



university of
groningen

Tips for interviews
with newspapers, TV,
internet, or radio

A young man with dark curly hair, wearing a black jacket and a dark scarf, is speaking into a microphone held by a young woman with long red hair. She is wearing a brown jacket and large headphones. They are outdoors, with a blurred background of a building with a tall spire.

Preparing for publicity

Preparation

- Ask the interviewer what exactly the interview is about and whether you can have a look at a few key questions in advance.
- Ask whether anyone else is to be interviewed for the article/item.
- Identify the critical questions that might be asked in advance and formulate your answers to them.
- Decide which key message you (or the UG) want to get across on this subject.
- Find out which target group the medium for the interview is aimed at, and check whether the medium has published anything on the subject before.
- Make agreements with the journalist about reading and checking the text for errors before it is published (in print or online).
- Ask whether a photographer or cameraman will be present, to prevent unpleasant surprises.
- Ask whether a TV or radio interview is to be transmitted live or if it will be recorded (and edited).
- When preparing for an interview with a national medium, always consult the spokesperson in the Communication Office.

During the interview

- 'Off the record' is a fallacy. An interview only finishes when the journalist is no longer on camera.
- Never answer questions aimed at someone else. Stick to what you know.
- Listen to the questions carefully. Try to find a question that allows you to communicate your key message.
- Talk 'past' the journalist, as if you are addressing the target group as a whole.
- Don't be afraid to say: 'I don't know'. Never lie.
- Possible pitfalls include: talking too much and running out of steam, getting distracted, and being over-emotional.
- Be yourself and avoid playing a role.
- Get back to your key message if the interview seems to be going in a direction that you don't like, e.g.: 'The fact is...', 'What we do is...', 'But what's important to the UG is...'.
• Formulate short sentences in normal language. Avoid using jargon.

After the interview

- In the case of a printed or online medium: Read the result of the interview carefully. Respond to factual errors and provide extra information if necessary. Never change the style of the interview and be careful about amending the content.
- Ask whether the article will be accompanied by a photo or a video, and if so, ask to see it beforehand.
- If the interview is likely to attract a lot of national attention, the Communication Office can arrange a media analysis.

Please note: Inform the Communication Office
(news@rug.nl or communicatie@rug.nl)
and relevant UG colleagues about the interview.

If necessary, call the spokespersons:
Anja Hulshof - 06 - 1151 6323
Sjoerd Bekius - 06 - 3192 1490