

Student Fulbright Program

FINAL STAGES OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

CAMPUS INTERVIEW TIPS FOR A BETTER INTERVIEW NATIONAL SCREENING PROCESS LAST THOUGHTS

CAMPUS INTERVIEW

The purpose of the campus interview is to provide additional information about your candidacy to the National Screening Committee. The interviews are your only chance to articulate, in person, your reasons for wanting to study or conduct research abroad. Each Azusa Pacific University applicant will be interviewed individually for approximately 20 minutes by a panel (3-4 members) of the Azusa Pacific University Fulbright Screening Committee. Panelists may question students on contacts they have made overseas, academic preparation for the study, knowledge of the host country, and language training. The interview, in general, is the student's chance to talk about his/her project with a group of knowledgeable, interested Azusa Pacific University faculty.

Interview Information:

Interviews take place during the second and third weeks of October on campus.

Wear clothing in which you feel comfortable, but presentable. Formal attire is optional.

You will have an opportunity to sign-up for an interview time when you submit your application on the day of the campus deadline.

The panel's rating of your application is based on an evaluation of your complete application – essays, transcripts, letters of reference, language evaluation, and the campus interview. The Azusa Pacific University Fulbright Screening Committee will assess the content and feasibility of your proposal, your language preparation, your knowledge of the host country, etc., and then complete the Campus Committee Evaluation Form (Form 10 of the official application). The panel will rate your candidacy on a scale from “excellent” to “not recommended.” The campus interview is **not** a mechanism for disqualifying applicants, but it is a mechanism for rating the applicants. Your rating will not be disclosed to you at any time, nor will you be given feedback regarding the Campus Committee Evaluation form. This information will be kept confidential.

Please note: No one is eliminated from the competition at the campus level. Azusa Pacific University is asked by IIE to forward all applications submitted, regardless of the rating given by the campus committee.

Panel Makeup: Some committee members possess substantial experience working with Fulbright applications, and recognize the components of a good application. In addition, your application at the national level will not only be read by people specifically in your academic field, but by others who have knowledge of the country or area you wish to go.

Do not be concerned if your campus interview panel is made up of faculty and staff from outside your area of study. In fact, one of the key concepts of the Fulbright Program is to be able to articulate your proposal to a “lay” audience. Those applicants who can do this successfully, are often themselves, successful applicants.

Please be aware that the campus interview is meant to support, not decide the fate of your application. The application is meant to give the National Screening Committee as much information to work with as possible, and is thus very important. The campus interview will be your only interview through the IIE Fulbright process, except in a few cases (e.g., the performing arts).

AWAY FROM CAMPUS FALL SEMESTER? If you will be away from campus during fall semester, please notify the Fulbright Program advisor immediately. Most students who apply for the IIE Fulbright Scholarship at Azusa Pacific University have a campus interview. In some circumstances, when the applicant cannot be present for the interview, the individual's application will be “paper screened” by the Campus Screening Committee. In other words, the committee will read and discuss the application, and provide a rating based on the complete, written file and/or a telephone interview. If you have a legitimate reason for missing the campus interview (e.g., studying at Azusa Pacific University in Oxford), you will not be at a disadvantage. However, if you will be in the area and it is possible for you to interview, it is important to participate in the campus interview process.

TIPS FOR A BETTER INTERVIEW

- **Be yourself!** Do not forget, however, that you are being interviewed in a formal situation. Be relaxed and true to your personality while maintaining a professional demeanor. One scholarship winner said, “My feeling on interviews is that attitude is everything. It is important to project your vitality and energy – [no scholarship] committee wants to give its money to some blah who’s going to mope around all day.”
- **Dress code.** Do not dress in a manner which will make you feel uncomfortable, but do not dress too informally.
- **Theme.** Go into the interview with a general “theme” in mind. Try to make connections between your responses so that your overall interview has a cogency to it.

