

How to shoot a prize -wining film on your phone

Unlock your phone's potential to create professional looking video

Videography is quickly becoming a must-have skill for anyone looking to impress in social and professional settings. You don't need to be a 'creative' – all you need is a phone, say the experts.

Shooting video is no longer just for aspiring filmmakers, it's a form of communication that everyone should explore. It can be used to impress employers and friends alike. You may even be given an assignment in the form of a short film. Getting started is easy once you know the basics.

Build your story

Dr Bruce Isaacs, a Senior Lecturer in Film Studies in the FASS Department of Art History says authenticity and clarity are key. "You need to be crystal clear about the core message and the narrative needs to be quite punchy, so that you can engage people right away."

"The best stories are the ones that reflect the writers or directors own experiences and perspectives," he says.

Dr Isaacs says the University's new Who is Sydney? film competition is a great opportunity for students to have a go at videography at the same time as sharing a unique experience. Dr Bruce Isaacs

"Creating a film will be an amazing way to document students' own involvement at Sydney, and to explore how you are contributing to student life.

"Having diversity of cultural background within the filmmaking team is fantastic, because it will challenge students to bring their different perspectives together in a coherent way."



Figure 1. Dr Bruce Isaacs

Top 5 tips to nail the shot on your phone

While fancy expensive cameras can work wonders for the professionals, videographer Trixie Young says the camera on a smartphone will do a stellar job too if you know what you're doing. Here are her five key lessons.

1. Shoot in well-lit locations

If your background is super bright and your subject isn't, this doesn't look great. Get in the habit of moving around until your subject is brighter than the background. If you're filming indoors during the day, you can position the subject facing a window, so the light hits their face. If you're shooting at night, go for places that are well lit, so your audience will be able to see what you're trying to show them.

2. Sound is key

Bad audio will ruin your video more than bad footage, so consider investing in or borrowing a mic that can be used with a mobile phone. Basic mics that plug into your phone are cheap and readily available. If you can't hear what your subject is saying, or the audio is bad quality, it can be off-putting and spoil your whole video. Recording interviews in quiet locations is ideal if you can't get your hands on a mobile phone mic.

3. Ready and steady

Do whatever you can to stabilise your phone so you get nice, smooth footage. There's nothing worse than watching shaky material! (Unless you're going for a Blair Witch style video.) There are phone holders, tripods and gimbals designed for shooting mobile, but you can also keep it simple and just prop your phone up against something to keep it still. If you need some movement and are going handheld, position your elbows close to your body for some extra stability.

4. Capture lots of b-roll

Videos are made up of lots of smaller video clips that illustrate your story. The more b-roll footage you have to tell your story, the more effectively you'll get your story across. You could do things like shoot your subject from up close and further away, or ask your subject to repeat an action (like high fiving someone) a few times so you can capture it from a variety of angles.

5. Add some flair (if it suits)

Don't forget your mobile phone has lots of cool video recording features like timelapse, hyperlapse, slow motion and so on, so consider injecting some different styles into your video for some extra interest. Register for a workshop at ThinkSpace to learn how to edit your video with Premiere Pro.