

Interview Best Practices

The Interview

Choose a room for the interview with minimum noise. Ask yourself these questions. Is the air conditioner running? Are there any noises being produced by appliances? Is the interview room next to a noisy highway? Are the windows open?

Write Interview Questions (Do not share these with the interviewee.) Only give him/her an overview of the questions you will ask. Prepping them with questions makes the interview feel rehearsed.

Rules of thumb

- Make the subject feel comfortable
- Review ground rules with subject before starting interview. (i.e. repeat back the question, eye perspective, if they need a break then just say so, have water for them,)
- Eye perspective: looking at camera or just off camera but not both. Off camera is more common. If the subject is looking off camera, the interviewer should be standing to the immediate left or right of camera.
- Have the subject repeat back the question so the audience has a frame of reference for the questions being asked.
What is your name? My name is...
- Compose your shot so the camera is seeing from subject's chest to head, also known as a Medium Shot.
- Use a windscreen when recording audio outside.
- Never have your camera facing a window with a subject in front of it. The light from the window will darken the features of your subject and create a silhouette look.
- Always use a tripod, **Always** and make sure the tripod is **balanced**.
- The tripod should always be level with the subject's head. The camera should never look down or up at the subject.
- If the subject is sitting, the interviewer is sitting. If the subject is standing, the interviewer is standing. You never want the subject looking down or up at you as he/she answers questions.
- Always use a lav mic when conducting interviews, especially outside. The lav mic will directly pick up the subject's voice and create a separate channel from external noises. There is no way to separate the two if you do not use a lav mic.
- Never rely on just the camcorder's internal audio. Always use an external mic of some sort to record audio.
- If the interview is inside, try to conduct it in a location with a sufficient amount of light.
- If the interview is outside and it is extremely sunny, the subject should not be standing or sitting directly in the sun. Move to a slightly shaded area.
- Overcast days are better for outside shooting vs. sunny days

- Be conscious of your environment where you are filming. You should have an aesthetically pleasing background.
- Make sure your shot is framed well.
- Everything in your frame is there for a reason. There should be nothing in the frame that you don't want your audience to see.
- Interview questions should tell a story. Intro, body, conclusion.
- Make sure you bring **Release Forms**. Every subject should sign a release form giving you or the University permission to use the interview for specific purposes (i.e. post to Bucknell website)