- **Do not worry about being nervous.** The interviewers want to challenge you, but they certainly will not be confrontational.
- **Language Ability:** IIE places great emphasis on the feasibility of the proposal when evaluating each application. For this reason, they stress the importance of foreign language skills if you are going to a country where the native language is not English. The interviewers may ask you questions in the language of your chosen country. Always reply in the language in which you are asked a question, even if it is to ask the committee member to repeat the question. The committee places less importance on fluency than your potential to communicate in the language.
- **Know something about the country to which you are applying.** Familiarize yourself with current events, politics, literature, cultural events, and what is going on in your field in that country. Some interviews will not go into these subjects in much depth, but some will.
- **Know something about what is going on in the U.S.** (especially issues relevant to what you study). Read a paper that reports on international news as well as national news.
- **Before you go into the interview, re-read your application (including your transcript).** Interviewers may ask you about any and all parts of your application, and you must be prepared to talk about any statement you have made. It is easy to forget a seemingly insignificant point you may have made, and embarrassing to draw a blank on your own writing. When you re-read the application, examine some of the ramifications of each sentence and how it might be interpreted by an outside reader. Try to read each sentence (or paragraph) and think of at least one possible question the interviewers might ask. Be sure you can completely and concisely answer all of your own questions. Consider having a friend read your essay and comment or question you on points he/she finds particularly interesting or unusual. Know what it is you wish to study and be prepared to discuss it. If you have written your essay well, you will be able to guide the interviewers to the questions you want to answer.
- **Body language is important!** Do not slouch. Eye contact is important. It is good to firmly clasp your hands in your lap, especially if they are shaking. Relax, and do not appear stiff.
- **Stand by your convictions,** but remember to acknowledge other people's viewpoints as well. Do not be dogmatic or defensive. Show you are able to hold a strong opinion while also understanding and valuing the merit of other viewpoints.
- **Do not be afraid to state your opinions and argue them.** The ability to support your opinions without becoming angry or defensive is positive. Some interviewers are curious to know how you will react in a situation where your beliefs are questioned. The same interviewer who presses you about your thoughts on a particular matter may agree with you completely. Be careful not to compromise to avoid confrontation (i.e.,

do not simply give the answer you think is expected). Be straightforward and stand by your convictions.

- **Channel your nervous energy into enthusiasm.** Be genuinely enthusiastic about the scholarship and the opportunities they can afford you. Be positive and do not hesitate to let the committee know you really want the scholarship.
- **Unsure of a question?** If you are unsure of what a question is meaning, you can do one of two things: take a definite line on what you thought the question was, or ask politely and briefly for clarification. Some applicants, when asked an especially difficult question, request clarification in order to gain time to think. Do not risk this tactic more than once in an interview, because you may appear unprepared.
- **Do not rush your answers,** or babble on about inconsequential matters as you search your mind for an answer. Consider each question and provide a thoughtful answer. Do not be verbose. If an interviewer wants more information, he/she will ask for it. Do not wait too long, however, to reply to questions, or you risk wasting your interview time on expectant silence.
- **Feel free to say “I don’t know.”** The interview should be approached as a conversation, not an oral exam. Never go into an interview worried about failing.
- **Humor is important.** Do not be too serious. Your interviewers will enjoy an amusing comment and it makes the interview situation much more human. Keep a sense of humor.
- **Tired panelists.** Remember that the panel will be interviewing a number of candidates. Make allowances for the possibility that the panel may be tired. Let the interviewer determine the interview pace. Treat all of the panelists’ questions with respect.
- **Know something about the origin and intent of the scholarships.**
- **How you enter and exit is important.** Smile at everyone when you come in, and leave time for a casual or humorous comment or two at the beginning. Let them set the pace. Thank them and make a polite exit when they indicate the interview is over, but do not rush out the door.
- **If you are extremely nervous,** conduct a mock interview with friends or faculty to prepare for the real interview. Mock interviewers should have read your proposal and ask you questions both about your work and yourself.
- **Do not try to analyze the interview afterwards** by wondering, “What if?” Many applicants dwell on less-than-articulate answers and pregnant pauses and do not realize that their interviews went quite well.

- **Again, be yourself!** It is a tip that bears repeating. Remember that the panel is looking forward to meeting you and will enjoy interviewing you.

NATIONAL SCREENING PROCESS

IIE Fulbright Scholarship National Deadline: October 21, 2006

After the campus interview, the Fulbright Program advisor will forward your entire application, including references and transcripts, and the Campus Committee Evaluation Form to IIE in New York by the national deadline.

Your application will first be reviewed by a nationally appointed committee in the United States. Except in a few cases (e.g., performing arts), you will not be asked for any further interviews. IIE will notify you directly in late January or early February whether or not you have passed national screenings. If you pass, your application will be sent to the supervising agency in the country to which you are applying, and the final decisions will be made.

You will receive final notification from a commission abroad, the U.S. Information Agency, or IIE beginning in April 2006. Students sometimes receive notification as late as June or July. There is no standard timeline by which country committees make their decisions.

Please contact the Fulbright Program advisor when you receive official notification, as this office is often not informed until a later date.

LAST THOUGHTS

- Make this scholarship application a priority and manage your time well. This process will not become overwhelming if you remain focused and organized.
- Details! Details! Details! Whether it is completing your application or following up on references, pay attention to the details. Make your application as neat, tidy, and easy to read as possible, or you may appear to lack seriousness of purpose.
- Submit everything on time. Supporting materials can be submitted late, but you should make every effort to have a completed application by the time of the campus deadline. Incomplete applications will reflect poorly on you at the campus and national levels.

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