The Campus Committee

A. The Interview

IIE recommends that members of Campus Committees review the selection criteria listed on page 16 and check the appropriate country summaries on the website just before interviewing an applicant to familiarize themselves with the requirements for the country involved. The FPA should also remind the members of the Campus Committee that graduating seniors should be compared with their peers and not measured against more advanced students. In addition to the Foreign Language evaluation required as part of the application, the Campus Committee, or one member of it, should also test the language competence of students applying for study in countries where knowledge of a foreign language is required by conducting a portion of the interview in the language of the country, if possible.

The purpose of an interview is to supplement the factual data which is recorded in the application and in the supporting letters of reference, language evaluation and transcripts. It should help to determine whether an applicant is equipped to cope with living and other conditions in the host country and whether the applicant is adequately prepared to carry out the proposed project.

In most instances, an interview of 15 to 30 minutes will be adequate to give the committee a picture of the candidate as a person, as well as an academic. Some interviews may require slightly more time, some slightly less. The committee’s impression of each candidate should be recorded on the Campus Committee Evaluation Form which is included as part of each application. Comments as substantive and explicit as possible are most helpful. Since the items on the Evaluation Form are general in nature, some specific questions for guidance have been included on the following pages. FPA’s may wish to reproduce and distribute this section to their committee members before the interviewing session.

“The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy—the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something that we have failed to see.”

Senator Fulbright, The Price of Empire

B. Sample Questions for Campus Committees

Reviewing Applications for Study or Research

1. Academic or Professional Qualifications (especially in relation to proposed project)
   This can basically be evaluated from the paper application. However, the following queries may elicit additional information.
1) Is the candidate able to present a realistic statement of his or her professional aims?

**For Graduating Seniors**

2) Has the candidate investigated which foreign universities offer the best opportunities in the chosen field of study?

3) Has the candidate ascertained that the sources in which interest is expressed will be available during the coming academic year?

4) Has the candidate undertaken any work out-side regular courses in connection with the proposed project or field of study?

**For Advanced Graduate Students**

5) Is the candidate familiar with research in the area currently being conducted in the U.S. and abroad?

6) Does the candidate belong to any professional societies or organizations in the field?

7) Does the candidate regularly read or subscribe to any professional journals or other publications in the field?

8) Has the candidate presented any professional papers, or had any works published?

9) Has the candidate made any contacts in the chosen field overseas?

“*The graduating senior need not demonstrate a project as thoroughly developed as the graduate student, but should show some area in which he or she can acquire productive results other than learning the language and about people in another culture, rather a stock phrase.*

Former NSC member

2. Validity and Feasibility of the Proposed Project

1) Does the candidate need to go overseas to pursue the project, or could it be done equally well in this country?

2) Why has the particular host country been chosen?

3) Could the project be undertaken equally well in another country?

4) Can the project be completed in one academic year?

5) Would the resources necessary for the project be available to the candidate?

6) What steps, if any, have been taken to ascertain that such resources would be available?

7) Does the candidate have sufficient background and training to carry out the project?
8) Does the proposed project fit well into the candidate’s overall career plans?

“Graduate student projects are especially carefully studied for feasibility, significance and the applicant’s qualifications for successfully accomplishing the project. Here the university committees’ recommendation is most helpful. We did observe in a few cases that graduate students had submitted projects too large to be completed in one academic year, or a project which could just as easily be accomplished in this country, say the Library of Congress or a research library. Both of these were factors which worked against the applicant.”

Former NSC member

For Advanced Graduate Students

9) How extensively has this particular topic already been investigated, or is it something new?

10) What contribution, if any, will this particular project make to the general body of knowledge in the field?

11) Has the student, as a Ph.D. candidate, completed preliminary or comprehensive examinations

12) Has the proposed project been accepted or approved as a dissertation proposal?

Sample Questions for Campus Committees Reviewing Applications for Teaching Assistantships

1. Why has the applicant chosen to apply for the English Teaching Assistantship?

2. Why has the applicant chosen a particular country?

3. What does the applicant hope to contribute in the classroom and what qualifications, training or experience does the applicant have that will make them an effective teaching assistant?

