile when answering the phone and throughout your conversation. Make sure to speak clearly and at a reasonable volume. If you are soft-spoken, you may need to work at projecting your voice.

Identify yourself: Identify yourself immediately after saying hello. Explain the reason for your call. Example: “This is Chatham Student, a recent graduate from Chatham University. I am calling in response to the accounting position listed on your firm’s employment website.”

Respect others’ time: After you identify yourself, ask for a person’s time. Example: “Do you have a few minutes to talk?” or “Is this a good time to talk?” or “Am I reaching you at a good time?”

Leaving a message: If you reach an administrative professional, be sure to display the same courtesy you would demonstrate if you were speaking with the interviewer. Try to address the person by name. Example: “Thank you, Mr. Smith. I appreciate your assistance.”

If the interviewer does not return your call, you may call back and reach the administrative professional again. Ask if that person could suggest a better time for you to call. If you receive a suggestion, use it.

If you reach a voicemail system, you should leave a message including information about when you can be reached. Prepare for this scenario in advance.

Ask to put someone on hold: If it is absolutely necessary to put someone on hold, ask the person with whom you are speaking. Example: “Let me get that information for you. May I put you on hold?” This is much more professional than saying, “Hang on.” A person should not be left on hold for more than 30 – 60 seconds.

Screen calls appropriately: Use the phrase “Who’s calling, please?” if you find it necessary to screen telephone calls.

Hang up gently: An abrupt hang-up or slamming of the phone is unpleasant for the caller.

Use appropriate language:

Phrases to Use:	One moment please	Yes
	All right	Good-bye
		She’s not available right now

Phrases not to Use:	Hang on	Yeah
	Okey-doke	Bye-bye
		She’s tied up right now