DIY VIDEOS

A best practice guide
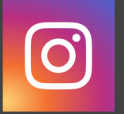
THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

GOLDEN RULES

The best videos are those that communicate your message clearly and compel your audience to take the intended action. The gear you use is a secondary concern.

Know your audience and their video consumption habits. This will help you make a video they will watch, act upon and share!

TL;DR

PUTTING IT ON SOCIAL?

- Keep it under one minute
- Always include captions
- Include a USYD watermark in the bottom corner
- Immediately get to the point and stick to the point
- Have a clear call to action (CTA) at the end of the video
- Know your channel orientations and film to fit these orientations:
  - Insta story and IGTV: portrait
  - Insta feed: square or portrait
  - Youtube, Facebook, LinkedIn: landscape

VIDEO SPECS

TL;DR

Facebook

Max video length: 240 minutes
Max file size: 4 GB
Aspect ratio: 9:16 to 16:9
Orientation: Landscape,
portrait, square

Twitter

Max video length: 140 seconds
Max file size: 512 MB
Aspect ratio: 1:3 to 3:1
Orientation: Landscape,
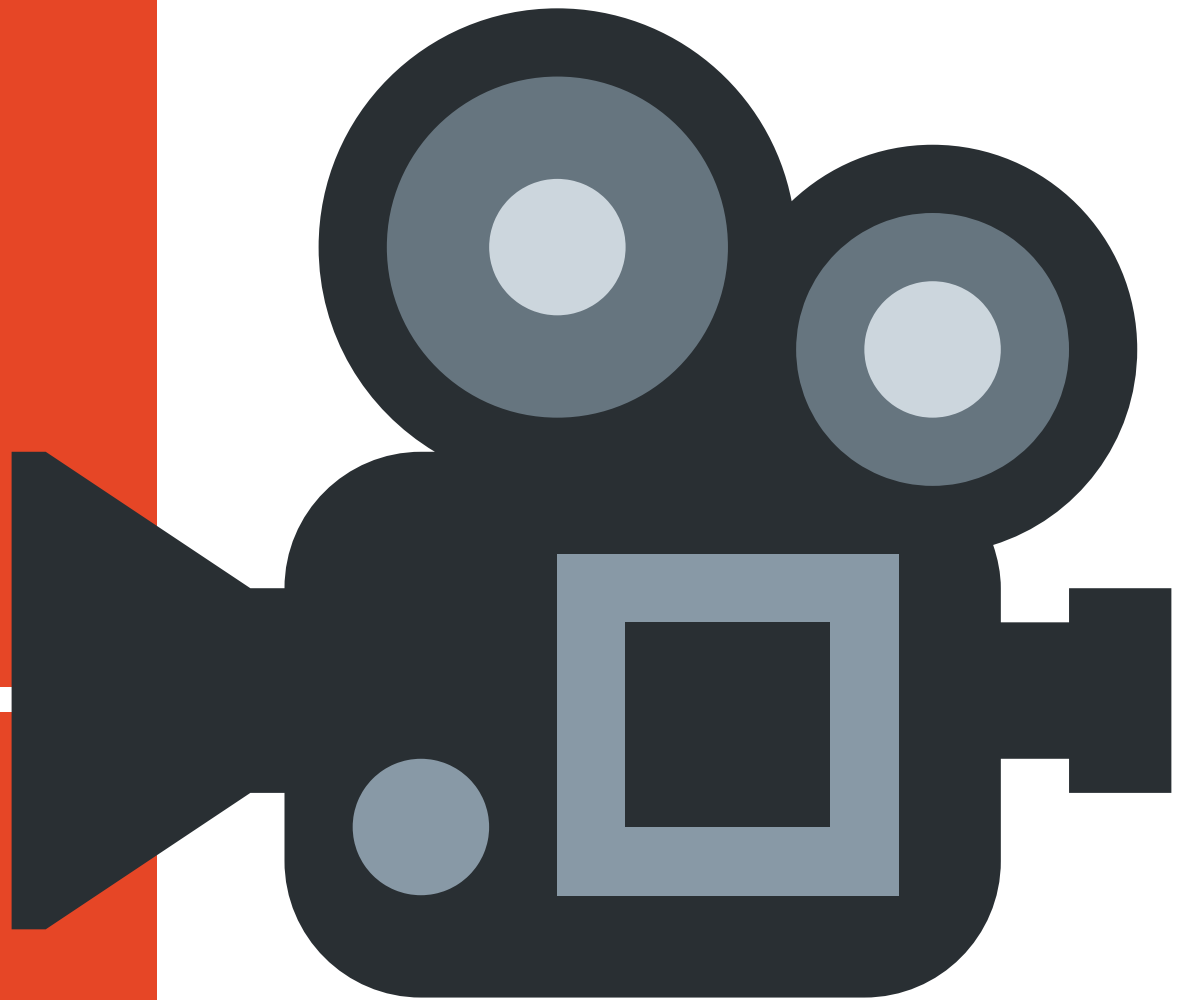portrait, square

Insta feed

Max video length: 60 seconds
Max file size: 4 GB
Aspect ratio: 1.91:1 to 4:5
Video orientation: Landscape,
portrait (only 4:5), square

Insta story and IGTV

Max video length: 60 seconds
Max file size: 4 GB
Aspect ratio: 9:16 to 16:9 to 4:5
Orientation: Landscape,
portrait (excluding 2:3), square

FILMING
TIPS

FIRST: what are you trying to say?

