**TRIPOD**
Always use a tripod. Shaky video footage is unprofessional.
Even when audio recording, a small tripod will reduce the likelihood of noise feeding through the table and into your recorder’s mic.

**MICROPHONE**
Use a lavaliere microphone on your subject/interviewee if your camera or audio recorder has a microphone input. The closer your microphone to the subject, the better the audio.

**QUIET ENVIRONMENT**
Always videotape in a quiet location. Ensure there is absolutely no background noise.
If your recorder is resting on a table, avoid tapping, movement, or note-taking on the table.

**HEADPHONES**
Always wear headphones while recording. It is very important to monitor your audio throughout the session.
Select an audio or video recording device that has a headphone jack.

**WHITE BALANCE**
Follow your camera’s instructions to white balance. Usually, this means zooming in on a white card to lock in your camera’s settings for white. All other colors should be true if you white balance first.
*Video recording only

**AMBIENT SOUND**
Record 30 seconds of room noise. In other words, record for 30 seconds with no one speaking. Every room has its own ambient sound. This recorded room sound will be useful if you need to edit out audio problems and then fill in the blank audio spaces “dead spots”.

**FOCUS**
Use the manual focus setting on your camera. Zoom in on your subject and focus, this will lock your subject into focus. If your camera is set on autofocus, it tends to “search” for an object, making the focus fluctuate in and out.
*Video recording only

**TEST RECORDING**
Before you begin recording the interview, record 30 seconds or so, play it back and make sure the tape doesn’t have drop outs, or that the tape doesn’t malfunction.
If recording audio only, record a test file to make sure the device is working well.

**RULE OF THIRDS**
Use the rule of thirds in your composition. Aim for a medium shot.
*Video recording only

**ZOOMING/PANNING**
Avoid zooming and panning. Compose your shot and maintain it throughout the interview.
*Video recording only