Media outreach can be intimidating for scientists. Here are some tips to navigate interviews with journalists.

• After the press release is issued, be available for interviews for about one week.

• Return journalists’ calls and e-mails following the press release promptly. Reporters often face extremely tight deadlines.

• Prepare a few key points.

• Be conversational — don’t be afraid to show a human side and tell anecdotes.

• Assume that everything you say can be published.

• Most journalists will not send you a draft of the article to look over. However, researchers can offer to answer fact-checking questions.

• If an article contains an error or sensationalizes the findings, ask for a correction, write a letter to the editor, or respond on social media and tag the journalist.

This media guide originally appeared on Nature News in the article “How to work with your institution’s press office to maximize the reach of your work” (click to read the full text)

Need more help or advise? Reach out to: Maarten Muns, Science Communication Adviser Leiden University (m.a.muns@bb.leidenuniv.nl) or 071 527 32 82