Video Recording with Phones and Tablets

The following guidelines for making videos with common, everyday tools such as smartphones and tablets will help ensure that your video successfully represents and projects the UMass Amherst brand.

For Best Image Quality

- Choose a location with bright, even lighting.
  - Outdoors with the sun high in the sky and behind the camera
  - Outdoors in shade
  - Indoors with ceiling lights on
- Avoid:
  - Strong lighting that casts shadows onto your subject
  - Filming subjects directly in front of windows or other strong light sources
- Use a tripod if possible.
- Have matte face powder or foundation on hand to minimize shine.
- Keep your subject’s entire head and shoulders in the frame.
- Leave enough space below the neck to place a name caption.
- Turn your camera horizontal to record.

For Best Sound Quality

- Position the camera within two to four feet of the subject.
- When recording indoors:
  - Choose a carpeted location.
  - Position your subject away from hard surfaces such as windows, walls, and desks.
- When recording outside:
  - Be aware of the sounds around you.
  - Move away to avoid background noise from vehicles, pedestrians, and construction work.
- If you must record in a noisy location, consider purchasing a special microphone designed for smartphones.
- Have drinking water on hand for your subjects.

Sound Interview Techniques

- Determine the essential points to be made.
- Ask yourself:
  - Who will watch the video?
  - What is most important for them to know?
- Avoid trying to include too many detailed points.
- Keep your video under two minutes, if possible.
- Write a question for each point you want to make.
- Keep your questions short and to the point.
- Avoid “yes/no” questions.
- Indicate in your questions what you are looking for in the answer.
- Have your subject restate the question in the answer.
- Share your questions with your subject(s) before you shoot.
- Use cue cards or a prompting app.
- Ask your subject to stop, take a deep breath, and start again if he/she is nervous and talking too fast.
- Avoid the use of “Ums” and “Ahs” during the interview.

Additional Shots

- Remember to shoot B-Roll footage:
  - People in labs or classrooms
  - Equipment and processes used in research
  - Related photos and graphs
- Make decisions about framing and composition before you start recording.
- Record at least six seconds of each shot—then add a few seconds more.
- Film a variety of shots: wide, medium, close-up.

Copyrighted Material

- Do not include commercial music in your video.
**Branding**

- Be clear that your video is a UMass Amherst production.
- Start and end your video with the UMass Amherst Intro and Outro graphic cards.
- Adhere to UMass Amherst brand identity standards for typography and color.

**Closed-Captioning**

- If you plan to publish your video on a UMass Amherst web page, social media platform, or YouTube, you must provide closed-captioning for the hard of hearing.

If you need additional assistance, please contact:

Donna Blackney  
Video Producer/Manager  
Office of News and Media Relations  
dblackney@umass.edu  
Office: 413-545-7270