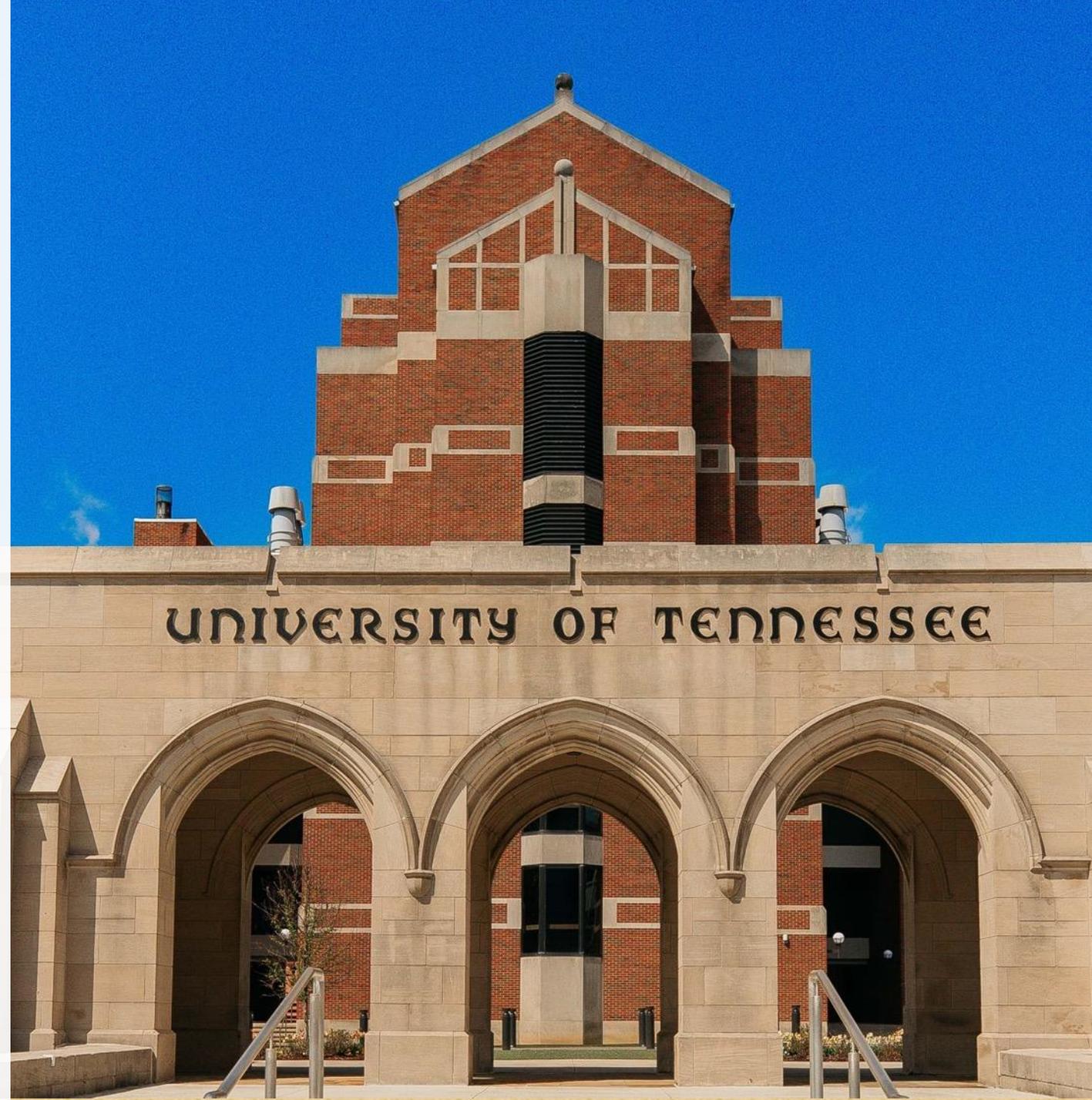


# Media Interviews



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER.





