



MEDIA INTERVIEW GUIDE

When a Journalist Calls or Emails

Answer warmly and be polite. Ask for a description of what the journalist is working on and get the journalist's name, media outlet, contact information and deadline.

Whether you're ready to go, unsure you want to proceed, or need a little time, let the reporter know you will provide a courtesy heads-up to UNO's Office of University Communications and be in touch shortly. It is also always acceptable to say you need time to prepare.

Call 402.554.2358 or email unonews@unomaha.edu. University Communications staff will discuss the request with you and offer recommendations if you are unsure about proceeding with an interview. Staff can also run you through blitz media training, which includes a practice interview.

Before committing to an interview, consider these questions:

- Is the subject in your area of expertise?
- Do you feel comfortable your answers won't be interpreted as official UNO positions?
- Is any controversy involved unrelated to UNO?

The Interview

Stay on the Record

From the moment you pick up the phone or greet a journalist in-person, consider the interview already under way. Be friendly, but don't say anything you wouldn't want attributed to you, even if you're offered the chance to comment off the record.

Answer Questions Directly

Be ready to answer common questions and tough questions about the subject. Be honest and be yourself. Avoid speculation and don't repeat information the journalist relays if you are unsure of its accuracy.

Return to Key Points

Ask yourself what would make this a successful interview. If the journalist chose just one quote for the story, what would you want it to be? Return to key points repeatedly during your interview and use flagging statements to draw attention to them, such as "The most important thing to remember is ..."

Never Say "No Comment"

If you can't answer a specific question, explain why.

Avoid Conflict

Many stories involve some kind of conflict. Keep answers calm, positive and academic. You are likely being interviewed as an impartial expert. Ask for more information if you believe you are missing an important element of the story.

Answer for the Layperson

Quotes with jargon or field-specific acronyms likely won't be included in a story.

Stop When You've Nailed It

If you feel you have answered a question well, let the silence stand. This provides the reporter with cleaner audio for editing and allows the reporter to fully process your answer.

Ask for a Run Date

It's perfectly fine to ask when a story will run. Don't ask for an opportunity to review or approve the story before it's published.

TV Tips

- Wear a blazer or jacket in case the reporter is using a lapel microphone.
- Look at the reporter, not the camera.
- Be mindful of your facial expressions and body language.
- Stop and start over if you find yourself stumbling.