4. What interest does the applicant have in teaching?

5. How will the opportunity contribute to the applicant’s future goals?

6. What use will the applicant make of time outside the classroom?

7. Does the applicant use English (conversation) clearly and distinctly?
3. Language Qualifications

REMINDER: At least a portion of the interview should be conducted in the language of the host country. This is particularly important for countries where fluency in the language is required or where the language is widely taught in the United States. IIE recognizes that language testing may not be possible for the more esoteric languages. In such cases, the formal Language Evaluation Form will suffice.

1) Is the candidate comfortable in the language or is the student hesitant in asking or responding to questions in the language; can he/she carry on a conversation?

2) What is the candidate doing to improve facility in the language?

3) If the candidate will be working in rural areas, does he/she possess knowledge of the regional dialect? Does he/she realize that such a dialect is necessary?

4) If the candidate will be accompanied by dependents, are they proficient in the language?

N.B.: For Teaching Assistantships, please comment on the candidate’s aptitude in the English language, as well as the language of the host country.

“It is altogether unrealistic—and probably undesirable as well—to aspire towards a single, universal community of humankind with common values and common institutions....The rapprochement of people is only possible when differences of culture and outlook are respected and appreciated rather than feared or condemned, when the common bond of human dignity is recognized as the essential bond for a peaceful world.”

Senator J. William Fulbright, Remarks upon receiving the Athinai International Prize from the Onassis Foundation in Athens, Greece, April 1989

4. Evidence of Maturity, Motivation, and Adaptability to a Different Cultural Environment (Personal Suitability)

1) Does the candidate seem emotionally stable and mature?

2) Does the candidate appear to have the ability to meet people effectively?

3) Will the candidate be able to adjust to a different cultural environment, or to new and unusual situations?

4) Is the candidate open to new ideas?

5) Is the candidate tolerant and able to understand and appreciate another person’s point-of-view?

6) Does the candidate accept criticism well?

7) Why is the candidate applying for a grant?
8) Are there any personal or family problems which might cause distress during a year abroad?
9) If the candidate will be accompanied abroad by dependents, will they be able to adjust to the new environment?
10) Do they seem eager to go abroad?
11) Does the candidate realize his/her responsibility in providing for dependent travel and financial support during the tenure of the grant?

5. Knowledge of Host Country

1) Engagement in the Community. Since the primary aim of the Fulbright Program is to further mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, has the candidate demonstrated a clear commitment to the host country community. Becoming involved in the local community will contribute significantly to this goal and will enhance the candidate’s experience in many ways. How does the applicant speak to this point? Has the applicant included some examples of interaction with the host community through volunteer and extra-curricular activities?
2) What does the candidate know about the history of the country and its present political and economic conditions?
3) Is the candidate aware of the host country’s geography and the distance between its major cities?
4) How familiar is the candidate with the country’s social customs and the cultural differences which would be encountered?
5) Would the candidate be apt to take advantage of opportunities abroad?
6) Is the candidate purely an “academic” type who would be inclined to spend most of the year abroad pursuing scholarly activities?
7) How knowledgeable is the candidate about domestic and world affairs?
8) Would the candidate be able to interpret the U.S. effectively overseas?

“Dogs bark at a person whom they do not know”

Heraclitus

C. The Campus Evaluation

Experience has shown that personalized, in-depth comments on each candidate interviewed will be to his/her advantage. Members of the NSC appreciate the helpful insight which substantive comments in the Evaluation Form have given to some candidates. FPAs are urged to give their candidates this advantage by seeing that
individual reports for each candidate are provided. To provide further guidance, examples of both a well-completed and poorly-completed Campus Committee Evaluation Form are attached. Some FPAs have found that reproducing the Evaluation Forms and distributing them to the Campus Committee for individual notation during the interviews is a useful method of collecting individual opinions and comments on each candidate which can then be synthesized by the FPA, a staff member, or the Committee Chairman after the meeting. Other FPAs find it easier to have the committee reach a verbal consensus on comments for each interview and for a staff member or a member of the committee serving as scribe to record the comments, which are later entered on the CCE Form, uploaded into the applicant’s online file and attached to the student’s application online.

