**Guidance for commissioning video**

**Before you start**

The following guidance will walk you through the entire process of producing, commissioning and publishing your video project.

1. Timescales and budget

How long does it take from creating your brief to receiving your video(s)?

What factors determine the timescale of a project? Here are some thing to think about:

* **The scale of the project:** do you require a single video or is it a campaign comprising of multiple videos? The larger the output, typically more time will be required to plan and produce it.
* **The content of project and your requirements**: a single video could be as simple as a one-camera setup to produce an interview. Conversely, it could be a story-driven recruitment video with many complex elements. The higher the complexity, the longer it takes to produce.
* **Budget** – your budget will have a determining factor on what is achievable for the project. A smaller budget may warrant a smaller crew and [simplified creative treatment](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVxMrZFt7pk) which will in turn allow for a shorter turnaround. Whilst a larger budget may facilitate a larger crew with a more [complex creative treatment](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zWokd5rH8Q) that may take longer to execute and deliver.

A good brief that considers the above factors will allow the supplier to provide more accurate timescales based on your requirements.

When should you start planning your video?

* The first question to ask is if your timescale is realistic?
  + A typical timeline when creating a video contains these elements:
    1. Writing your brief and sending it to suppliers
    2. Suppliers have 48 (minimum) hours to respond to your brief
    3. Reviewing and approving the response(s) from the supplier(s)
    4. Providing feedback to unsuccessful suppliers
    5. Pre-production planning with the supplier such as: scheduling in filming dates, availability of talent and location scouting
    6. Undertaking the filming
    7. Post-production for editing and finalising your video, including multiple rounds of amends to ensure the supplier is realising your brief.
* If you’re operating on a tight timescale or your budget is small, consider this when producing your brief. Suppliers can advise what is achievable within your constraints.
* If you’re still unsure – you can [contact Communications Production](mailto:extcomms@leeds.ac.uk) for a sense check of whether your requirements and budget are well aligned.

2. Objectives, audience, messages and channels

Thinking about these four factors is critical to helping inform your brief. It will help you and your supplier construct a clearer picture of what it is that you wish to create. To begin, consider the following:

* What do you want your video to achieve? (Objectives)
* Who do you want to see your video? (Audience)
* What do you want your audience to think, feel or do after watching your video? (Messages)
* Which channels (eg Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Plasma Screen) will your video be used on? (Channels)
  + This may affect which formats you request from your supplier.

In the video briefing process, you’ll be prompted to answer questions like these, so it’s worth keeping them in mind.

**Commissioning**

To commission your video(s) you must complete a [Video Briefing Form](https://comms.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2019/07/Video-Briefing-Form-July-2019.docx). The purpose of this form is to provide the suppliers with as much information as possible about your project. By giving the suppliers a strong foundation, it will better enable them to respond creatively with a pitch that reflects your needs.

1. Preparing your brief

The brief will guide you through the following areas of your project:

1. Project overview
2. Objectives
3. Audience
4. Messaging
5. Deliverables
6. Formats
7. Logistics

The Video Briefing Form will provide prompts at each stage to help draw out as much detail as possible.

2. Reviewing your brief

Upon completion of your brief it is considered good practice to seek feedback prior to submitting it to the supplier framework.

1. If you work in a **faculty, school or service marketing/communications role**, you can contact central marketing for feedback on your brief.
2. If you are an **academic,** you can contact your local faculty marketing team for feedback on your brief.
3. If you are working on a large, complex, campaign-level project, you can contact Communications Production for feedback on your brief.

Speaking to your relevant point of contact will allow an experienced commissioner to identify any possible improvements and offer assurance on the information that you have provided.

3. Submitting your brief

Once your brief is ready for submission, the next step is to send it to: [videosuppliers@lists.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:videosuppliers@lists.leeds.ac.uk).

We advise you send this with an accompanying email briefly summarising the project along with any additional information you think the supplier may need to know.

This will send your brief to the four video suppliers. Suppliers will aim to respond within 48 hours of receiving your brief.

We recommend that upon sending the brief to the suppliers, you ensure that yourself or a colleague related to the project are available to answer any questions from the suppliers in the immediate days of submitting the brief.

4. Assessing your responses and selecting a supplier

1. Assessing your responses:

Now that you have received your responses from the suppliers, you will need to assess their pitches

Consider the following when assessing the responses:

1. Has the brief met the criteria you set out from the start?
2. What do you think of their ideas, creativity and approach?
3. Have they demonstrated value for money?
4. Have any concerns been raised about your brief that may impact your initial timescales?
5. Have they provided previous examples of similar work?