# Welcome!

## The Office of Communications and Marketing

- Assists in all media interviews
- Aids in crisis communications
- Offers media relations training
- Is the first step in media outreach
- Contact [communications@uthsc.edu](mailto:communications@uthsc.edu) or [mreisser@uthsc.edu](mailto:mreisser@uthsc.edu) 901.448.5544

# Learning outcomes

- Understand importance of media interviews
- Understand strengths and drawbacks of interview formats
- Develop skills to prepare for interviews
- Learn to stay on message during an interview
- Learn to pivot when asked a hard question and return to key messages during an interview

# Importance of media interviews

# Importance of media interviews

- Share your work
- Showcase your credibility
- Promote UT Health Science Center
- Control the message



# Interview formats



# Taped interview

Typical format for TV, radio, podcast

## TV

- Almost always want you on camera
- Interview lasts 5-20 minutes
- Interview **will** be edited

## PODCAST

- You can go more in-depth about yourself and your research
- Interview lasts 30-60 minutes

# Live interview

## TV

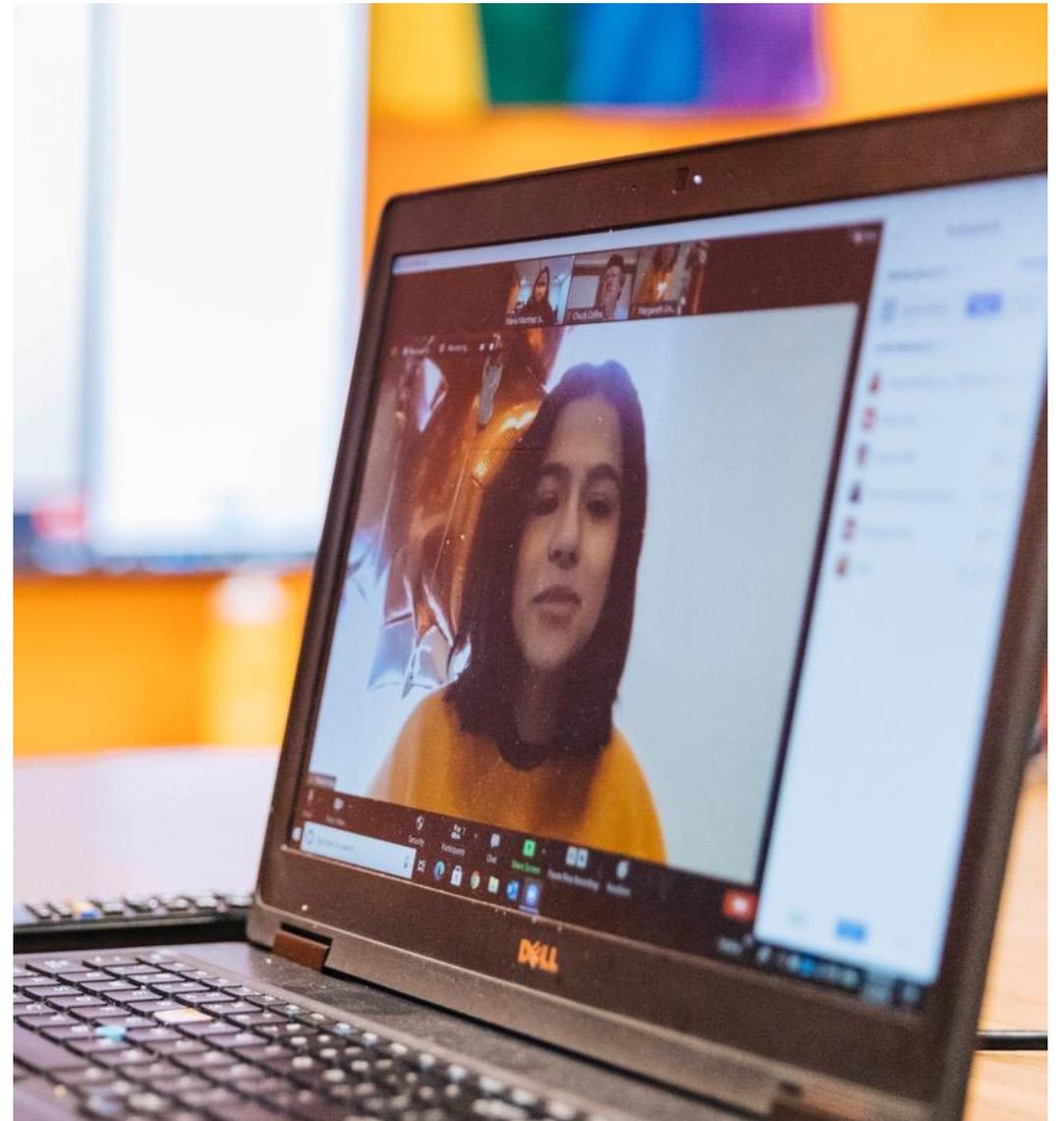
- Usually lasts 2-5 minutes
- An anchor or reporter will likely conduct the interview
- Be aware that a live interview is not edited and what you say will be in the broadcast
- There is no “off the record.” Say only what you intend to be used in the story.

