

Working with TV and Radio

How to Give an Interview for TV and Radio

The University's Press and Policy Team offer formal Media Training and can provide last-minute advice for interviews arranged at short notice. If you have been approached to appear on TV or radio, please **contact the Press Office on ext. 23708**.

Before the interview

Ask the following questions before you agree to be interviewed:

- What is the programme and what is its audience?
- What is the interview about and what areas will be covered?
- Is anyone else being interviewed, as if so, who? Will you be discussing the issue with them?
- How long will the interview last?
- Is it live or pre-recorded?
- Where will the interview take place? Can they arrange transport?



Practice:

- think of 3-5 key messages of your research and aim to get those across. You can use the Messaging Worksheet in the Plan section to get started. [Impact Resources - Plan \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://warwick.ac.uk)
- producers need engaging, fluent speakers on air so rehearse what you want to say in front of a colleague or record yourself and play it back

During the interview:

Do:



- Be positive, calm and courteous
- Remember your audience - you are talking to the public, not your peers. use colloquial language and avoid jargon, acronyms or long titles
- Make use of anecdotes, analogies and examples to help listeners to visualize your points and to

better understand and relate to what you are trying to communicate

- If the interviewer is trying to take you down a route that you are not comfortable discussing, answer the question briefly and then say something like: 'What is important...' or 'What we have found in this research...' to bring it back to your key messages
- Correct any mistakes made by the interviewer, but avoid being pedantic
- Repeat yourself: your interview is likely to be edited so reiterate your most important points.

Be sensitive: Your research may impact people in different ways. Remember to be sensitive to the range of audiences who might be listening.

Don't

- use the interviewer's name as it can sound overly familiar
- avoid answering questions as it can sound like you have something to hide
- get angry. Avoid saying just 'no' to a question that is intended to elicit a reaction
- attack other researchers in your field
- fall for the interviewer's pregnant pause encouraging you to carry on
- repeat back an interviewer's provocative phrase, even if refuting it

For Radio

- Sound convincing and enthusiastic
- Avoid ums and ahs
- Remember that you are effectively talking to one person listening to the radio not to a vast audience
- Remember that your audiences are unlikely to be experts and don't have the advantage of visual aids, so it is even more important that you keep your language clear and jargon-free.



- *For local radio:* remember that local radio has its own agenda - find a local angle on the story to make it relevant to their audiences

For Television



- Look at the interviewer - pay no attention to the camera
- Sit firmly upright in your chair. Don't move or rock your chair
- Don't wear anything distracting, i.e. dangling earrings or small stripes and checks (which cause problems for television), etc.
- Nod when introduced and at the end
- Don't move or relax at the end of the interview until you've been told to - the camera may still be on you
- Remember that you are not talking to thousands but individuals in front of their TV

A more detailed guide to interviews by Alun Lewis and Adrian Pickering of LP Media Training [is available on the Communications Office's webpages.](#)

You can also contact members of the Press Team [via the webpages.](#)

Additional note on Dress

You should feel confident when appearing on television and should dress in a way that makes you feel comfortable. However, there are some tips that are useful to bear in mind:

- Be neat but do not overdo it. Do not wear multi-coloured garish clothing that looks fine to the human eye but makes TV cameras think you are some sort of special effect.
- Dress in the context of the story, for example, do not appear in the latest fashions if you are covering a story on poverty. Do not wear charming pullovers with pictures of Disney characters when you are talking about criminal justice or ethnic cleansing. In short, think before you dress that morning 'does my clothing, jewellery etc. fit within the context of the story?'
- You may also wish to avoid the more garish shades of blue particularly if the film crew intend to use any special effects in your interview. The colour blue is the key to a TV technology called chroma key used in special effects. It is outdated but it is still sometimes used when a simple special effects shot is needed.