**How should departments, divisions, colleges and other parts of the University handle approaches from media outlets who want to film on their premises?**

First, check whether your department or college has a policy on filming. There may already be a procedure in place. Some colleges, for example, like to consider requests once a term at a governing body meeting; others may be more relaxed about ad-hoc requests. Colleges and departments which are regularly used as locations are likely to have a standard filming agreement already drawn up.

* If in doubt contact your communications officer (if you have one), departmental administrator and/or bursar, or their equivalent.

Second, establish what kind of request it is.

**News item or documentary about the University?**

*e.g. a news report on admissions or a negative news story about Oxford*

Please contact the News Office (tel 2-80528, news.office@
admin.ox.ac.uk) for advice and support.

**News report about Oxford research or for which your academic is providing expert comment?**

Once your academic is happy to take part,
they or you should follow your department or college’s policy on filming (see above).

**Location request unrelated to the University?**

i.e. they want to use your site purely as a location for a feature film, TV programme, advert, photoshoot, etc.

**What kind of questions should you ask?**

Find out as much as possible about the programme. In many cases, production companies are pitching a programme which may not have been commissioned by a broadcaster. If they can claim that they have the University of Oxford on board, it could add weight to their pitch. You could also waste a lot of time and energy on a programme that is never going to be made. If they are vague on detail, proceed with caution.

Questions to ask might include:

* Has the programme already been commissioned or is it a pilot to be pitched to a broadcaster in the hope that it will be commissioned?
* For independent production companies – what other programmes have you made? Have you made similar programmes before?
* Is there a commercial sponsor or partner for the film? Sometimes we get filming requests which turn out to be for promotional videos for a particular organisation.
* What is the title/working title of the programme? What station will it be broadcast on/are you pitching to? What are the audience figures for that channel generally and, if there is a likely time slot for transmission, for that series/time slot in particular?
* Can they supply a synopsis of or detailed information about the programme?
* What and where do they want to film? Get them to be as specific as possible. Have they been to Oxford to recce likely sites? Do they understand that Oxford is not a campus university? If they talk in vague terms about filming ‘at the main university building’ or ‘in the place where all students hang out’, they have not done their homework.
* Who do they want to film? Do they want to talk to staff and/or students? Have they identified individuals already? Do they expect you to help in finding people?
* If the film is not exclusively about Oxford, how will the Oxford segment fit in to the programme overall?
* When do they want to come? Is there some flexibility in when they can come to Oxford or are their dates pegged to other commitments?
* How long do they estimate filming will take?
* How many people will there be in the crew? How much equipment will they be bringing? Will they be bringing vehicles?
* Are they filming elsewhere in Oxford? If so, ensure that they understand that you are only responsible for your department or college and no-one can grant them blanket permission to film across the University. They will need to approach each location separately.

Other things to think about when making your decision:

* How much disruption is the filming going to cause? Are you going to have to restrict access to parts of your building (e.g. to a library during its usual opening hours) or is the filming going to be self-contained in an office?
* Does the type of filming proposed benefit your department/division/college/the wider University? Does it rehash stereotypes, either about the University or academia in general? For example, programme makers might want to film in the classic book-lined dusty old don’s study when in reality your academic never sets foot outside their cutting edge high-tech lab.
* Can you insist on a credit for your college or department? If your academic is just described as, for example, ‘Cybersecurity expert’, your department and/or the University will get little or no credit or benefit.
* Do you need to spend time briefing the presenter/interviewer? Don’t assume they know what they are talking about. If the filming involves interviewing members of your department or college, you may have to spend time going over background material in advance.
* Will your academics need any media training? The News & Information Office can offer ad hoc advice on dealing with media and has published guidance at http://www.ox.ac.uk/public-affairs/media-coverage/media-guidance (single sign on needed).
* Requests to use the University of Oxford logo should be discussed with the Design and Publications team in PAD (publications@admin.ox.ac.uk, tel 280545)

**Commercial requests**

Some requests will be of a commercial nature where the film maker wants to use your premises purely as a location for filming a TV programme, feature film, documentary, advert etc which is not connected to the University. This is likely to be a major undertaking and you will need to involve other members of your department or college at an early stage. Film makers will need to have valid public liability insurance and have signed a contract.

Many of the questions about practical matters above will be relevant – particularly those about the extent of likely disruption, timetable, size of crew, vehicle access, and other practical requirements. Consider whether the location fee you may be able to charge is actually worth the disruption. Think also about whether the finished work is likely to reinforce unhelpful stereotypes about Oxford and its students and staff. A number of colleges are reported to have refused permission to allow scenes in the Bullingdon Club-inspired film *The Riot Club* to be filmed on their premises for that reason.

Lastly, the News & Information has published advice for film makers at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/filming-in-oxford> . You may find it helpful to direct film makers to that page.

 *News & Information Office
University of Oxford
October 2017*