



Interviews



SOCIETY OF JESUS
General Curia in Rome

 **Basic requirements for video production**



Introduction

If we believe we have something important to say, **we need to make sure that the technical quality of our recordings stands up to the importance of the message.**

Here are the things we need to remember about when filming a video interview:

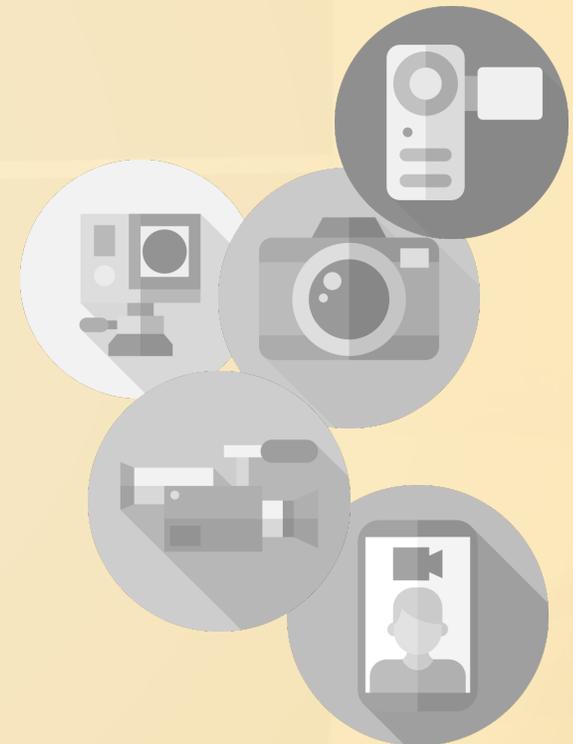
- ✓ Good quality image
- ✓ Good quality audio
- ✓ Deliberate arrangement of the film set and the interviewee
- ✓ Meaningful questions, precise answers

Good quality image

It's great if you can afford a film camera but it might be difficult in most cases. Therefore the minimum requirements for the video equipment are:

- **Camera:**
 - Minimum of FULL HD resolution
 - External microphone plug
- a tripod
- a lavalier microphone

You can use film cameras, camcorders, DSLR/mirrorless cameras or even smartphones.



Be flexible!

If a **smartphone** is the best what you can have, it still might work great, especially new iPhones or higher models with Android system. Nowadays you can easily purchase smartphone tripods, microphones and lighting.

If you can invest more than that, please consider using a **camcorder** with external audio input, preferably inside image stabilization and 4K image resolution.

If you are more specialized (but only then), you can use a DSLR, a mirrorless camera or a film camera.



Basic setting of the camera

- **FOCUS** - Make sure the image is in focus. If you use a DSLR you might want to switch to manual in order to be sure your interviewee is in focus, not the background for example.



Basic setting of the camera

- **EXPOSURE** - Your interviewee has to be visible.
 - You can use a 3-point lighting set up ([check out instructions](#))
 - If you don't have any specialized lights, please use natural light from a window or artificial light so that it's in the front-right or front-left of the interviewee (never in the back or full front).



More camera settings

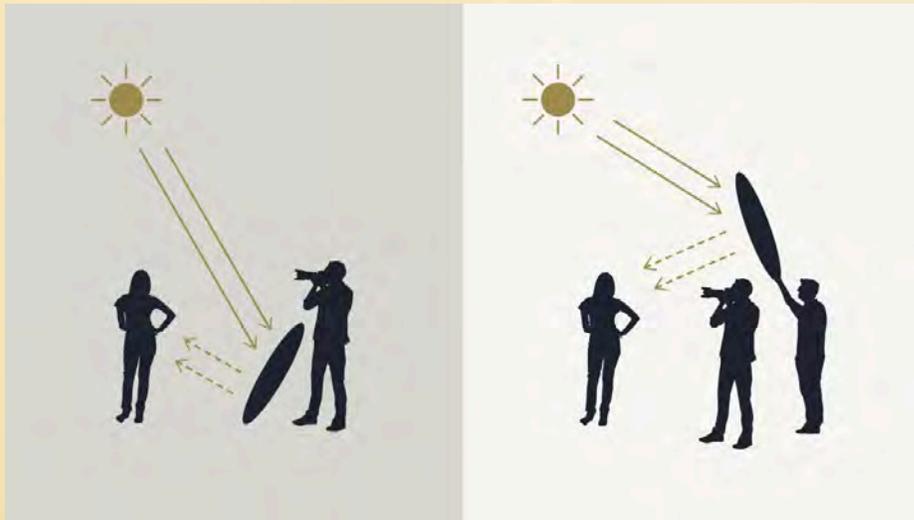
Here are some more tips on how to set up your camera well:

- If you have a choice, **shoot your interview/speaking part in the highest possible resolution** (for instance 4K rather than Full HD). This way it's possible to crop the image in the editing software and have a **close up** and a **wide shot** from just one take. 
- It's nice to have some slomotion shots too. Even some smartphones record 120 frames (very slowed down video), so you can try having a few shots like this to enrich the viewer's experience.



Outdoors or indoors?

