Video-production guidelines

For schools, departments and other organisational units who are interested in producing promotional online videos.

Communications and Marketing
bristol.ac.uk/style-guides/

Version: 4.1, updated October 2017
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Introduction

These guidelines are for schools, departments and other organisational units who want to produce videos for use on bristol.ac.uk or social media channels associated with the University of Bristol.

The guidelines cover videos intended for external audiences (eg prospective students, researchers, alumni, business partners, etc) or for use in general communications to current students and staff.

If you are looking to produce videos for teaching, research or other purposes connected with your work at the University, visit the Technology Enhanced Learning and Educational Development (TELED) support and training for general guidance, or contact the TELED team at tel-help@bristol.ac.uk.

Accessing links

To access the links in this document when viewing a printed copy, download the digital version at:

bristol.ac.uk/video-guidelines
Where to start

Planning

Proper planning is essential to ensure that the content of your video achieves what you want it to, and that it actually gets seen by the people you are trying to reach.

Basic checklist

1. **Budget:** costs for video vary widely, a three-minute film can cost anywhere between £800 to £3,000+ depending on what’s involved - talking heads, graphics, animation, captions (subtitles), music rights, interviewing, editing, etc. Knowing how much money you have will help you prioritise.

2. **Audience:** who are you trying to target with your video? Defining this will affect the content of your video and the way you distribute and promote it.

3. **Content and impact:** what do you want to achieve through your video? What do you want people to think or feel afterwards? What impression are you trying to create? Is there a ‘call to action’, ie do you want people to do something after they have watched the video? Thinking through these questions at the very outset will help shape everything that follows. It might help to look at what competitor institutes have created with a similar brief: what can you learn from that or improve on?

4. **Length:** shorter is generally better for online video. Viewing statistics tend to show that viewers’ attention spans fade within the first 30 to 60 seconds so you need to be snappy and concise. If you plan properly, you should be able to sum up the point and the message of your video concisely, so a video of around three minutes or less should be achievable. Longer videos can work for unpacking complicated ideas in depth, eg the recording of a lecture. But again, it generally depends on the content of your video and what you are intending to convey.

5. **Roles and responsibilities:** who is going to oversee the project? How many people are involved in commenting/approving various stages of the video? Who will sign off on the final cut?

6. **Scheduling:** if there are multiple interviewees and/or locations, you will need to create a schedule for the film company, and pre-arrange access to certain locations where necessary.

7. **Consent:** if you are filming students, whether in a lecture setting or in one-on-one interviews, you will need to obtain written consent. The University has a standard consent form for this. You may also need to arrange consent with external speakers.

8. **Distribution and promotion:** how are you going to get the film seen? How will your target audience find your film? Don’t assume that simply by creating a video and uploading it to the web that it will attract an audience. Distribution should be a key consideration in the planning stage, not an afterthought. Even if you have the most shareable or interesting video in the world, if you start with a small base, the total views will typically be small. In other words, video content needs to be widely viewed in order to simply gain an average amount of sharing, and this takes some work. For advice on
how best to promote your video, contact the Communications and Marketing Campaigns Team at communications-team@bristol.ac.uk.

If your video is specifically related to student recruitment, we also recommend contacting the Customer Relations and Student Marketing Team as they may be able to publicise it to prospective students via prospectuses and the customer relationship management (CRM) tool.

9. **Evaluation:** how will you measure the success of the video once it is live? Number of views? Number of applications or conversions to your course? Responses to a particular call-to-action? This step is often overlooked, but it is important to find out the return on your investment so that you can plan future promotional activity and ensure that any money is spent effectively.

**Hiring a production company**

The University has worked with a number of film companies, and the following list is by no means exhaustive. Whom you choose to work with will depend on your budget, and the end result (what you get for your money) will depend largely on how well you brief the company.

**Companies with experience of working with the University**

- Beeston Media
- In House Media
- UBTV
- Uni Visuals
- Yoho Media

In House Media and UBTV are run by University students: worth approaching if your budget is small, and a good way of engaging with Bristol students.

