Skype for Somerville College admissions interviews

What is Skype?
Skype is a free, easily downloadable software that allows free phone and video calls between two computers which both have the Skype software installed. Using Skype's free video function enables applicants and interviewers to see each other.

For more information see: http://www.skype.com/en/

The Skype company and software are independent of Somerville College and of the University of Oxford.

If it is not practical or affordable for you to use Skype and the necessary hardware and equipment, please don't worry, but do let us know immediately.

Where should you set up Skype for your interview(s)?
We prefer your Skype interview(s) to be held in your school or college, if you are still in education and if this is feasible given any time difference between Oxford and your town or city. The interview arrangements will preferably be overseen by a member of your school or college staff, who would be able to help with any problems.

Will I need to bring identification with me to the Skype interview?
At the start of your interview you will be asked to produce a form of photographic ID that can be clearly visible to the camera. The ID should be in English. You will be asked to confirm that you are not recording the interview as this is not permitted and to demonstrate that no one else is with you in the interview room.

What do you need in order to use Skype?
To make high quality video calls using Skype, you will need basic hardware and equipment, and the Skype software, as follows.

A. Hardware and equipment

1. A computer with a dual core processor and microphone.
   You need a minimum CoreTM 2 Duo or a similarly fast processor, which is fairly standard these days.
2. A web-camera (webcam).
   You need a high quality video webcam, inbuilt or external, with 2.0+ megapixels. You will also need to install the accompanying webcam software. A good quality webcam costs about £30.00 in British Sterling.
3. If your computer does not have a microphone you will need a computer headset with microphone, or a computer phone handset with microphone.
   a. A computer headset with a microphone is different from a telephone headset. A computer headset has two separate connectors – one for the microphone and one for the speaker. A computer headset costs around £30.00 British Sterling. Alternatively, you can buy a phone handset, as long as it has two connectors so that it can be plugged into your computer, or a USB handset that connects via USB.

4. A high-bandwidth internet connection.
   You need 384 kbps and above, preferably hard-wired broadband – that is, plugged into the wall, and not dialup and not via wi-fi.

5. You must use a desktop or laptop computer. Tablets or Smartphones are not large enough for the Skype interview to be conducted satisfactorily.

B. Software

1. The latest version of Skype for Windows or for Mac.
   The free software can be downloaded from the official Skype website and installed on your computer:
   http://www.skype.com/en/

2. A Skype account, which you can set up yourself once you have downloaded Skype.
   You will need to provide Somerville (admissions@some.ox.ac.uk) with your Skype username, your email address, and your telephone number(s) (including international dialling code) where you can be reached during the interview.

C. Other requirements

1. A private room
   You need a quiet, private space for the duration of the interview, where you won't be disturbed or interrupted. This will preferably be in your school or college, if you are still in education and if this is feasible given any time difference between Oxford and your town or city.

2. A back-up telephone
   There should be a telephone in the room as a backup in case the Skype link fails, so that our tutors can interview you by telephone.

3. For Science subjects you should bring with you some plain A4 paper and a black marker or felt tip pen as you may be asked to draw diagrams in the interview that must be visable over Skype. The interviewing tutors may take a still shot of the diagrams that you have drawn so that they can refer to them later.

Please note

Applicants are not permitted to contact interviewing tutors following a Skype interview. All communications must go through the Admissions Office.

Interviewing tutors may occasionally take a still shot of any diagrams that applicants draw as part of the interview process.

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