D. The Campus Rating

After candidates have been interviewed and commented upon, the Campus Committee should assign them one of the following ratings:

1 = Exceptional  
1.5 = Outstanding  
2 = Very Good  
2.5 = Above Average  
3 = Average  
3.5 = Fair  
4 = Not Recommended

These rating should be assigned on an absolute scale; candidates should not be judged against one another. Making relative comparisons among the school’s applicants is generally not productive, and, in some cases, detrimental. Applicants compete with one another in individual country competitions within the nationwide Fulbright competition. Because the countries, fields of study, and levels of study vary, applicants from your campus will, in most cases, be considered by different sections of the NSC. Thus, a relative rating (#2.5—“The fourth best applicant from State University this year”) will be meaningless to the section of the NSC which considers your candidate for a grant to Hungary. It is best to try and establish an absolute rather than relative standard for each degree level and category of award (i.e., teaching or study/research).

All applications, including those not recommended by the Campus Committee, must be submitted to IIE.

Applications which are rated #4—Not Recommended—are reviewed by the staff in New York prior to the screening period. Provided the staff agrees that a #4 rating is justified, the applications of candidates who are not recommended by the Campus Committee are not presented to the National Screening Committee. If the staff feels there is some question as to whether the #4 rating is justified, the FPA will be called for additional
information. It is important, therefore, that the Campus Committee be especially candid and thorough in commenting upon candidates whom they do not recommend.

In order to standardize ratings, we request that you consider the following:

**Use the entire range of ratings.** You may need to make subtle distinctions between highly qualified candidates. The scale can be viewed as a tool in making these distinctions.

**Establish general standards for each rating.** For example, what makes an application exceptional or outstanding? You should take into account all of the elements listed above in making this determination.

**Keep in mind the applicant’s degree level** when considering the rating guidelines, particularly as related to the Statement of Grant Purpose and language proficiency.

**1.0 Exceptional** should only be awarded to candidates who have exceptional talent/skill in their grant field and who excel in most of the areas of consideration previously noted.

**1.5 Outstanding** is awarded to candidates who may have outstanding to exceptional talent/skill in their grant field and outstanding academic/professional qualifications, but who may not be in the top tier according to personal criteria, such as adaptability and motivation, potential for engagement in the host community, and other criteria. That is, in your view, the record in these latter categories is very high, but not at the same level as for those who you rated 1.0.

**2.0 Very good** is awarded to candidates who have demonstrated very good talent/skill in their grant field as well as very good academic/professional qualifications. Their project proposals, personal qualities and other areas of consideration are good to outstanding. In some cases, a 2.0 rating could be assigned to a candidate whose talent/skill and professional qualifications lean more toward outstanding, but whose personal qualities lean more toward above average. These are distinctions that can be settled during the discussion and rating stage of the process at the meeting.

**2.5 Above average** is awarded when the candidate’s talent/skill in their grant field, academic record/preparation and project proposal are above average but whose secondary factors range from above average to very good. These candidates have projects that are viable and feasible, but may not be as compelling as those you would have rated very good and higher. However, they have above average talent/skill and academic/professional qualifications and would contribute to the Fulbright program in ways based on their personal characteristics and qualities.

**3.0 Average** is relative. Generally candidates for the Fulbright grant are among the most highly motivated students and young professionals. An overall rating of 3.0 would indicate that the candidate presented a good work sample and well-developed project and is qualified to carry it out, but when compared to the other candidates in the field would be rated in the lower range. In other words, you would consider the candidate worthy of receiving a Fulbright grant if funding were available. Depending on the country, candidates rated 3.0 would not be recommended for a grant in Arts.
3.5 Fair is a rating that would be given to candidates whose talent/skill, proposal and other qualifications are marginal in terms of receiving a grant. That is, in your view, you may not consider them suitable for a grant, but may be open to reconsideration. Depending on the country, candidates rated 3.5 would not be recommended for a grant in Arts.

4.0 Not Recommended is reserved for a candidate who:

Presents an unfeasible project,

Is clearly not qualified to carry out a proposed project,

Has extensive host country experience, usually more than one consecutive year living in the host country (less than one year may not be grounds for Not Recommended, but may be reflected in a lower rating),

Through a combination factors, raises serious concerns about their suitability for a Fulbright grant.

