AZUSA PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY

GENERAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR

Azusa Pacific University Video Productions

Purpose of the Toolkit

These general standards and guidelines are intended to encourage the freedom of your visual storytelling while helping you remain aligned with the spirit and media standards of Azusa Pacific University.

By creating video content for the APU community and external audiences, you help promote and reflect the university through visual storytelling. Please keep in mind that the video you create not only represents your area, but also APU, and it should reflect the mission and brand accordingly.

Before You Begin

Contact the Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement

Contact the Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement (SCE) via Google form at least two weeks prior to the start of your production, or as soon as the need for a video arises. It's helpful to our office's strategic communication efforts to be apprised of communication, marketing, and promotion efforts across campus.

Students hired in an official capacity to produce external-facing videos that promote an Azusa Pacific University school, program, department, or service are required to connect with SCE prior to production.

APU Brand Elements

Before production, consider the story or idea through the lens of the APU brand elements. Please consider the following questions for all productions:

• Is it Christ-centered?
• Does it point to comprehensive, relevant scholarship?
• Does it point to meaningful access to transformational education?
• Does it welcome others and point to APU's generous community?
• Does it point to selfless service?

The spirit of these questions is integral to influencing everything produced, though we understand that not every project will allow all of these elements to be expressed simultaneously.

Pre-Production

Pre-production is an essential part of the filmmaking process. About 70 percent of filmmaking centers on planning and shaping your story. Only about 30 percent centers on capturing the images and editing the final work. Given this context, please ask the following questions during pre-production:

• Will the production be true, meaningful, and distinct to who APU is as a university?
• Who is the audience that you hope to reach?
  - Is the content relevant to their experience, and does it communicate appropriate information in a meaningful way to that audience?

Production

Scale

Video recorded with a mobile device is acceptable for sharing on social media in many instances. However, some video projects, especially those used for institutional marketing, communication, and fundraising, require the use of a professional videographer. Please contact SCE if you're unsure which to use or for a list of recommended production companies and individual freelancers.

Length

Anything from 15 seconds to 3 minutes is an optimal length for a general-purpose video meant to work across a variety of platforms. Be sure to communicate your key messages early on, and consider both the platform and audience who will be engaging with the content.

Aspect Ratio

Aspect ratio describes how wide and tall your video is. The most common aspect ratio for videos shot horizontally is 16:9, and the most common for videos shot vertically is 9:16. For the majority of the content that will be utilized across a variety of platforms and environments, we recommend a horizontal, 16:9 format.

Opportunities for creating and sharing vertically oriented videos have greatly increased. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and other mobile-centric media are great places to leverage this type of content. However, please consider all possible use cases for your film before committing to producing it vertically.

View social media platform-specific video specs.

Post-Production

Graphic and Logo Usage

Graphic and logo standards reinforce our identity and represent our visual branding elements. Utilize the graphics and design guidelines included in this toolkit.

Video Thumbnail

Creating a custom thumbnail and uploading it is almost always preferable to allowing the platform site to select one for you. The thumbnail should give your viewers a good understanding of what to expect from the video and introduce the video in an aesthetically pleasing way.

Music and Footage/Image Licensing, Consent for Use

Music Licensing

If music is used, a use license must be acquired. Licenses may be purchased from a variety of sources that offer licenses for streaming use in perpetuity for a nonprofit 501(C)(3).

Paid music licensing services (not an exhaustive list):
- Musicbed
- Artlist
- Soundstripe
- Epidemic Sound

Free music licensing services (not an exhaustive list):
- YouTube
- SoundCloud
- Free Music Archive

Footage/Image Licensing

The use of any video footage or still images that were not created by you should also be covered by some form of permission by the original rights owner. Please secure these rights prior to the publishing of any video content.

Paid footage and image licensing services (not an exhaustive list):
- Filmsupply
- Artgrid
- Dissolve
- Storyblocks
- Pond5

Free footage and image licensing services (not an exhaustive list):
- Pexels
- Unsplash
- Pixabay
- Videeezy

Consent for Use

You will also need consent-for-use forms (also known as release forms) signed by all participants seen or heard in your film. This includes APU students, staff, faculty, and alumni. See the audio/video/photo release forms included in this toolkit.

Video Accessibility

Making your video accessible to all audiences is an important part of the content creation process. This includes:
• Using colors thoughtfully with the appropriate contrast. Use this tool to ensure the appropriate contrast.
• Making sure text and titling are readable
• Avoiding flashing content
• Choosing a current video format and accessible video player
• Adding closed captions to your video
  - While many platforms and software can automatically generate captions for a video, we recommend using a professional service like Rev to create captions that meet the most current accessibility standards

Delivery and Hosting

Compressing for the Web

Compressing video reduces its file size. Generally speaking, smaller files upload faster and load quicker when played back. When exporting for a platform such as YouTube, we recommend using the following video compression:

HD Delivery:
• H.264
• 24 fps (23.976)
• bitrate 10,000-20,000 kbit/s
• resolution 1080p HD
• aspect ratio 1920 x 1080 px (16:9) or 1080 x 1920 (9:16)

4K/UHD Delivery:
• H.264
• 24 fps (23.976)
• bitrate 35,000-55,000 kbit/s
• resolution 2160p
• aspect ratio 4096 x 2160 px (4K) or 3840 x 2160 px (UHD)

Hosting Your Video

Several options are available for hosting a video file. When hosting videos for an external audience, please contact SCE to determine the best platform or channel.

For hosting of videos for internal audiences, we recommend uploading the video to Google Drive or the YouTube channel of your specific school or department. In the visibility settings, set the video to "Unlisted."

The official APU YouTube channel is often not the best solution for general video hosting. It is a strategic communication, marketing, and promotional channel maintained by SCE, and is used to tell our institutional story, help recruit and retain students, and engage with our faculty, staff, alumni, and donors.

SCE reserves the right to request edits or decline hosting your video on the official APU YouTube channel.

Contact

If you have any filming questions not addressed in this toolkit, contact SCE by email at stratcomm@apu.edu and someone will assist you.

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Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement