Your science media toolkit

Media checklist

When contacted by a journalist, the following checklist can help you make sure you haven’t missed anything. Following these guidelines can help ensure a smooth experience and a positive outcome.

Find out why the journalist is calling you

- Where are they from?
- What are they reporting on?
- Why are they reporting this now - what is their ‘angle’?
- Who else have they spoken to?
- What is the general line of questions they want to ask you?
- Can they send you the press release/paper/report they are working from?

Get their contact details - a direct telephone number and email address

If you need time to gather your thoughts or read over material, find out when their deadline is and ask if you can call back in a reasonable timeframe.

Contact your institution’s communications team/manager.

Prepare the three most important points you want to get across in your interview.

Call the journalist back within the timeframe promised.

When talking to them, make sure you say your three points (most important first) and only comment further if you feel comfortable doing so.

Let the journalists know your availability for the rest of the day and give them your mobile number where possible.

Plan your key message

Step 1 Communication objective
What is the desired outcome or action you would like to see as a result of this interview?

Step 2 Target audience
Who are you trying to reach?

Step 3 Key messages (with supporting facts)
What are the three most important points you want to convey to this audience?

1. 

2. 

3. 

Step 4 Restate key message
In one brief sentence, summarise the main point you want to communicate.

Adapted from ‘Standing up for Science’ media checklist.
Credit: Sense About Science and Dr Claire Bithell UK Science Media Centre