You are allowed to contact the suppliers at this stage to ask questions, seek clarification, or discuss the ideas or approach they have created.

Keep in mind that the suppliers may have reduced the scope of what they can produce to ensure it adheres to your budget. Suppliers should make this clear in their response.

1. Assessing your responses:

Once you have selected a supplier, follow these steps:

1. Contact your chosen supplier to agree and sign off on the proposed creative treatment.
   1. You can send this within an email outlining all the work to which you are agreeing. This provides you with a record of what has been agreed should you need to refer back to it at a later date.
2. It is mandatory to provide feedback to unsuccessful suppliers by outlining some of the key reasons as to why they were unsuccessful. You can use the prompts in the Selection Criteria section on the Video Briefing Form to produce this feedback.
3. What to do if you do not receive a response:

In the event that you do not receive a response from any of the video suppliers, you should [contact Communications Production](mailto:extcomms@leeds.ac.uk) who can review your brief and if necessary gather feedback from the video suppliers as to why they did not submit pitches.

**Planning**

1. Initial Preparation

Now that you have chosen a supplier, you can now start planning your project.

This stage will help to firm up your plans, ensuring that what is produced is as close to your vision as possible. It is common practice to be actively involved at the planning stage.

A good starting point is a ‘Kick off’ or ‘Development’ meeting. In this meeting the commissioner (you) and the supplier will discuss, develop and decide on how your video(s) will be executed.

Ideally this would take place in the form of a face-to-face meeting or video call.

An initial meeting will help you to tie up any loose ends and gain further clarity, which will result in a better output.

From here, the supplier will work with you to create a schedule which will incorporate filming, editing and the delivery of your videos. It is important that you check this carefully to ensure it is realistic and feasible. You should also agree upon a schedule for feedback and how many rounds of amends will be required.

2. Logistics

There are a wide-range of considerations when it comes to filming your video(s):

1. Where will the filming take place? Your supplier will be able to advise on their suitability. Consider the following:
   1. Is it possible to recce the location prior to filming to determine how noisy the location is?
   2. Do you need a bad weather alternative if your location is weather-dependant?
   3. You will also need to seek permission for filming on campus. When filming on campus, please get permission locally and let the following people know:
      1. Estates Helpdesk – eshelp@leeds.ac.uk
      2. Press Office – pressoffice@adm.leeds.ac.uk
      3. Beverly Kenny (Head of Conferencing and Events) – b.kenny@adm.leeds.ac.uk

This email should include: who you are, the purpose of the filming and where you are filming.

1. You will also need to consider who will feature in the film.
   1. Have they been on camera before and can you assist in helping them to feel comfortable when being filmed?
   2. What is their availability and how much on-camera time will they have?
   3. Do you need to line-up standby options in case of absences or drop outs?
   4. What will they wear? Ensure it’s appropriate to the project/setting. Avoid busy patterns and extremities of colour.
   5. You must ensure that all those featured in the film complete a GDPR-compliant image release form.

3. Has the supplier provided you with the relevant pre-production documents? These typically include:

1. Running Order (Detailing the sequence of your video)
2. Shot List (List of the shots to be captured)
3. Schedule (A time-specific outline of the day(s))
4. Call Sheet (A list of those involved on the day(s)) containing: contact details, scripts, key messages etc.)
   1. Roles and responsibilities (Detailing the key people in the production team and what element of the production they’re responsible for eg Camera Operator, Producer, Director)

**Filming**

1. General Guidance

You will get a better video if you are in attendance of the filming of your video(s) and play an active role in the filmmaking process.

Please refer to the Filming Day Checklist document which you can print out and work through prior to filming.

2. Logistics

1. **Documentation** - Ensure you have all the relevant pre-production documents printed and with you.
2. **Additional Support** - It is recommended that you invite at least one colleague along to the filming to provide you with assistance.
3. **Quality Control** – This will be one of your primary responsibilities which will involve: checking dialogue/key messages against the pre-production documentation
4. **Direction** – See below for a few considerations of where you can provide direction:
   1. Is there anything distracting happening within the shots? Check both the foreground and background, removing elements where necessary.
   2. Is the weather having a negative impact? (such as too much wind)
   3. Are the subjects of the video being articulate and speaking clearly?
5. **Troubleshooting -** We advise you to update the supplier on how you think the day is going in line with the schedule and running order. This will provide peace of mind and transparency. If you are running short on your planned time, communicate this with the supplier immediately to discuss your available options.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

