Cockrell School Communications and Marketing

**Guide to Recording Video Messages from Home**

Updated: April 2020

**1. FIND A QUIET SPACE OR ROOM**Audio is extremely important — having good and clear audio will compensate for sub-par video quality. Do not use a headset microphone, as it brings static into the audio and makes your voice sound mechanical. A room with carpet will also help prevent bouncing or echoing.

**2. LIGHT YOUR FACE**

Find a room with big windows facing you. Don’t sit in front of a window or light (you will end up being backlit). Don’t have the brightness on your screen turned up too high because your face will be overexposed.

**3. FIND THE BEST CAMERA ANGLE**

Put your angle a little bit higher than or directly at eye level. You can put your laptop on stacked books if you’re not using a camera with a tripod. You want to avoid people looking up or down at you.

**4. BE COMFORTABLE AND RELAXED**

Find a space where you feel comfortable, either standing or sitting. You want to be relaxed while you are recording your speech on video. Speak naturally and try not to read scripts word-for-word in front of you.

**5. MAKE A TEST VIDEO**

Create a test video to see how you sound and look. Don’t hesitate to start over if there are distractions or any other interruptions (like computer alert sounds) that occur in the middle of your filmed message. Remember: nobody will ever see your practice runs!

**6. RECORD IN LANDSCAPE MODE**

We want these videos to be consistent and to fit within the ratio of a laptop or TV, so record your videos in landscape (horizontal) mode.

**7. USE ZOOM TO RECORD YOUR MESSAGE**

Use Zoom on your computer or tablet to record your video, or put your phone on a tripod. If that is not an option, you can also record and export video files through the PhotoBooth app on your iPhone or through through the horizontal camera function on your Android device. Make sure that the video is stable and in focus. Avoid holding your recording device in your hand in front of you.

**8. BACKGROUNDS, SETTINGS AND ACCESSORIES**

When clean, organized and properly staged, in-home office settings can be great, authentic backgrounds for video messages. Just be careful about clutter and how your surroundings appear (e.g., put up that bin of dirty laundry, fix the curtains, remove inappropriate posters, etc.). If that is not possible, consider using Cockrell School-themed virtual backgrounds available here: <https://utexas.box.com/v/cockrell-zoom>. Also, necklaces, earrings, scarves and glasses can be used as accessories and can speak volumes to your personality. They can also help layer in school spirit.

**9. DRESS IN APPROPRIATE ATTIRE**

For faculty, staff and alumni, please wear semi-formal or business attire. Burnt orange is encouraged! For more formal virtual videos (like Commencement) produced by department chairs and other leaders/speakers, please wear your academic regalia.