

# Tips for audio podcasts

Audio podcasts can be a useful addition to the resources with which you teach. Students can engage with them even if there is no screen available (e.g. on the way to the University).

**SHORT:** Keep them short (around 10- 15 minutes at most) and conversational



and use them to link your material to recent events in the news or in the research or policy literature.

**INTERVIEW:** You can interview guests by Skype to put in your podcasts (for example other academics who research in the areas you are teaching). The interview format works particularly well with podcasts. There are many good examples

of this in popular podcasts: listen for example to “Reasons to be Cheerful” a podcast series by Ed Miliband and Geoff Lloyd.

**SOUND:** Sound quality is paramount. A good microphone is essential but you can achieve pretty good sound quality with a smartphone (e.g. iPhone with a cheap lavalier microphone and the “Sound Recorder” app). Don’t rely on the internal microphone of either your phone or computer as the sound quality will be very poor. See the “webinar” tips sheet for a recommendation of a USB microphone that you can use with your computer. This is the easiest set up.

You should always do some post-editing after the recording to:

1. Cut out long pauses or stutters.
2. Improve the sound quality and raise the gain to around -10 or -6 decibels. These can be achieved in the free Audacity software or in (the expensive) Adobe Audition which is part of the Adobe Creative Cloud. You should become familiar with noise reduction, compression and normalisation for the best output.

**MUSIC:** Interspersing your podcast with relevant music clips can help to keep students’ attention. Listen to this podcast on inequality for an example:

[www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b05102t3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b05102t3)

Author: Alvin Birdi, University of Bristol