

Tips for Filming UF SURF-REU YouTube Videos

Why a YouTube video?

- Culmination of your summer research project
- Public track record/proof of SURF-REU participation
- Resume citation
- Excellent addition to graduate school applications
- Valuable for future internships and job offers

Requirements

- Content must be about your summer research project and/or experience. A mix of both is ideal!
- 2 – 4 minutes in length
- Self-filmed, with editing if possible
- Working in pairs is allowed if you have similar projects, but everyone must submit their own video
- Faculty advisor must submit the Faculty Consent Form AND then view and approve the video
- Upload final video (with your full name in the title) to 2026 SURF-REU Dropbox by **July 27, 2026**

Video Basics

- Who are you? (name, institution, major, year in school/graduation timeframe)
- Program (University of Florida SURF-REU, College, Department)
- Project (title, research, etc.)
- Who are you working with? (faculty mentor, Ph.D./postdoc mentor, lab mates, team members)
- Future plans (graduate school, research interest, future career)

What to Do if Your Research Content Cannot be Posted Online

- Film a general video with project info that does not disclose embargoed results/ideas
- Give impressions of your summer research experience / working with graduate students
- Talk about future research topics/projects and future plans (graduate school, career)

Before Filming Your YouTube Video:

- Shooting your video requires planning and effort. Start thinking about your content **EARLY**.

- While a decent video can be done without editing, it will be more compelling if visuals (video clips, images, reels, etc.) are included (see editing resources below)
- If you are using the camera's built-in mic, make sure the camera is close to you. Do a test and play the video back to make sure that the speaker can be easily heard and understood.
- Make sure the surroundings are not too noisy.
- Don't shoot into the light (i.e., don't stand in front of a window while filming).
- Consider using a tripod to make sure the camera is steady.
- Make your story interesting – both in what you say and what you show.
- Take full advantage of being outdoors or in a research setting to demonstrate your project.

Sample Outline (Feel free to deviate and be creative)

- *Start with a bang* (the most interesting, attention-getting aspect of your project). It doesn't need to be incredibly dramatic, just needs to capture attention
- *Explain your project.* To keep it short and interesting, think of it as if you were giving an elevator pitch. A 3-minute video is usually easy to watch. An 8-minute video is usually too long.
- *Think about explaining why your project matters* (why should people care? What problem does it address? What did you learn from the experience?).

Equipment

Most personal smartphone cameras/devices are capable of shooting in high quality (720 resolution +). Feel free to use your own laptop, smartphone, tablet, Go Pro, etc.

Editing

A stronger video is possible if you have the ability to edit. Editing takes time, so plan for that in advance. Editing allows you to control the pacing, show images while hearing voice-over, take out mistakes, shoot out of order, etc.

There are various video editing software available online, depending on your skill level. Feel free to use a combination of short videos, clips, and photos

- iMovie (beginner): <https://www.apple.com/imovie/>
- Adobe Spark Video (beginner): <https://spark.adobe.com/about/video>
- Adobe Premier Pro/Final Cut Pro (intermediate):
<http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere/html>

UF also provides students free access to Lynda.com if you need video tutorials on any of the video editing software. You will need to log in via your UF GatorLink account at <https://training.it.ufl.edu/>.

Do not use copyrighted material, such as music, in your video.