- Sun is an amazing source of light but it's also very strong and difficult to control. If you're planning to shoot outside consider a cloudy day or a shadowy spot.
- Also, you can use sun reflectors to soften and redirect the light:



Good quality audio

- **Always use a lavalier microphone** plugged in to the camera and placed on the interviewee's chest. Some things to remember about:
 - Make sure the audio levels are okay. If your camera doesn't allow audio monitoring with headphones, please record a short rehearsal with your interviewee and play to check if all is ok.
 - Check if the mic doesn't touch interviewee's clothing, so that it doesn't make unwanted rubbing noises.
 - Don't record in a noisy street, on a windy day, in a crowded room etc. All these things will be heard 10 times more on the recording than in real life.
 - Avoid leather chairs and sofas, they always make noise when interviewees move.
- **If you don't have the microphone**, the cheapest options like [Boya BY-M1](#) cost less than 20 dollars. Let us know if you need help.



Arranging the set properly

As much as we don't want any noise on the audio, we don't want to have any “noise” elements in the image either! **Think of the right space for the topic** you're covering that will let our viewers focus on the character. Place your interviewee in some distance from the background, so that it doesn't blend with him/her visually.

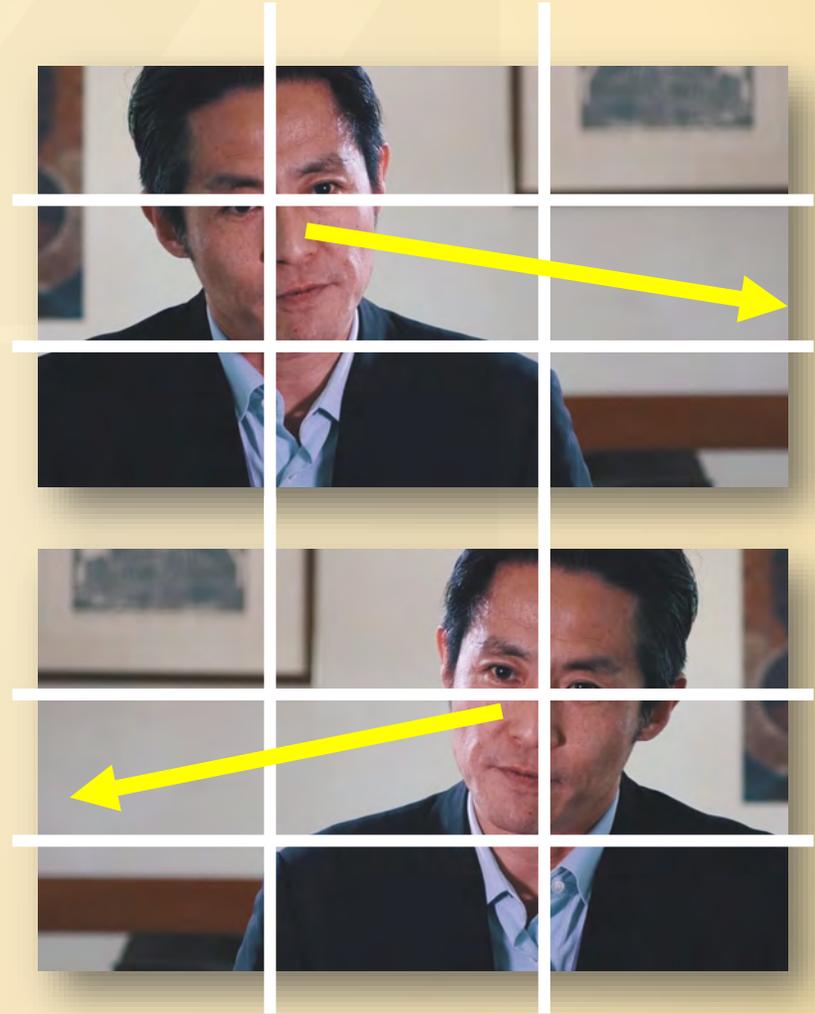
At the same time you should avoid fully sterile, empty backgrounds, which will make the image too isolated... Unless this is your exact purpose!





“Where should I look?”

If your interviewee is answering questions to you or an interviewer, place him/her in the one thirds of the screen’s width and height and make look slightly to the right (or left) of the camera. This will feel the most natural to the viewers. ([Watch more about *thirds composition*](#))



Take

“Where should I look?”

If your interview is talking directly to the viewers, not just responding to the questions but also using phrases like “Dear....” you can ask him/her to talk directly to the camera and use a central composition.





The interviews' style

- It is recommended to advise your interviewee to answer questions as if there were no questions asked:
 - *What day is today?*
 - ~~*Monday 1st.*~~
 - *Today is Monday 1st.*
- Tell your interviewee to feel comfortable about repeating any answer and lack of time pressure.
- Specify the length of the answer you're looking for (ex. One sentence, one thought etc.)
- Advise your interviewee to take 3 seconds of silence before and after answering the question (it's easier to edit later).



Sending the files to us

- **If you have your materials ready**, please always send the raw, unedited materials, the way they come out of the recording device.
- Don't send via messaging apps like Whastapp or Facebook. They compress the files so that they're smaller but also low quality.
- The best option to send big files is **WeTransfer** or any other cloud like Google Drive, One Drive, DropBox but files should be packed in a ZIP or RAR archive.

Summary in 6 points

1. Record horizontally



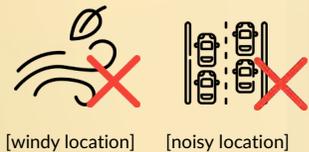
2. Make sure we can see you



3. Avoid a shaking camera



4. Make sure we can hear you



5. Choose the right format



5. Send via cloud, not messaging apps





Thank you

For more information contact us via infosj-video@sjcuria.org
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