

# Tips for Interviews

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With a focus on scholarships and fellowships

# Types of interviews

- Depending on the specific fellowship the interview can take one of several formats depending on what information the committee wishes to assess
  - a. Technical interview
    - Goal: Assess technical proficiency and knowledge
  - b. Non-technical Q&A
    - Goal: Understand the candidate's background, motivations, and aspirations
  - c. Informal conversation
    - Goal: Gather a holistic understanding of the candidate (do they understand themselves well, what are their general interests, etc.)

# Types of interviews

- A candidate can prepare for each of these in a specific way
  - a. Technical interview
    - Study the material you will be interviewed on: typically either for your specific field (if the fellowship isn't field specific) **or** the scholarship/fellowship-specific field
  - b. Non-technical Q&A
    - These questions may take various forms but they are all in the same vein and seek information about your personal/professional background, meaningful experiences, future goals and aspirations.
  - c. Informal conversation
    - Hardest to prepare for
    - General tip: get comfortable speaking to someone you don't know very well about a variety of topics. Be genuine.

# So which category are PiE scholarship questions?

- a. Technical interview
- b. Non-technical Q&A**
- c. Informal conversation

# High level: What do we want to learn about you

- Where do you come from?
- What has shaped you?
- Where do you want to go?
- What motivates you?
- What do you want to do?
- What do you understand about yourself?
- What will you do with that knowledge?

# How to answer questions while providing depth?

- Interviewer questions are a starting point
  - Start by answering the surface level question, but then go beyond
  - Add depth and detail that gives more information about you, your experiences, your future aspirations, and how you plan to achieve those goals

# How to answer questions while providing depth?

- Some questions are more open ended / less simple (e.g., “describe a time when...”)
  - These are the most important to provide detail on
  - *Not doing so is a poor reflection of the interviewee*
- Interviews (similar to the application) is the time to *humble brag*
  - You want to show the interviewers that you are worth the investment

Note: all information provided by interviewee is a data point for the committee



Rule of thumb: if there's some piece of information that comes up organically, even if you are not sure about its relevance to the original question, ***include it in your answer***

# How to answer questions while providing depth?

- Example: "Who is/are your role model(s)?"
  - Basic answer: My parents
  - In depth answer: My parents immigrated to the United States in the early 90s without much more than some cash savings and a couple of suitcases of everyday essentials. They were well-established in their home country: college degrees, working middle class jobs, and stable living conditions. But, they saw the signs of social upheaval and economic collapse and wanted to ensure a more secure future for their children in the US. They worked hard: working multiple jobs with multiple shifts, taking night classes to get the accreditation they needed to do the jobs they did before moving. There was no question the sacrifices they needed to make to get established in their new country and to make sure I never wanted to for anything: personally, academically, financially, etc. They taught me the merits of hard work. Their sacrifices and gruelling work hours paved the path that has allowed me to get to where I am today. I will always be grateful for what they have done for me. As they get older, I hope that I may support them even a fraction of the support they provided me my entire life. At a broader level, I also know that my experiences are one of privilege; even within the population of immigrant families, my family's story is one of the more idealistic ones. I hope that I can do my part to ensure that all families (immigrant and otherwise) have equal access to opportunities whether that is through volunteering efforts or by voting for policies and elected representatives that reflect those ideals.

# A couple of generic interview resources

These resources are not PiE specific, but some of the points are good to keep in mind

<https://www.acc.org/Membership/Sections-and-Councils/Fellows-in-Training-Section/Section-Updates/2020/10/20/20/42/Tips-and-Tricks-For-Fellowship-Interviews>

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/common-scholarship-interview>

# Questions?

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