

Tips for recording meetings and interviews to aid successful transcription.

The Room

- Quiet room with no noisy background – i.e. traffic, music, people shouting. If it is possible, close the window.
- If there is a phone in the room, either switch to silent or unplug. This also goes for mobiles!
- The room should not be too large – i.e. recording one person in a church would be difficult.
- Cups, saucers and teaspoons should be removed from wobbling tables.
- Stop any table kicking, paper rustling, jingling coins in pocket, clicking on and off of a pen, etc
- If you have a microphone or lapel microphone, please use it.
- Try not to allow people to speak at the same time.
- Test the recording with your interviewee; ask them to speak into the microphone – what they had for breakfast or lunch, rather than just 1-2-3, LISTEN BACK to it, and make appropriate adjustments to improve levels etc.
- Make sure your recording levels are set quite high (check there is no 'boom' or distortion - your transcriptionist will only have a certain additional amount of volume control to play with).
- Attendees should be encouraged to keep their voice levels steady, and if they turn away from the microphone at any time, ask them not to speak while doing so. If they do, you will need to ask them to repeat what they've said into the microphone.

Recording equipment

Tapes - Check with your transcriptionist if there are any types of tapes she cannot use e.g. mini, micro or standard. If you think the quality of the tape is eroding through constant use, replace them with new. If using battery operated equipment, ensure the batteries are new – but preferably use mains powered equipment where possible.

Digital - There are lots of different systems with varying degrees of compatibility, so check before starting work that your transcriptionists will be able to transcribe from your system and remember to check the remaining battery time before you start.

General

A good rule of thumb is to ALWAYS CHECK FIRST with your transcriptionist before starting the work, to ensure that they can carry out the work and in case they have any last minute tips / advice for you. If they do, please heed it – they will have given you that information for a very good reason – in order to ensure that they give you the best possible results from your recording.