**Top tips for picking the right company**

- Communicate clearly about your brief (see the Planning section) and your expectations of the process. Explain who’s involved, what you want to achieve, who needs to sign off and who is likely to get involved at the last minute.
- Be clear about how much creative input you want from the company, and how much you are directing the brief.
- Negotiate: most companies will provide a breakdown of costs (how much towards cameras, lighting, sound, captions, music licensing, etc), if the quote is too high, ask what you’d lose with a smaller budget.
- Check who will own the rights and what the restrictions are on where and for how long you can use the content. We would normally recommend that the University owns all rights without usage restrictions in perpetuity. See ‘Contracts’, below.
Understand the whole process: budget overruns and who pays for them, missed deadlines and how this impacts the payment schedule, or whether there are penalties on either side.

Contracts

It is good practice to have a contract in place between you and the film company that lays out who owns the copyright to the film, who is responsible for distributing it where and how, etc.

There is a standard contract to cover this, drawn up by the University Secretary’s Office. You can download a copy of this contract for your own use on the video-commissioning agreement web page.

Doing it yourself

Video-production - from initial storyboarding to filming and sound capture to editing - is a complicated project, and we strongly recommend hiring a professional filmmaker or company to undertake this.

However, if you do wish to learn more about what the filmmaking process entails, Jisc Digital Media’s Video Creation Toolkit offers extensive advice on the technical specifics of making a video.
House style

Logo screen

All videos must display the University of Bristol standard logo screen for at least two seconds at the end (the ‘tail’) of the video. The logo screen should use a simple fade transition, without complicated animation or sliding effects.

Download files

Your film company should download the following files in order to use them in their edits.

To download a file, click the link; then in your browser:

- **Chrome**: click (top-right corner) > ‘Save page as’; then save the file to a location of your choosing.
- **Firefox**: click the orange ‘Firefox’ button (top-left corner) > ‘Save page as’; then save the file to a location of your choosing.
- **Internet Explorer**: click ‘File’ > ‘Save as...’; then save the file to a location of your choosing.

Please download the correct version for the dimensions of your video.

16:9 (widescreen) logo screen, 1280 x 720px

![University of Bristol logo screen](bristol.ac.uk/university/media/web/images/uob_video-titlecard-16-9.jpg)

Download as:

- **.jpg, 83kB**
  - bristol.ac.uk/university/media/web/images/uob-video-titlecard-16-9.jpg
- **.eps, 4.5MB**
  - bristol.ac.uk/university/media/web/images/uob-video-titlecard-16-9.eps
Notes

These titles screens are using the most common dimensions for video and may be rescaled (while maintaining the aspect ratio) as necessary.

If you intend to rescale the file for your video, we recommend using the .eps version.

If you require a different dimension to those listed above, please contact web-editor@bristol.ac.uk.

Titles and credits

Opening titles, including the title of the video and relevant department name (if needed), may be added at the start (the ‘top’) of your video.

If you are using titles, ensure the University logo appears on the first screen, in the bottom-left corner.

Production credits (if required) should appear at the end of the video, before the final standard logo screen.

Any titles and credits used should adhere to the following:

- White background or overlaid on footage;
- Typeface should be Helvetica Neue (Thin, Light, Medium, Bold or Heavy variants).
  - Arial may be used if Helvetica Neue is not available;
● If not using black, typeface colours must follow the identity guidelines colour palette;
● Transitions between titles should use a simple fade in/out or crossfade.

On-screen interviewees

Any people speaking to camera should be named with an on-screen credit the first time they appear. The credit should include their name and where appropriate: job title, department, course, year of study.

To avoid interfering with the legibility of any subtitles, the credit should ideally appear in the top portion of the screen.

Use of music and other works made by others

Note: The film production company will normally take responsibility for acquiring permission for use of music and other works in your video, and we provide the details below for awareness.

Music

You/your film company will need to get permission to use any music or other recorded work in your video, which may well involve a financial overhead. If you don't, you may leave yourself open to prosecution.

For general information on this and who to contact, see the Copyright Hub’s information on getting permission to use music.

You can also find free music licensed under Creative Commons, which is legal to use as long as you follow their attribution policy. More information is available on the Creative Commons website.

MA Composition of Music for Film and Television

Students from the University’s MA Composition of Music for Film and Television are able to provide music for videos, both pre-recorded and bespoke work. Not only is this a cost-effective way of acquiring music for your video, but it also shows off the range of talents from our students.

Contact Louis Johnson at lj15221@bristol.ac.uk for more information.
Other works

While music is a type of third-party work very commonly used in videos, you/your film company will also need to obtain permission for other types of work that are made by a third party, if you want to include them in your video. Examples include slide shows, photographs, or pre-recorded footage.

If you have a specific query about getting permission to use a third-party work in your video, please contact the University Secretary’s Office.

Captions/subtitles

Captions (also known as subtitles or closed captions/CC) allow people with hearing impairments to understand the content of your video. These are now required for every video intended for inclusion on bristol.ac.uk, or the University YouTube channel, so ensure that you have budgeted for this during the planning stage.

For more information on creating and implementing captions, see the accessibility requirements section of these guidelines.

Example of house style

To view an example of the house style being used, watch the video ‘The invention of colour’ on YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYZWv0B_2sU
Accessibility requirements

When producing video that is to be distributed online, you should aim to make it accessible to all potential viewers.

This means factoring in the time and cost of producing captions and possibly audio description and a transcript. Where the video is intended for an international audience, you should consider getting dialogue translated into key target languages.

Implementing the above measures will help to widen your audience, as a larger range of people with differing abilities will be able to understand your content. Moreover, many people in offices or other public spaces won’t want to, or be able to, listen to your video regardless of their physical ability, and providing captions will benefit this audience as well.

All new videos that are intended for inclusion on the University website or the University YouTube channel now require captions in order to adhere to Conformance Level AA of the W3C guidelines, as outlined in our accessibility policy. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to produce captions, contact web-editor@bristol.ac.uk.

Captions

Captions (also known as subtitles or closed captions/CC) are a separate file to your video that contain a text version of the dialogue, along with timecodes. These timecodes allow the correct text to sync with the dialogue as it occurs during playback.

Captions can also contain important sound cues such as applause, music, etc, which appear in the background of your soundtrack.

Since captions are created and uploaded as a separate file to your video, they can be turned on/off by the viewer, using options in the video player.

Caption file format

The preferred caption file format is .srt (SubRip) text format. This format is supported by YouTube and makes it easy to embed captions for online playback.

Commissioning captions

Most video production companies will offer captioning as part of their service and can offer you a quotation for this.
Creating/editing captions

Subtitle Edit

Should you need to create or edit captions yourself, one option is a free application:

- **Subtitle Edit**

This allows you to import your video, and create and save a new .srt captions file. You can also import an existing .srt file and the associated video file if you need to re-edit existing captions.

**Note:** for video playback within Subtitle Edit, the best option is to have [VLC media player](https://www.vlcmedia-player.org) installed on your computer; then in Subtitle Edit, go to Options > Settings > Video player and under ‘Video engine’ select VLC.

How long does it take?
The length of time it takes to create captions depends on several factors, including typing speed and experience. But it is reasonable to expect a novice to take around 15 minutes to complete captions for every one minute of video.

YouTube

It is possible to edit the automatic captions created when uploading a video in YouTube. YouTube currently provides an automatically generated captions file for every video uploaded, but these are never entirely correct and need reviewing and editing by the uploader. However, this is often a quicker process than creating a subtitle file from scratch.

If your video is being uploaded to the University YouTube channel, you can arrange a time to come to the Communications and Marketing Office in order to review and edit the YouTube captions for your video: contact [web-editor@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:web-editor@bristol.ac.uk) to arrange this.

Got a question about creating or commissioning captions? Contact the [Web Editor team](mailto:web-editor@bristol.ac.uk).

Transcripts

A transcript is a written document containing all the dialogue (and important sound cues) within a video, without the associated timecodes. It does not sync with your video, but is made available for download alongside your video and reads much like a standard written script for film or theatre.

Transcripts are not required for videos to be included on the University website or University YouTube channel, but can be of benefit in certain cases.
Recording settings, file formats and codecs

Recording settings

Recording codec (for playback codecs, see below)

We recommend using AVCHD (AVCAM); this is becoming the primary codec for HD consumer cameras.

Data rate

We would recommend one setting below the maximum that the camera supports. Some software can struggle when the maximum setting is used.

Resolution

If the video is only destined for web display, we recommend filming in 720p (1280 x 720). This will give you a file that is between SD (Standard Definition) and full HD (High Definition).

If you plan to use the video for other purposes (ie beyond use on the web), always film at full 1080p resolution (1920 x 1080) or at the camera’s highest setting.