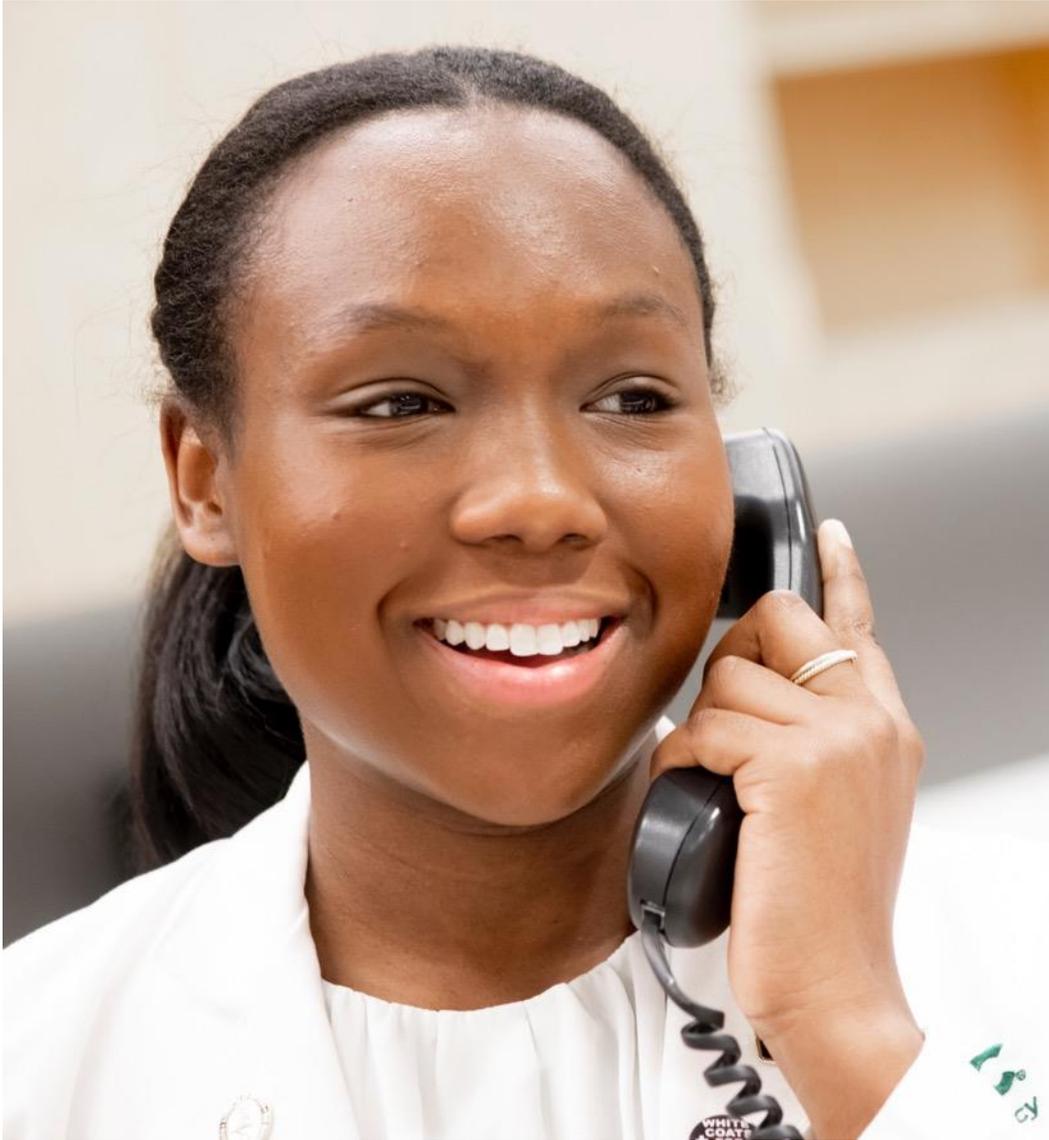
## SOCIAL MEDIA

- TV, radio, newspaper, etc.
- Flexibility in interview length
- The interview can remain archived on the social media page and shared by others
- Sound bites can be pulled for TV, newspaper, or digital stories

# Zoom interview

- Still the preference of many journalists working remotely or needing a quick interview
- Live or recorded for use on air and online
- Check that backgrounds are clean and presentable. When possible, backgrounds should represent UT Health Science Center.





## Phone or email interview

Often the preference of newspaper reporters.

- Your written email responses will be used as quotes. Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) can assist before responses are sent.
- Phone interviews can be recorded. Office of C&M will set up phone interviews and provide second set of ears on the call
- Interview length depends on complexity of the issue and the reporter's deadline

# Preparing for the interview



# Communicate your request

- Faculty staff, and students should alert Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) or their college communicator if asked for a media interview
- Campus communicators should loop in OCM
- OCM will reach out to campus communicators when area-specific requests are received
- Consistent messages, no surprises

# Know who is interviewing you

OCM will assist in doing a quick pre-interview assessment to confirm:

- Interview format
- Goals and angles of the story
- Questions/topics ahead of time
- Who is interviewing you

**Be prepared to challenge the journalist if necessary**

- Say something if the storyline is inaccurate or misleading. OCM will assist with this process.





# Research the journalist

College communicators can research background information on the journalist.

- Watch, read their previous stories
- See if they've done a past story on similar topics and determine their beat
- Watch a full interview
- Look for their style, how they ask questions



## Prepare

- Translate your work, expertise, and research into everyday language
  - Long responses can get you off topic.
  - Concise points prevent your messages from being cut down by the journalist.
  - People reading newspaper and digital articles should be able to understand the information.



## Talking points

- Anticipate questions that will be asked
- Write down key message points, including general information about the field
- Infuse brand messages where appropriate (UT Health Science Center educates and trains the majority of the health care workforce of Tennessee and cares for citizens across the state). Vision: Healthy Tennesseans. Thriving Communities.
- Prepare to pivot back to your talking points
- Have a college/unit communicator review your talking points

**How to stay on message**



# How to stay on message

- Review talking points ahead of time
- OCM or college/unit communicator will ask the journalist what to expect before the interview starts
- Give short answers that are easy to understand
- Avoid pressure to fill silence. Finish a statement and stop talking
- Expect challenges

**How to pivot and return to key messages**



If you work in a sensitive area, you may be asked a difficult question. Bring the conversation back to your talking points.

