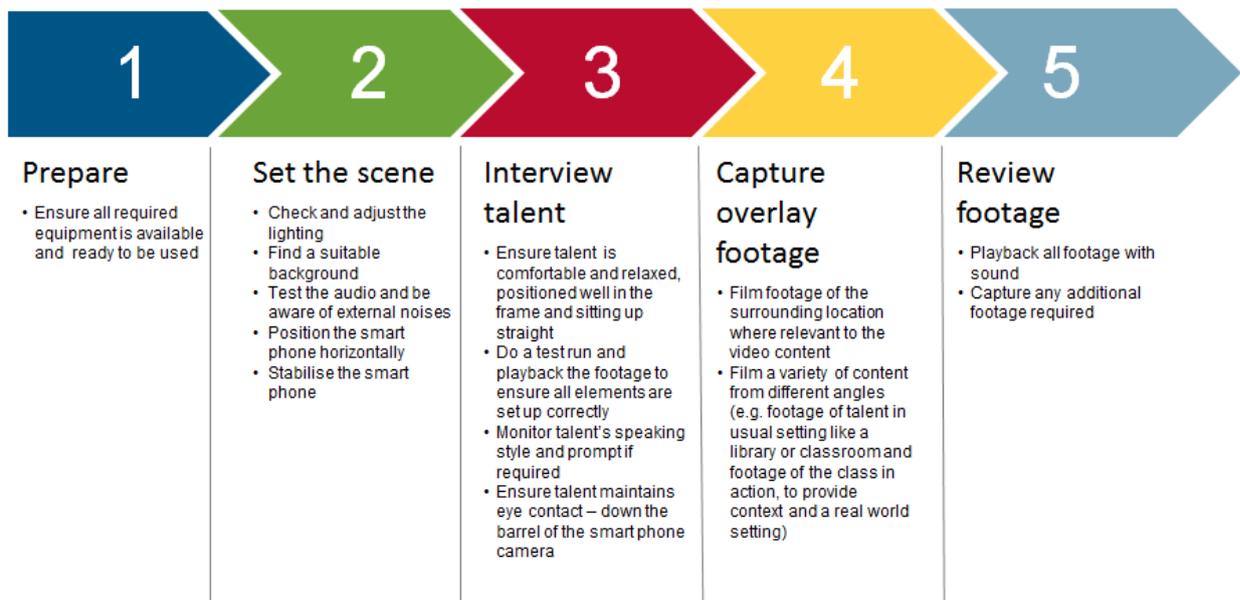




A guide to smart phone filming

The following is a five-step instruction guide to filming interview talent using a smart phone. This document should be used as a reference point in conjunction with the STAR case study video and storyboard.

How to produce smart phone video



STEP 1: Preparation

Before you start filming, ensure you are equipped with the following items:

- **Smart phone with ample storage** - Ensure you have plenty of storage available on your phone – videos take up a lot of memory. Consider saving old footage on a computer or hard drive to free up your device
- **Portable Charger** - Bring a portable charger (filming uses a lot of battery)
- **Talent release forms** - Bring plenty of talent release forms (if required)
- **Script** - Print the script and break it up into bite-size sections (technically referred to as 'takes') to make the process as smooth as possible
- **Video quality** set to maximum setting- Increase the quality of your videos by adjusting your smart phone settings. Go into your camera settings and select the highest video quality (e.g. 4k at 30 fps)

- **Smart phone set to ‘Do not disturb’** - Remember to turn your phone to ‘do not disturb’. This will mean if you get a text, call or notification while filming, your footage won’t be impacted by your phone’s notification sounds or vibrations.

STEP 2: Setting the scene

Once all equipment is ready, it is important to ensure all external factors are considered and controlled to enable the best quality video production. Below are some factors to consider when setting up your vision to be filmed.

Lighting

- Choose a well-lit location. If filming outdoors, the best time for filming is mid-afternoon
- Ensure the background colours and setting suit the theme and content of your video
- Use natural lighting where possible and ensure the lighting (whether sunlight or artificial) is not too harsh
- Trial the lighting with a test video. Review the test footage to ensure the lighting complements the content, the subject is well lit (free of shadows, glare and shine) and the background does not overpower or distract from the talent.

