Interview Protocol Template

DESN2003: Research for Innovation

Interview Protocol Template — Blank Template

Your Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Research Question: _____

Pre-Interview Checklist

Item	Done?
Research question clearly defined	[ ]
Interview type chosen: [ ] Structured [ ] Semi-structured [ ] Unstructured	
Recording device tested	[ ]
Consent form prepared	[ ]
Quiet location confirmed	[ ]
Backup note-taking ready	[ ]

Part 1: Opening Script (2-3 min)

Read this verbatim to ensure consistency:

> "Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is _____ and I'm conducting research on _____.
>
> This interview will take approximately _____ minutes. I'd like to record our conversation so I can focus on listening rather than note-taking. The recording will only be used for research purposes and your identity will remain confidential.
>
> Your participation is completely voluntary. You can skip any question or stop the interview at any time.
>
> Do you have any questions before we begin? Do I have your permission to record?"

Consent given? [ ] Yes (verbal) [ ] Yes (written) [ ] No — do not proceed

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Part 2: Warm-Up Questions (3-5 min)

Easy, non-threatening questions to build rapport:

1. _____
2. _____

Part 3: Core Questions (20-30 min)

Your main research questions with follow-up probes:

Question 1: _____

- Probe: "Can you tell me more about that?"
- Probe: "Can you give me a specific example?"
- Probe: _____

Question 2: _____

- Probe: "What do you mean by _____?"
- Probe: "How did that make you feel?"
- Probe: _____

Question 3: _____

- Probe: "Why do you think that is?"
- Probe: "What happened next?"
- Probe: _____

Question 4: _____

- Probe: _____
- Probe: _____

Question 5: _____

- Probe: _____
- Probe: _____

Part 4: Closing (2-3 min)

"We're coming to the end of our time. Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't covered?"

Listen and note any additional points: _____

"Thank you so much for your time. Your insights are really valuable for this research. If you have any questions later, feel free to contact me at _____."

Post-Interview Checklist

Item	Done?
Recording saved and backed up	[ ]
Field notes written within 24 hours	[ ]
Key quotes flagged	[ ]
Surprising findings noted	[ ]
Follow-up questions for next interview identified	[ ]

Anti-Pattern Checklist — Did You Avoid These?

Mistake	Avoided?
Leading questions ("Don't you think…?")	[ ]
Double-barreled questions (two questions in one)	[ ]
Yes/No questions without follow-up	[ ]
Interrupting the participant	[ ]
Showing approval/disapproval of answers	[ ]
Asking hypotheticals ("Would you use…?")	[ ]

Interview Protocol Template — Worked Example

Your Name: Alex Chen **Date:** Week 5

Research Question: What is the relationship between Instagram like-checking frequency and anxiety, and what motivations drive this behavior?

Pre-Interview Checklist

Item	Done?
Research question clearly defined	[x]
Interview type chosen: [ ] Structured [x] Semi-structured [ ] Unstructured	
Recording device tested	[x]
Consent form prepared	[x]
Quiet location confirmed	[x]
Backup note-taking ready	[x]

Part 1: Opening Script (2-3 min)

"Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is **Alex** and I'm conducting research on **how HKU students experience Instagram, particularly around engagement metrics like likes**.

This interview will take approximately **30** minutes. I'd like to record our conversation so I can focus on listening rather than note-taking. The recording will only be used for research purposes and your identity will remain confidential — I'll use a pseudonym in any write-up.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can skip any question or stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Do I have your permission to record?"

Part 2: Warm-Up Questions (3-5 min)

1. **Can you tell me a bit about how you typically use Instagram?** (Frequency, what you do, who you follow)
2. **What do you enjoy most about using Instagram?**

Part 3: Core Questions (20-30 min)

Question 1: Walk me through what happens after you post something on Instagram.

- Probe: "Can you tell me more about that?"
- Probe: "How soon after posting do you usually check back?"
- Probe: "What are you looking for when you check?"

Question 2: Tell me about a time when a post got fewer likes than you expected.

- Probe: "What do you mean by 'fewer than expected'?"

- Probe: "How did that make you feel?"
- Probe: "What did you do after that?"

Question 3: How do you decide whether to keep a post up or delete it?

- Probe: "Why do you think likes matter in that decision?"
- Probe: "Has this changed over time?"
- Probe: "What would need to change for likes to matter less?"

Question 4: If Instagram hid like counts tomorrow, how would that affect your experience?

- Probe: "What would you miss?"
- Probe: "What might improve?"

Question 5: Is there anything about your Instagram experience that affects how you feel day-to-day?

- Probe: "Can you give me a specific example from the last week?"
- Probe: "How do you manage that?"

Part 4: Closing (2-3 min)

"We're coming to the end of our time. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience with Instagram and likes that we haven't covered?"

"Thank you so much for your time. Your insights are really valuable for this research. If you have any questions later, feel free to contact me at alex.chen@hku.hk."

Anti-Pattern Checklist — Did You Avoid These?

Mistake	Avoided?
Leading questions ("Don't you think…?")	[x] — Asked "How would that affect you?" not "Wouldn't that be better?"
Double-barreled questions (two questions in one)	[x] — Split questions about keeping/deleting posts
Yes/No questions without follow-up	[x] — All questions are open-ended
Interrupting the participant	[x] — Let them finish, then probe
Showing approval/disapproval of answers	[x] — Neutral responses only
Asking hypotheticals ("Would you use…?")	[x] — Asked about past behavior, not hypothetical future