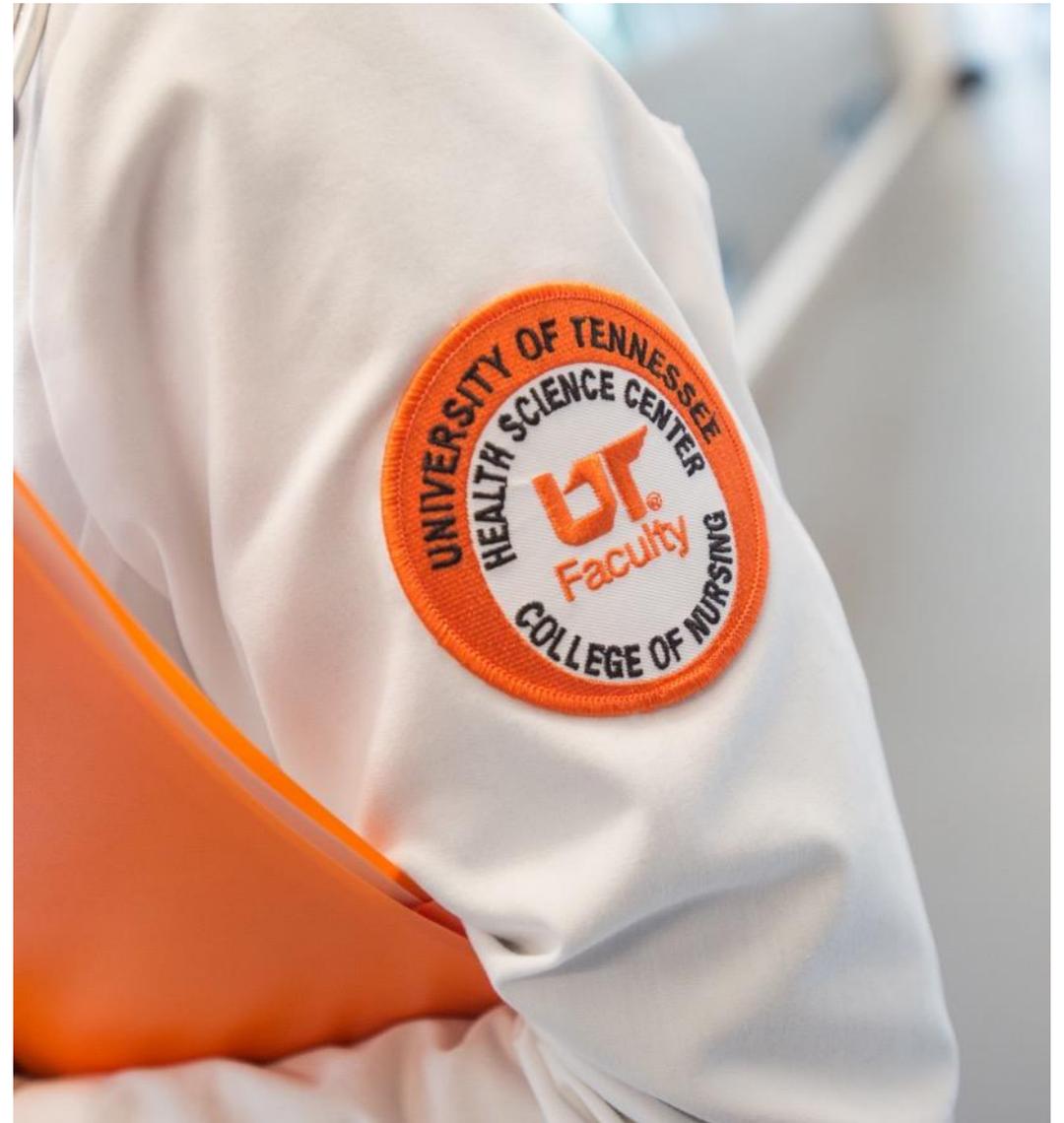
# Making the pivot

- What I know...
- Keep in mind that...
- If you take a closer look, you'll find...
- That said...
- What our research shows is...



# Wardrobe tips

- White coats should have appropriate UT Health Science Center logo
- Otherwise, dark, solid colors show best on TV
- Two pieces or collared jackets and shirts are better for attaching microphones
- Wear small, discreet jewelry
- If possible, a UT Health Science Center lapel pin is a nice touch





## Key takeaways

- Media interviews allow you to share your work with a broad audience and highlight your expertise
- Speak only in your area of expertise. Only the chancellor or a designee can speak on behalf of the university
- There are several interview formats
- Understand what the journalist wants when receiving an interview request
- Connect with OCM or college communicator when interview request is received
- Key messages should be clear and concise
- Use pivot language to stay in your comfort zone