



SCREENHOUSE

# Media Media Skills For Skills For Scientists Scientists

A one-day course to help scientists:

*Communicate their work simply and effectively*

*Understand what the media wants*

*Avoid career-damaging mistakes*

**SCREENHOUSE TRAINING  
FOR PROFESSIONALS, BY PROFESSIONALS**

## INTRODUCTION

The media have never been more interested in scientists and their work – from high profile science documentaries, to TV programmes that name and shame; from considered articles in broadsheet newspapers that try to explain the science clearly, to broadcast news reporters who want you to sum up ten years of research in less than thirty seconds.

Many research grants now require recipients to communicate their research to the public.

But can you explain your work in one minute, without using any technical terms?

Could you spot the reporter's "trick" question in an interview – and answer it well?

Do you know how to avoid scaring the public with a throwaway remark?

This one-day course will prepare you to deal with the media with confidence and skill – from writing your own press release, to answering live questions on the news, to presenting your work in a full length feature documentary.

Using training exercises, role-plays, and real-life examples, delivered by award winning science TV professionals, this course will equip you with a range of techniques to use when interacting with the media.

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**TIMETABLE**

0900-0915	<p><b>Coffee &amp; Introduction</b>  <i>Who we are</i>  <i>What this course will help you to do</i></p>
0915-1000	<p><b>What Makes A Good Story</b>  <i>Who are you talking to?</i>  <i>Why is anyone interested?</i>  <i>How to tell the story</i>  <i>The Good, The Bad And The Bearded</i></p> <p><i>Science vs the media: understanding why the media's agenda is not the same as yours. The common traps scientists fall into.</i></p>
1000-1100	<p><b>Telling The Story Simply</b>  <i>How to explain scientific concepts to the public.</i>  <i>Good and bad examples</i>  <i>Interactive exercise – junking the jargon</i></p>
1100-1300	<p><b>You And The Media</b>  <i>Why will the media approach you?</i>  <i>Who is approaching you?</i>  <i>Print journalism</i>  <i>Radio and TV</i>  <i>TV Process: understand and survive</i></p> <p><i>It's one thing to be able to tell your story simply; it's quite another to appear in the newspaper, on radio or TV. This section explains the differences.</i></p>

SCREENHOUSE MEDIA SKILLS FOR SCIENTISTS

1300-1400	<b>LUNCH and an informal chat to the tutors.</b>  <i>Prep for interviews</i>
1400-1530	<b>Doing It For Real</b>  <i>Practice your skills on camera</i> <i>Straight Interview</i> <i>Show and tell interview: you in the lab</i> <i>Science interview with demo</i>
1530-1615	<b>Tricky Questions:</b>  <i>What to do if your research is under attack..</i> <i>How to deflect tricky questions</i> <i>Should you refuse to appear?</i> <i>Should you go 'off the record'?</i>
1615-1715	<b>Getting It Out There</b>  <i>How to write a press release</i> <i>What print and broadcast journalists want.</i> <i>Exercise: Write Your Own Press Release</i>
1715-1730	<b>Q+A</b>

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The ultimate aim of the course is to improve the public's understanding of science, by equipping scientists to communicate better with the media.

The course objectives are that each delegate will leave with:

- 1) An enhanced understanding of how communicating with the public, through the media is different from communicating to fellow scientists.
- 2) Knowledge of the processes involved in creating a print article and a broadcast programme, to give more confidence in dealing with the media and the ability to maximise positive coverage.
- 3) The ability to tell a science story themselves, in a way that will grip a non-scientist.
- 4) An improved ability to write press releases and to take part in broadcasts, both radio and TV.
- 5) Preparing to answer difficult questions from journalists.

## THE TUTORS

Media Skills For Scientists is run by Screenhouse Training, part of Screenhouse Productions. Screenhouse is a multi award-winning producer of science TV programmes, including *Stardate*, the series covering live space events for the BBC, and *Local Heroes* in which Adam Hart-Davis told the stories of science pioneers.

The course tutors are Paul Bader and Patrick Titley:

**Paul Bader:** Creative Director of Screenhouse. Paul started his career in Genetics research at the University of Edinburgh, before joining Yorkshire Television as a science producer. He set up Screenhouse 15 years ago, and since then has made many successful programmes for channels all round the world. He won the prestigious Presidents Award for Science Communication. He's also the author of several popular science books.

**Patrick Titley:** Science Producer/Director. Patrick is a maths graduate and a trained teacher; and has made many science programmes. Patrick has won several awards for his work, including a BAFTA. And he filmed the most watched experiment in the history of TV – Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher doing kitchen chemistry at Number Ten...