

Standing up for Science

Media checklist

You've been contacted by a journalist, what next?

The following is a checklist of what you can do, step-by-step, if you are contacted by a journalist. It doesn't have to be followed exactly but is a good guide if you are unsure of how to handle the situation.

- 1. Find out why the journalist is calling you**
 - Where are they from?
 - What are they reporting on?
 - Why are they reporting this now – what is their 'peg'?
 - Who else have they spoken to?
 - What do they want to ask you?
 - Can they send you the press release/paper/report they are working from?
- 2. Get their contact details – a direct telephone number and email address**
- 3. If you need time to gather your thoughts, find out when their deadline is and ask if you can call back in 15 minutes – be aware journalists only have a certain amount of time to write the story**
- 4. Contact your press officer and your supervisor**
- 5. Prepare the three most important points you want to get across in your interview**
- 6. Call the journalist back within the time frame promised**
- 7. When talking to them make sure you say your three points (most important first) and only comment further if you feel comfortable doing so**
- 8. Let the journalists know your availability for the rest of the day and give them your mobile phone number where possible**

Developed with Dr Claire Bithell, senior press officer, Science Media Centre

Excerpted from: *Standing up for Science: A guide to the media for early career scientist*

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