Video file formats and playback codecs

For the widest possible support we recommend rendering files in the MP4 format using the following codecs and settings:

Video codec

- H264 - MPEG-4 AVC (part 10) (avc1)
- Minimum resolution:
  - Footage shot at 720p: 640 x 360
  - Footage shot at 1080p: 960 x 540

Audio codec

- MPEG AAC mp4a
- Sample rate 48KHz
Getting videos online

Videos should not be uploaded directly to the University’s web content management system (CMS), since this does not support large file sizes (ie over 5MB). Instead, there are several options for getting your videos online:

1. Options managed by you/your department:
   a. Departmental YouTube channel;
   b. Departmental website media folder.
2. Options managed by the Communications and Marketing Office:
   a. University (corporate) YouTube channel;

Note: there are several alternative video-hosting services available in addition to YouTube; but we have restricted our guidelines to YouTube on this page due to its popularity

1. a. Departmental YouTube channel

Benefits:

- Easy hosting and embedding of multiple videos;
- Social media benefits through YouTube recommendations, YouTube search, comments, etc;
- Can track viewer analytics for your videos (eg number of views, how much of the video viewers watch, whether they view video embedded on your site or directly on YouTube, viewer location, etc);
- A range of privacy settings for each video;
- Can create playlists for your videos.

Things to consider:

- Maintaining an account requires (some) resource, like all social-media channels, and may not be suitable if you have only a small number of videos.

YouTube help

YouTube has numerous help articles available to help you with managing your videos, including:

1. Creating a channel for your department;
2. Uploading videos;

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1 To create a new YouTube channel, you require a non-UoB Google account. When creating a new Google account or signing into an existing one, make sure you are logged out of your
3. Creating a playlist of multiple videos;
4. Embedding videos and playlists on your web page;  
5. Using and interpreting YouTube analytics.

Channel logo

Please use the following version of the University logo when creating your YouTube channel:

- Logo for use with video hosting (PNG, 18kB)

This version of the University logo may only be used to create your video-hosting channel icon and in no other circumstances. Other versions of the University logo are available for use in different circumstances.

Promoting your channel

We can add a link to your departmental channel from the corporate University channel, and from the social media listings page on bristol.ac.uk. Contact web-editor@bristol.ac.uk to request this.

Featuring a pre-uploaded video

We can feature videos on the University YouTube channel that are already uploaded to your departmental YouTube channel, without reuploading the video. If you are interested in promoting a video via the University YouTube channel, contact web-editor@bristol.ac.uk.

1. b. Departmental website media folder

The media folder is attached to your department website, but is accessed outside of the CMS. It should be used for any large files, including large PDFs or other documents, audio files and video files.

By storing your video in your departmental website media folder, you can then embed the video onto a web page. See the online implementation instructions for details about how to embed videos held in a media folder.

To request a media folder, please contact web-support@bristol.ac.uk (requests must come from the Site Administrator for your website).

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2 If your website is on the Plone or Zope CMS, videos can only be embedded on an "advanced web page", as the code is not compatible with the Edit-on Pro editor. Please contact your Site Administrator to set up an advanced web page. Web pages in the T4 SiteManager CMS are able to handle the video code.
Benefits:

- Useful for hosting one or a small number of videos;
- Can embed captions easily to individual videos;
- Hosted within the UoB network: not dependent on the policies of a third party;
- Can make your video private so it is only viewable by University staff and students (via Single Sign-On).

Things to consider:

- No analytics (except for page it is embedded on);
- A greater understanding of HTML is required to embed videos (than YouTube);
- Video must be embedded on a web page in order to view it (no ‘hosting page’ as with YouTube);

2. a. University (corporate) YouTube channel

The University YouTube channel generally features videos that are made as part of University-wide initiatives. We may also include videos made by departments, research groups and other University units that align with these objectives, either by uploading the video to the channel, or by featuring a pre-uploaded video on the channel.

Benefits:

- As with Departmental YouTube channel, plus:
- Channel has high visibility, exposing your video to a potentially wide audience;
  Can promote videos already uploaded to your own YouTube channel.

Things to consider:

- As with Departmental YouTube channel, plus:
- Video must meet criteria for inclusion (will be reviewed by the Communications and Marketing Office);
- Timeframe for adding videos is governed by available resources in the Communications and Marketing Office.

Video upload request

To request for a video to be uploaded to the University YouTube channel, please complete our video submission-request form (.doc, 42kB) and send to web-editor@bristol.ac.uk. Video files should be submitted via the FLUFF (or similar) service. Please do not attempt to attach video files to emails you send us.