



Department of
**International
Development**



LSE ID Podcast Guidelines

[The LSE ID blog](#) is a space for public discussion of issues, research, experiences and free-form thinking related to international development. As well as publishing articles, the ID blog publishes [podcasts](#) created by staff, students and alumni from the Department of International Development. [Our podcasts explore a diverse range of topics related to International Development](#) and are streamed on all major platforms, including [Spotify](#), Apple and [Amazon](#).

If you are interested in creating a podcast for the ID blog, please contact Maya Bullen m.r.bullen@lse.ac.uk to pitch your idea and read the podcasting guidelines below.

Subject

As with articles for the blog, podcasts could be about anything related to International Development – and it is a broad subject. At the Department of International Development, we are dedicated to understanding problems of poverty and late development within local communities, as well as national and international political and economic systems. We encourage an interdisciplinary approach to postgraduate teaching and research, and this is reflected in the diversity of the blog's articles and podcasts to date.

The most popular and effective podcast format is **a discussion** between a number of people, whether a discursive series covering particular issues in Development or an interview with someone about their work, research or personal experience. You might also want to have a discussion with someone about an event you've attended, a book or article you've read or a shared experience relating to the field of International Development.

A **column-style podcast by one author** can also be powerful and effective if you want to dig into your expertise or insight into a particular issue, area of research or topic in the news. Podcasts with only one speaker are best kept short and to-the-point.

It's crucial to **research your topic and plan each episode thoroughly**. [Take a look at these 'Podcasting 101' slides](#) from the Eden Centre which give advice on planning and recording your podcast.

Research ethics and consent

Ethics and consent are important issues to consider, particularly if you're planning on interviewing people who may be in a vulnerable position or who may have had traumatic experiences (e.g., refugees or asylum seekers). The key is that you:

1. Inform guests (orally or in writing) where the podcast will be published and shared: **publicly under the LSE ID podcast channel across multiple streaming platforms** including Spotify, Apple and Google.
2. If you'll be discussing sensitive subjects, gain informed consent in advance (oral or written) on the topics you will discuss for the podcast.

If in doubt, ask your mentor or a member of ID staff familiar with your topic. You can also [view these slides on podcast research ethics and consent](#) for more information.

Tone

There are different approaches in tone, but podcasts should use an **accessible, friendly and clear tone** rather than using heavily academic or esoteric language. The style should be conversational to **invite the listener in and express ideas in simple terms** – as well as talking to your co-host, imagine your listener is a friend who is not from an international development background, and make your discussion accessible to them.

Different podcasts will appeal to different audiences depending on the subject matter and approach – remember to **consider who your target audience** is and **keep them in mind** in the content you produce.

Structure

There is no fixed length for a podcast as this will depend on your subject matter, approach and how many guests are featuring – **between 20-45 minutes is the suggested range**, but you can [take a look at this article](#) for tips on deciding on show length.

Your podcast should have defined sections to make it easy to follow:

1. A **theme tune** if you're using one. There are websites that provide royalty-free music that is free for use, including [unminus](#), [bensound](#), [Incompetech](#), [YouTube's royalty free channel](#), [909 music on Soundcloud](#), [Pixabay](#), and others. Remember that many of these music libraries will still require attribution, so take a look at the usage rights. Don't use any music that is protected by copyright.
2. A brief **intro** where you introduce yourself / your cohost, the subjects and themes of the podcast (*e.g. A podcast on contemporary global health crises*). A good intro sets expectations and piques the interest of the listener. You should also mention any **social media/website links, calls to action** (listen to past episodes, when podcasts are released, get in touch with us on Twitter etc) in your intro. If you're doing a series, this should be the same each week.
3. Explain the **focus of the particular episode** (*e.g. This episode focuses on sexual and reproductive health in southeast Asia*)
4. It might help to break your episode into **segments**, (*e.g. a brief overview of a topic followed by an interview with an expert.*) and you can use transition music (again, public domain only) between segments if you like

5. An **outro** where you sign off and share any social media/website links, calls to action (listen to past episodes, tune in next week, get in touch with us on Twitter etc) and sign off, followed by your theme tune if you have one.

Recording your podcast

You can record your podcast in a number of ways, but the easiest way if you're new to podcasting is over Zoom:

- If you schedule a Zoom meeting with a guest, you can use **Zoom's record function**, which creates an audio-only (as well as a video) recording from your meeting. [Find a good summary of how to record a podcast interview using Zoom here.](#)
- You can read [this blog which provides technical advice for getting the best possible audio quality when recording on Zoom](#)
- **Wear headphones** when recording if you can, as it will reduce the audio feedback picked up by the microphone. A headset with a built-in mic is even better
- You can select an **option** on Zoom **to record multiple separate audio tracks** which can make for a higher-quality end-product – see the blogs linked in the bullet points above. Additional software like [Zencastr](#) can improve audio quality and has free options and it can be used through Zoom
- If you'd like to make the audio quality as professional as possible, you could consider investing in a microphone that can be connected to your computer, or borrowing microphones/other audio equipment from LSE's Audio-Visual team – contact them at students can borrow this from the Audio-Visual team: imt.av.support@lse.ac.uk
- Make sure to **record in a quiet room, speak clearly and avoid heavy breathing or rustling into your mic** – this will mean less editing/cleaning up to do with your recording later
- Try to make sure that the **sound quality and volume is even across all voices and music** – variation in volume and quality for different voices in a podcast is distracting for the listener
- It's also an option to record on your phone - the voice recorder app on smartphones is usually good. It can work well to record with your guest over Zoom, but also record your own vocal tracks separately (do a countdown with your guest so it's easier to sync them later) for higher audio quality, then layer these tracks together afterwards on your editing software
- Take a look at this [useful list of tips for your podcasting set-up](#) to further improve the quality of your audio.

Editing your podcast

- You will likely need some **basic audio editing software** to edit together your podcast, such as [Audacity](#), [Garageband](#), [Reaper](#), [Logic Pro](#) and [Adobe Audition](#).
- These may seem complicated to use, but YouTube tutorials will help you to grasp the basics needed for podcast editing very quickly.

- The Eden Centre can provide technical support for any tech-related issues you have, including audio recording and editing – [find their guide for using Audacity here](#), and contact Chris Doughty, c.g.doughty@lse.ac.uk if you need tailored support.
- As well as incorporating different sections together (e.g., layering your voice tracks, adding your intro and outro), these software programmes have tools to adjust volume, reduce background noise and otherwise improve audio quality.
- If you're struggling to download or use software, get in touch with us and we can give you pointers and help you to edit your podcast.

Sending us your podcast

- You can send your podcast as an **mp3/mp4 or WAV file** to m.r.bullen@lse.ac.uk – if you need to use an alternative format, please email to check this first.
- It will likely be a large file - if it's too large to attach to an email, send it through <https://filedrop.lse.ac.uk/>
- Alternatively [WeTransfer](#) works well, although this often ends up in a junk folder, so **if using WeTransfer**, please send a regular email to flag this.
- **Please also send a short description of the series and a description of the content of each episode**, short **bios** about hosts and guests, as well as **three key words** that can be used to tag the podcast - this is needed for searchability on streaming services.

If you have any questions, please contact Maya Bullen at m.r.bullen@lse.ac.uk