

Tips for print and online interviews

When the media approaches you

Find out the purpose of the interview

- Your expert comment on a current issue?
- For an article about your research?
- A profile of you and your work?

Brief yourself on the newspaper, magazine or website the reporter represents

- Is their style serious or light?
- Is the audience likely to be already scientifically well-informed?

Brief yourself on the issue

- Why is it making news? (Do a quick Google search)
- Who else has commented?
- What can you add to the discussion?

Ask questions

- What will the angle and context of the story be?
- How long will it be?
- Who else will be interviewed?

When you are being interviewed

- Bring along high quality diagrams, figures or images that will help convey your message – they will help the journalist understand the story, and can greatly improve the prominence given to the piece
- Come prepared with simple examples and analogies about the science that will make it easier to understand and that will make good quotes
- Treat the journalist as a fellow professional
- Make absolutely sure that you've been understood
- Only say what you're happy to have printed

After the interview

- If you're worried you may be misquoted, ring the reporter to check – it's not media practice to show you finished copy but a journalist will usually be happy to read the relevant parts of the article to you over the phone – they want to get it right too!
- If you're not happy with what is printed, ring and point out the mistake. Unless the error is really serious it's better then to move on – and be more careful next time
- Keep the contact details for the journalist you spoke to. Later you can update them on the progress of your research, and it means you have a contact if you are ever looking to draw the media's attention to other new research