News and Documentary Video Shoots at UC Berkeley

When department heads, professors, researchers, or staff, get requests from television news or documentary crews to videotape them and their work, we ask that they let the Media Relations office know. In some cases, crews will need to sign a release form. When we're aware of a request, we can:

1. Prepare a location release form, as necessary *
2. Help the producers with logistics in setting up the interviews and visual elements, in order for UC Berkeley to get the most out of the story.
3. Offer campus footage (exteriors, classes, laboratories), which can improve the story.
4. Assess the producers’ level of professionalism and their intended use of the video.
5. Help professors and researchers prepare for interviews (i.e., give tips on the key messages they’d like to convey and presentation techniques, inquire about possible locations, visual elements).
6. Include the appearance in our “Berkeley in the News” feature and our monthly media report to the administration.
7. Follow up with producers regarding broadcast dates, record the broadcast, learn from it, and possibly include it in the TV highlights video we produce every few months.

*Location Release Forms:* For long-form news magazine shows and documentaries, we require producers to sign a location release, giving them permission to videotape the subject within a stated time-frame, at the stated location, to be used for the stated show. Production companies often ask us to sign their release form as well. As a policy, we decline those requests, explaining that we do not have the resources to legally vet and track separate contracts for the multitude of media requests that come to us each year.

Companies may also ask those being interviewed to sign a personal release form. Anyone going on-camera is free to do that. Our recommendation is that you ask that the release include language limiting the use of the video to the particular program for which it was recorded (i.e., "... to be used in an educational documentary tentatively titled..., and for no other purpose or use whatsoever.")

For daily news segments, like ABC's World News Tonight, NPR radio, or the local news stations’ stories, we do not require a release form, but we would like to be informed when they’ll be coming, for the reasons mentioned above.

Requests for shoots that are commercial in nature, (i.e. corporate promotional pieces, TV commercials, dramatic shows), should be directed to the campus Real Estate Services department, which requires different contracts and fees.