With your video supplier having informed you of the key roles and responsibilities within the production team, it is good practice if you have the support available to outline the same for your respective team members during the production days. Consider the following:

1. What areas when filming would benefit from additional support? For example, you may value an extra pair of hands to help with small jobs on set, or conversely someone to assist you with the direction and quality control.
2. Who is available to help? Check the availability of your team members. If they have the capacity, ensure that they schedule out the necessary time.
3. Inform the suppliers – If you will have supporting team members available for the day, it is important that you communicate this to your video supplier so that they are aware of who will be present and their role within the production.

**Editing & Delivery**

1. What happens next?

Once filming is completed, the post-production process begins. This will typically involve the following stages for the supplier:

1. Selecting the best footage/takes
2. Shortlisting background music options (if applicable)
3. First edit
4. Creation of graphics or text (including animation)
5. Colour Correction and treatment of footage
6. Sending to you for feedback and amends
7. Implementing your feedback in a second edit
8. Sending to you for feedback and amends
9. Implementing your feedback in a third, and usually final edit
10. Repeat steps 6-9 depending on decided rounds of amends (Optional)
11. Edit is finalised and colour grade is created and applied.
12. Final version is sent to you to sign off.

It is important to have agreed a schedule for feedback and amends in the planning stage, this will not only save you time, but help you to keep your project within budget.

2. Providing Feedback

When you receive each version of your edit, it is your responsibility to provide feedback to the suppliers. Providing feedback is an opportunity for you to review what has been created, identifying areas that have room for improvement.

In the first edit you receive, you can save time by only providing feedback on areas that you see as requiring major changes. Once you are satisfied that these changes have been made and have received the second edit, it is then recommended you start to provide feedback on the minor points and start to refine the smaller details of your video(s).

Providing well-articulated feedback is important. Use the below points as a guide to providing feedback, just think, is it:

1. Specific – Is your feedback indicating clearly what you want changing and where it is in the video? *eg Remove shot of building at 0:48*
2. Reasoned – By providing the supplier with a rationale for the change you want making, it will help them to better understand the direction you wish to take. *eg. This shot needs removing because this building represents a faculty that isn’t the focus of this video.*
3. Achievable – Is the change you require achievable? The suppliers will provide guidance on what is achievable, but it’s useful to check over your feedback before sending. *For example, if you know that a certain scene has a limited pool of available shots, asking for sweeping changes in these shots may not be practical.*
4. Constructive – An editor will ultimately receive your comments, so ensure to provide feedback as you would like to receive feedback. If you are displeased with a particular element, try to articulate why, as this will help the editor to better understand your point of view.
5. Collated – If you are collecting feedback from multiple colleagues, ensure that you collate this feedback, removing duplications, checking and removing conflicting comments to ensure that the requested changes are clear and concise for the supplier.

3. The final product

Now that you have received the final video file(s) from your video supplier, it’s important to consider these final checks:

1. Are your video files playing back correctly? It is good practice to test the file(s) on another computer to ensure that no concealed issues exist that may reveal themselves when cross-checking. If you do experience any issues, your supplier can help to resolve this.
2. Where are you going to store your video file(s) securely? Remember, whilst suppliers can resupply your video(s) up until a point, once passed, this may incur an additional charge. Ensure that your file is backed up, and if necessary, centrally accessible by your team should they also need to use it.
3. If requested in your video briefing form, have you received the raw footage for your project? If you have not received the files, please contact your supplier immediately to ensure this is fulfilled.

Please remember, now that you have the final video file(s), unless something you have previously requested is missing, additional changes or amends to your video(s) will likely incur a further charge.

**Publishing**

**How to publish to the University of Leeds YouTube Channel**

We advise that all video content which is published to YouTube is published on the [University’s main YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/universityofleeds).

To submit your videos to the University channel, follow the instructions on [the IT website](https://leeds.service-now.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=1d3a49e3db8f4b80366f18ca4b96197e). You will need to provide a title, description and tags for your video content. More details on these are found below.

**Optimising your content for YouTube**

By optimising the metadata (Title, Description, Tags), you can leverage the YouTube algorithm and achieve maximum visibility.

Metadata is the information YouTube uses to understand what your video is about.

The metadata makes up the Title, Description and Tags of your video. These are the easiest and most important things you can do to optimize your video and make it discoverable through search/ suggested content.

