

Interviewing Tips

You may experience one or two interviews as part of the process of applying for a prestigious scholarship. At campus endorsement interviews, you will meet staff, faculty, and an academic Dean or Provost who is responsible for endorsing your application. Depending on the scholarship, you may also interview with a panel of judges responsible for deciding who is funded.

You May Be Asked About:

- Your knowledge of the scholarship program, the guiding principles of the foundation or organization that offers the award, and in many cases, the person for whom the award is named (for example, Senator George J. Mitchell; President Harry S. Truman)
- The details of your proposal and its feasibility
- How your proposal relates to current trends or ongoing inquiry in your field
- Current events in your selected country, or the relationship between the US and your country (if going abroad)
- Past research, study abroad, and community service experiences that you've had
- Your academic, professional, and language skills preparation
- Your leadership experience
- Your strengths and weaknesses
- Your maturity and commitment

Before your interview, carefully re-read your proposal, the award agency website, recent publications in your field, and reputable news sources on current events. It is a good idea to practice with a “mock interview.” Have your friends, family, or SOP staff ask you questions and provide feedback on the content of your responses and your body language. It may be helpful to record your mock interview on video, so you can see for yourself how your posture, gestures, and expressions look to your interviewers.

Tips On Making Strong Responses To Questions:

- Organize your thoughts for a few seconds before speaking, and stick to your points.
- Elaborate by using a brief example, but don't ramble or introduce unrelated topics.
- Show enthusiasm and confidence, and avoid negativity.
- Don't know the answer to a question? Don't panic. Admit that you don't know the answer, but redirect the interviewer's attention to related knowledge that you do have.
- Expect to be gently challenged in your opinions, and be prepared to defend your proposal idea.
- Reveal your positive attitude by smiling and occasionally nodding.
- Make eye contact with all of the interviewers when responding to a question—not just the one who asked it.

General Interviewing Tips:

- Dress appropriately. Follow the UCI Career Center's [Dress for an Interview](#) handout.
- Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early for your interviews. Anticipate traffic or potential mishaps.
- Make a good impression with a firm handshake and a smile.
- Sit up straight and maintain eye contact with your interviewers.
- Don't fidget or cross your arms (defensive posture). Try to relax.
- Thank each of your interviewers when your interview concludes.

If you're applying to the Fulbright Fellowship, we recommend reading [Preparing for Your Fulbright Campus Committee Interview](#).