Example: Below is an example of poor (left) and good (right) quality visuals illustrating the impact of harsh and soft lighting on content produced. When setting up lighting for filming, use the visual on the right as a standard for good quality. If your test footage mimics the visual on the left, the positioning of talent in relations to lighting should be adjusted to remove shadows, harsh lighting and distracting shine. Try repositioning talent by asking them to angle their body or stepping away from under direct light sources.



Background

- Ensure the background is clear of distractions that could draw the focus away from your talent. For example, if any unexpected elements enter your screen, you will need to reshoot (e.g. people walk into view or car drives past)
- Select an interesting background that reflects the purpose of the video (i.e. do not conduct an interview against a blank wall, if speaking to a librarian, conduct an interview in front of a book case)
- Talent must stand out from the background – ensure there is distinct separation and colours do not blend (see example below).

Example: Below you can see the clear difference between the two visuals. In the visual on the left, the dog, who is meant to be the focus of the visual, blends into the background. Conversely, in the visual to the right, the dog is the focus of the image and stands out distinctly from the background.



Audio

For clear audio, ensure that background noise is kept to a minimum and the microphone (whether an internal smart phone microphone, or an external microphone that plugs into a smart phone) is as close to the person speaking as possible. Test the audio and use earphones when playing back the footage to listen for distracting or overpowering noises such as air-conditioning or a motorbike passing by.

Framing

Turn the smart phone horizontally when filming. Horizontal filming captures maximum context and a broader visual than a vertical frame. This enables greater flexibility in post-production with the video able to be watched on a greater range of digital devices and platforms.

Keep steady

Try to keep the phone steady. If filming freely, ensure you are standing/sitting with both feet planted firmly on the floor shoulder-width apart. Tuck your elbows into your sides, holding the phone with two hands at chest level – this will ensure stability and limit unnecessary movement in your footage. Alternatively, you can invest in a smart phone tripod or gimbal which steadies your phone for you (check out the [Osmo mobile](#) which is a simple device to use).

STEP 3: Interviewing talent

Presenting on camera can be daunting. Nerves and over-rehearsed presentation is obvious to viewers. It is therefore important to make your talent as comfortable, yet professional and authentic as possible. The following are tips on how to prepare, guide and manage talent during an interview.

- **Preparing your talent** - Ensure the talent is comfortable and relaxed. Allow the interviewee to practice speaking on camera before recording. Ask easy questions to

start them chatting (e.g. how your day has been). This will ensure presentation to camera is as natural as possible

- **Conduct a test run** - Before you start, always do a few takes and review the footage to ensure all elements are set up correctly
- **Monitor talent** – Monitor the talent’s speaking style and prompt them to slow down, speed up or speak clearer as required
- **Eye Contact** - Ensure the talent is looking directly at the camera lens, to give the impression they are speaking through the camera to the audience. You might find it useful to stick a colourful sticker next to the lens as a point of reference
- **Positioning** - Make sure the speaker is well positioned within the camera frame, not too close, but not too far away that you would struggle to hear (if you weren’t using a microphone). Ensure the camera is positioned at eye-level of the talent
- **Talent appearance** - Make sure the talent is standing (or sitting) straight, not fiddling, doesn’t have anything distracting in their pockets and has a generally neat and tidy appearance.

STEP 4: Capturing overlay footage

- **Overlay (i.e. ‘filler footage’)** – To provide context, colour and interest in your final video, film relevant scenes that complement the talent’s script. For example, if interviewing a librarian about classes on offer at the library, film a variety of shots in addition to the interview, including the class and librarian in action and footage of the library and setting itself.
- **Shooting variety** – Ensure to change up the camera angles. Use a selection of close ups, mid-shots and wide shots to make your video dynamic and engaging. Try filming a panning shot of an activity in action by holding the camera steady for three seconds, then slowly moving the camera from left to right, then holding the camera still for another three seconds before ending the recording.

STEP 5: Review footage

- **Review** - Once filming is complete, take the time to review all your footage. Ensure you have all required content. It is always better to overshoot than realise you do not have enough content when editing
- **Prepare for post-production** - Delete any miss-takes or footage where external factors interfered. Group videos you want to use in an album/folder on your smart phone. This will improve efficiency when selecting footage to input into an editing app or software
- **Input footage** - Input relevant material into your desired editing/post production app and create your video.