

Media Interview Quick Guide

University of Central Arkansas (UCA)

Media Relations Webpage (including guidelines for faculty/staff)

uca.edu/president/media-relations/

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Before the Interview

Please notify media relations that the interview is taking place and if you require any assistance. Media training and sample questions are available.

1. Know Your Three Main Points

- Identify **three key messages** you want the audience to remember.
- Keep each point clear, concise and conversational.
- If you remember nothing else: return to your three points.

2. Understand the Context

- Who is the audience?
- What is the format? (Live, recorded, print, podcast?)
- What is the reporter's deadline and angle?

3. Clarify Logistics

- Confirm time, location/platform, and length.
- Ask whether it's live or recorded.
- If appropriate, request topics in advance (not specific questions).

At the Start of the Interview

- Clearly state and spell your name.
- State your title and affiliation with the **University of Central Arkansas**.
- If relevant, briefly explain your role in relation to the topic.

Example:

"I'm Dr. Jane Smith, professor of biology at the University of Central Arkansas, and I've been leading this research project for three years."

During the Interview

1. Answer Clearly and Concisely

- Lead with your main point.
- Avoid jargon; explain technical terms.
- Keep answers focused (20–30 seconds is ideal for broadcast).

2. It's Okay to Slow Down

- Pause before answering.
- Repeat or rephrase the question if you need a moment to think.
- Ask for clarification if a question is unclear.

3. Stay Within Your Expertise

- Speak to what you know.
- If something is outside your role, say so.

Example:

"That decision is handled by our administration, but what I can share is..."

4. Distinguish Fact from Opinion

- Make it clear when something is your professional assessment or personal view.

Example:

“In my professional opinion...”

“Based on our data...”

5. Be Specific About “We”

- Clarify whether “we” means:
 - UCA
 - Your college
 - Your department
 - Your research team

6. Bridge Back to Your Key Messages

If needed, pivot gracefully:

- “What’s important to remember is...”
- “The bigger picture here is...”
- “At UCA, our focus is...”

Tone & Presence

- Be conversational, not scripted.
- Smile (even on the phone – it changes your tone).
- Maintain steady eye contact (for TV or Zoom).
- Avoid filler words and nervous habits.
- Speak in complete thoughts – short, quotable sentences.

Handling Challenging Questions

- Stay calm and measured.
- Don’t speculate.
- Don’t repeat negative framing unnecessarily.
- Correct inaccuracies politely.

Example:

“Actually, what’s happening is...”

If you don’t know:

“I don’t have that information right now, but I can help connect you with someone who does.”

After the Interview

- Offer to provide follow-up information if needed.
- Confirm details if necessary: correct spelling of your name and title, dates and times, etc.
- Let Media Relations know that the interview is complete. This helps with tracking coverage and sharing results.

Final Reminder

You are speaking to inform the public. Be clear. Be steady. Be human. Comment on what you know, and refer elsewhere if necessary.

Questions/Concerns? Tiffany L. Head, media relations director, thead@uca.edu, 501-852-2659