Podcasting tips

Zoom H1 recorder

Filming options:

**Interviews** are an exchange between an interviewer and an interviewee. When filming with one camera, the easiest option is to record the interviewee only. Questions can be added as titles on the video or on a web page alongside the video.

**Piece to Camera (PTC) / Talking Head** is when your subject talks directly to the camera as if the camera is the audience. You can film more than one person at a time if you use an external mic.

Filming and audio recording Checklist:

1. **Location**
   Choose a quiet location, away from interruptions. Examples of noise to avoid: lifts, turnstiles, telephones, printers, building work, generators, air conditioning etc. If you can’t find a quiet spot (and provided the noise adds context to the shot) you could include the source of the noise in the background.

2. **Backdrop**
   - Use a screen, such as the LSE photo boards in the NAB LG foyer, to create a studio effect. Set up some nice looking chairs rather than film people standing, as they could fidget out of shot. Also, frame your shot so that you can only see the backdrop in the background if possible.
   - Find something colourful such as bookshelves that will fill the whole screen.
   - Go for a shot with depth. For example, if you want to film a student in the Library, include a view of the Library in the background. This gives the shot depth and context and feels less claustrophobic for the viewer than placing your subject in front of a wall or a door. (That doesn’t mean film a wide shot of your subject to include the background, you still need to frame the shot for your subject. It’s enough to have the suggestion of what’s in the background!)
• Look for obstructions that may look messy in shot such as bins, cables or paperwork. Also be careful of anything that appears to be growing out of your subject’s head! Don’t be afraid to rearrange the room a little to make the scene more attractive. Just remember where everything goes and put it back after the interview!
• Choosing the right chair! Pay attention to how your chosen chair affects the posture of your subject. If they look too uncomfortable or slouchy, change it. Always place your subject in a non-swivel chair so that they can’t fidget or swing out of shot.

3. Lighting
• Film in good light and avoid too bright a backdrop for your subject such as a window or a projected image – it will turn your subject into a silhouette.
• Avoid filming in mixed lighting. Different light (sunlight, tungsten and fluorescent) all appear as different colours to the camera and it will struggle to balance them.

4. Composition
• Ensure that the camera is at eye level with your subject and that the tripod is level.
• Your subject’s position:
  o Interview: The interviewee should look at the interviewer not the camera. The interviewer should sit right next to the camera so that your subject is almost facing it. You should see both of your subject’s eyes, not a profile. The interviewer & interviewee should be at the same eye-level.
  o PTC: Position your subject’s chair so that their body is facing the camera front-on. As a cameraperson, sit or duck down so that you aren’t a distraction.
• **Framing your shot:**
  o Allow sufficient ‘headroom’, but not too much:

  ![Too much](image1)
  ![Too little](image2)
  ![About right](image3)

  o Aim for a ‘medium close-up’ (down to chest) and/or a ‘mid-shot’ (down to waist), if you can:

  ![Medium close-up](image4)
  ![Mid-shot](image5)

  o If your subject is quite animated, zoom out and reframe your shot (at the best opportunity) to include any hand/arm gestures.

  o **For interviews:** allow talking/looking space to indicate the space between the subject and the interviewer.

  ![Centred shot](image6)
  ![Shot with 'looking space'](image7)

  o **For PTC:** in most cases centre your subject.

  • Make sure that you’re happy with your shot and that it’s fixed before the interview/PTC starts.
  • Ideally wait until your subject stops talking before adjusting your shot (zooming in/out etc). You don’t want to have to ask your subject to retake their answer because you’ve messed up the shot.
5. Prep/notes for your subject

Pre interview
- If you plan to use an external mic (recommended where possible): ask your subject to wear something with a sturdy collar or tie to attach a clip mic.
- Subject should avoid wearing all black/white on top half
- Subject should avoid wearing busy patterns or close stripes as they can become animated.

Send your subject a list of the questions in advance.

Interview checklist
- If you haven’t already done so, make sure you bring a release form for the interviewee to sign.
- Go over the questions, so that your subject knows what to expect.
- **Interview:** ask the interviewee to face and talk to the interviewer and avoid looking at the camera/cameraperson. They should continue to look at the interviewer when they’ve finished their answer rather than look away.
- **PTC:** ask your subject to talk to the camera and imagine it is their audience. They should continue to look at the camera when they’ve finished their answer rather than look away.
- If there are extra observers in the room make sure they are positioned out sight of your subject so that they are not a distraction.

6. Interviewer tips
- The interviewer should look interested without making any noise, so lots of eye contact, nodding, facial expressions etc where appropriate.
- The interviewer should wait for one or two seconds before responding to the subject’s answer/response. For editing purposes you don’t want the two voices to overlap.

Good luck! Don’t forget to press record!