- You don't need to tell the whole story. The whole story can be told by supporting comms.
- Use video to dig deeper into one slice of the story.
- Simple language is best.
- Start strong with an engaging introduction. State the most compelling fact up front.

  Example: "We know bees make delicious honey, but did you know they're helping us plan our cities?!" Then go on to talk about 5 facts about bees and urban planning.

Food for thought

You don't necessarily need to film anything new. Your video could simply be a series of text and images or video footage edited together in an engaging way. You can use the Titles generator in Premiere Pro to create text and overlay it on your footage.

University of Sydney researchers have found an antidote to box jellyfish stings.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

PRO TIP

Write a script to distil your thoughts. You don't have to create a Hollywood-style script. Just make a 2-column script (see example below), with one column for spoken text or written text, and one column for visuals. For each point in the first column, there should be one or more points in the visuals column describing what will be shown on-screen. This will serve as both your script and your shot list!

EXAMPLE

Audio/text	Vision
Voiceover: Scientists have discovered a new parasite in the blood of flatback turtles.	Microscope images of parasite Video footage of flatback turtles
Voiceover: The parasite.. (share most compelling fact about parasite)	More microscope footage of parasite
Voiceover: The parasite was discovered by PhD student Mary Jones. Mary believes…	Microscope images of parasite Video footage of flatback turtles
Text/CTA: Read more about this discovery. URL	Branded outro screen with CTA and URL

GEAR

- Camera: The best camera is the one you have on you. This could be a mobile device, a DSLR camera or a camcorder. The type of camera you use is secondary to ensuring your message is conveyed clearly.
- Storage/memory cards: Make sure you have enough storage or memory cards, as video eats up a lot of space.
- Tripod: A tripod is essential if you want stable footage.
- Microphone: If you intend to record interviews, consider investing in a microphone, or borrow one from your marketing reps. It could be a lapel mic or a handheld mic.

PRO TIP

AV services loans out DIY camera kits that include an HD camcorder, memory cards, lapel mic and tripod.

Tips for shooting interviews

Talent The single most valuable thing you can do is choose someone who can communicate well and is comfortable in front of a camera. The person's title or rank matters less than whether they can deliver your intended message with conviction.

Location Recording in a fairly large, quiet room with big windows is ideal. Make sure you can close all the doors and windows, and turn off any air-con or fans to minimise background hum.

Lighting Open all the curtains, and only film during the day. Natural daylight is the best lighting source anyone could ask for!

Setup Set up your shot so the subject is facing the windows. Let the natural light illuminate their face. This means the camera person's back will be to the window.

If you want to blur out the background, position the talent as far away from the background as possible and make sure the subject is in focus. The closer your subject and the background are to each other, the more the background will also be in focus. If possible, try to not film in front of blank walls, having something in the background looks nice.

Use a tripod to ensure shot stability.

Tips for shooting interviews

Composition

If the talent is speaking directly to the camera, position them in the centre of the frame. If they're speaking to an off-camera interviewer, follow the rule of thirds and position them so there's enough 'looking room'.

Rule of thirds

Audio

Use a lapel mic to capture high quality audio. This is particularly important if you choose to shoot outdoors. Otherwise, just make sure you're in a quiet room by yourself. If using a lapel mic, conceal the mic cable underneath the person's clothing. If you don't have a mic, be at arm's length of your camera so the camera's microphone can record you clearly.

PRO TIP

Before hitting record, make sure your subject is in focus, and your audio levels aren't peaking. Record some test footage and play it back to ensure everything looks and sounds good.

Tips for shooting b-roll

- Videos are made up of lots of smaller video clips that illustrate your story. The more b-roll footage you have, the more effectively you'll get your story across.

- Video journalists often use the 5-shot method when recording someone doing something:

    - Close up of the hands to show WHAT is being done.
    - Close up of the face to show WHO is doing the thing.
    - Wide shot/establishing shot to show WHERE it's being done.
    - Over the shoulder shot to show HOW it's being done, and for a different perspective.
    - Unusual/alternative shot to show what else the viewer should know. You could stand on a chair or lie on the ground and shoot from these angles.

- Make use of any stabilisation gear you have access to, like tripods and gimbals, to ensure you have smooth, stable footage.

Editing and branding

- All university staff have access to Adobe Premiere Pro Creative Cloud video editing software. Contact ICT to set up access and installation.
- The university's branded video templates are accessible from within Premiere Pro. To access the templates, contact brand.info@sydney.edu.au with an explanation of your video content.
- Use captions in your video (people often watch with no sound). There is a captions/subtitles template in the University's video template package in Premiere Pro.
- Using infographics (if you have or can find the expertise) and background music can help keep people engaged. You can licence production music from sites such as Premiumbeat.com
- If you're in a pinch and don't have time to film b-roll (and you have budget), you can purchase stock footage from sites like iStock, Pond5 and VideoHive. Just make sure you read the licence carefully and store the footage responsibly.

Export settings

It will depend on where the video is being hosted/posted, but the following Premiere Pro export settings will be adequate for playing on a large screen:

Format: H.264
Width: 1920
Height: 1080
Frame rate: 25
Field order: Progressive

Aspect: Square pixels
TV standard: PAL
Bitrate encoding: VBR, 2 pass
Target bitrate: 15
Maximum bitrate: 15

Listicle videos

Social videos

Explainer videos

VIDEO IDEAS

Rapid fire question videos

Conversation videos