**Titles**

Your Title should accurately reflect the video’s content and be attention grabbing at the same time.

A good Title is likely to focus on the subject of the video rather than the speaker. Keep the Title to no more than 60 characters. This will ensure it doesn’t get cut off on mobile devices while staying concise and catchy. A well-structured, relevant Title should provide the viewer with the answer to their search. Identify important keywords and who you are targeting. If the video is aimed at students, include ‘students’ in the Title.

<include good / bad examples from Page 10 of existing guidance>

**Description**

The Description of the video is a very important factor in optimisation. Here you can tell the viewer what the video is about in depth and include relevant links.

Just like the Title, the Description uses keywords to help YouTube understand what your video is about. The first line of the Description should reiterate, reflect and expand upon the title. Include the same important keywords that you have used in the Title.

The rest of your Description can go into depth about the subject or provide extra information. This is the ideal place to draw focus towards the speaker and go further into the subject. You can enter up to 5,000 characters into your description. If the video is considered to contain time-based content such as a scholarship or an event that is currently taking place, it is best to put the link to any external websites in the first sentence of the description so that it is easily accessible to the viewer.

Only the first 265 characters are visible. The full content of your description is only visible once the viewer clicks on the “SHOW MORE” tab. Treat this as additional information for the viewer.

<include good / bad examples from Page 11 of existing guidance>

**Tags**

The following Tags must be included on all videos:

#University of Leeds, #Leeds University, #Leeds Uni

Tags should also be reflective of the title and description. Your tags should reiterate the script and content of your video. This helps the algorithm confirm that your video is what it says it’s about.

For example, if your video is titled ‘Study Economics at the University of Leeds’, you should include the Tag #Study Economics at the University of Leeds, including spaces.

There are 500 characters available for Tags and it is best to utilise them all but ensure that in total a video has no more than 15 Tags (YouTube automatically ignores all Tags if there are more than that).

Try not to include speaker names in the Tags unless the speaker is a well-known politician/author/doctor/etc.

Utilise this Tag space for the subject of the video rather than the speaker as this will result in higher views.

Google Keyword tool can help you plan Tags and optimise your video. Sign into your AdWords account and visit <https://adwords.google.com/intl/en_uk/home/tools/keyword-planner>

<include good / bad examples from Page 12 of existing guidance>

**Subtitles**

If you are putting your content on the University’s YouTube channel, your videos will be automatically subtitled for you at no cost by our subtitling service. If you are putting content on a different YouTube channel (eg LUBS YouTube), we can still subtitle content for you, you just need to flag this to [webcomms@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:webcomms@leeds.ac.uk). This again does not cost you.

If you are having content created for social media (eg social edits / clips), these subtitles will need adding directly onto your video files, and this is something you should request at brief stage from your supplier. Typically adding this retrospectively to your clips is expensive so we always advise you put this in your brief.

**Other types of video**

1. Animated Video

You can use animated content to convey hypothetical or complex information and where ‘live action’ footage is not available, such as research stories.

Animation can also be effective at conveying short, concise information as part of a wider campaign, for example an animation on scholarships as part of a student recruitment campaign.

Animation can carry though graphic design elements from printed collateral or flat graphics to help in continuing a certain look and feel. For student recruitment video content, the University has some set animation styles. Please contact [commsprod@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:commsprod@leeds.ac.uk) for more information.

2. Lecture Capture

You can also publish lecture capture content (for example, if you have had a guest lecture on campus) onto the University’s YouTube Channel. Guidance on how to do this is found on the [IT website](https://leeds.service-now.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=1d3a49e3db8f4b80366f18ca4b96197e).

3. Self-Shot Footage

On the whole we do not use ‘self-shot’ footage, because the quality does not reflect the professional nature of the image we want to portray from a University marketing perspective. The only exception to this is self-shot content from students.

Footage self-shot by students can be an authentic way of bringing to life what it’s like to study here at Leeds. Vlogs (video blogs) are popular amongst young people and it’s how many prefer to understand a topic or receive recommendations. Self-shot footage from students can be used in video content, but be sure to provide a clear brief to your subjects about what you’re hoping to achieve with their footage. You may also need to pay the students taking part. These clips do not generally carry our logos or any University branding.

4. Live Streaming

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram allow us to live-stream, and we do this using semi-professional equipment. If you’d like to discuss the best live-streaming techniques, please contact the Digital Communications team at webcomms@leeds.ac.uk