

National Fellowships Preparing for Interviews

Whether this is your first interview or your tenth, predicting what to expect while preparing for interviews can be difficult. Here are some tips to help ease the stress while you prepare for your interview!

1. **Expect more than one interviewer.** Be prepared to talk to a group or a panel of interviewers. Be ready to address multiple people, making eye contact with each of them while you speak.
2. **Dress appropriately.** Interviews are formal. For men it is standard to wear a jacket, or a suit and tie. For women, a dress, suit or skirt and blouse.
3. **Over Prepare.** Think about what you will say in advance to standard interview questions. These may include: Tell me about yourself? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Can you tell me about a time where you had to resolve a conflict? What is your most significant achievement? What has shaped you? What will you do next year if you don't get the fellowship? What do you like about your area of study?
4. **Know your application.** Re-read your application repeatedly, anything on the application is fair game, especially your personal statement and your proposed course of study/research plans.
5. **Keep up on current events.** Know about what is going on in the United States or around the world, as part of the interview might deal with current events. If you are interviewing for an international fellowship make sure to stay current on what is going on in your country of interest. Have an opinion. Be prepared to answer questions about how you feel about the current situations and what you plan to do to overcome them.
6. **Be aware of time constraints.** Provide short answers for less detailed questions. Leaving time for more detail on appropriate questions.
7. **Body language and calm speech.** Try and relax. Sit up straight. If you need something to do with your hands, put them together in your lap. Smile, this makes you look more relaxed even if you aren't. Make eye contact. Speak clearly and loudly enough that you will be heard. Use short sentences, to limit confusion. Speak slowly enough that you can be clearly understood. Avoid filler words "ah," "umm," "like." Pause, take a deep breath and then confidently continue with a fully formulated thought. Remember you made it this far for a reason.
8. **Be yourself.** Channel your nervous energy into excitement/passion for the Fellowship.
9. **Mock Interview.** Ask a professional who you trust to give you a mock interview to practice. That way you can feel more comfortable answering interview questions. Practice, don't over rehearse.
10. **Come Prepared with Questions.** Interviewers want to know that you took the time to look into their program and have a vested interest in it. Coming ready to ask them some questions to get more details shows that you are passionate about what you have applied for.