Furthermore, some countries may have exclusionary criteria, such as non-recommended fields of study or research or current residency limitations.
Selection Criteria

The Campus Committee should also be guided by the following selection criteria which are quoted from the *Guide for Screening Committees* sent to NSC members prior to their review of applications:

a. **Academic or Professional Qualifications**

Scholastic achievement, especially in the applicant’s major field, is of primary importance. An academic candidate who is enrolled in a graduate school should generally average a grade of “B” or above. You should, however, be aware that some professional schools, e.g., law schools, grade on a curve, and transcripts for these students should be reviewed with this in mind. You should also keep in mind that grades in a candidate’s major field are more important than overall grade point averages. An obvious improvement in achievement in the latter part of a candidate’s academic career should be taken into consideration as well. Please note that it is required that the candidate’s GPA—often very difficult to locate—be indicated on the application cover sheet. (Grade requirements for candidates in the creative arts do not hold the same importance as for those in academic fields.)

No degree level should suffer in comparison to another. Most countries prefer a good representation from all degree levels. While some countries prefer students with varying amounts of graduate training, B.A. students should not necessarily be at a disadvantage, as central funds may be available for some recent B.A. students. In countries where there is no degree preference stated, candidates should be compared only against their peers, so that B.A. candidates are not judged on the same basis as those preparing for the Ph.D. Obviously, proposals written by B.A. students would not be expected to be as sophisticated or developed as those presented by advanced graduate students.

One of the aims of the student Fulbright Program is to include junior professionals as well as students. Such applicants receive consideration equal to that given those who are still enrolled in school. For the young professional group, occupational experience should include work in a field which is related to the project proposed. Short-term summer jobs are generally not relevant in the evaluation.

**FPA NOTE:** *In reviewing transcripts, the NSC members note improvement in grades over the years, in graduate school, in major field, etc. If there is a reason why during a certain period a candidate’s grades dropped or improved dramatically, a comment from the Campus Committee on the Campus Committee Evaluation Form explaining such variance would be of great help to NSC members.*

“**Political extremism involves two prime ingredients: an excessively simple diagnosis of the world’s ills and a conviction that there are identifiable villains in back of it all.**”

John W. Gardner
b. Validity and Feasibility of the Statement of Grant Purpose

The candidate’s Statement of Grant Purpose is evaluated in terms of (1) its validity as a project, and (2) its feasibility according to the recommendations of the Binational Commission or sponsor abroad (see website or brochure). Transcripts, references, research activities and publications are sources of information in considering these factors. In addition, Campus Committees enclose detailed rating sheets on individual candidates which often discuss and evaluate their projects.

Candidates are asked to outline study plans or projects in their major fields which may be completed in one country in no more than one academic year abroad. Candidates who present overambitious projects, given time limitations, or whose need to be in the chosen country is not clearly described, should be at a disadvantage. Students should have stated their goals in as concrete and practical terms as possible.

FPA NOTE: The use of vague, general or broad terms in the proposal should be avoided. “Learning the language and firsthand knowledge of people in another culture” will not be a successful explanation for the candidate’s desire to study abroad.

In some world regions candidates may present an intra-regional, multi-country project, provided excellent justification is given for the need to be in several (no more than three) countries. Multi-country proposals are subject to approval and acceptance by all countries involved. Similarly, failure to obtain visas or research clearances in all countries will result in the withdrawal of any grant offer. Grantees are usually affiliated with institutions of higher learning in the host countries and must, as a condition of their grants, accept the institutional placements arranged for them. Since foreign universities generally do not give degrees after the year of study or research, candidates are advised not to make attainment of a foreign degree the object of their study.

Occasionally grantees will be permitted to enroll in the programs of American universities abroad. The objectives of the Fulbright Program, however, are best served by attendance at a foreign university.

Project feasibility relates not only to the resources of the host country or institution; it may also involve the extent to which certain fields of study, e.g., investigation into contemporary or recent political or military issues, might be sensitive for the host country. Another aspect of feasibility is the proposed method of carrying out the project. It should be borne in mind that some methodological techniques, such as extensive interviewing and/or the use of questionnaires, are inadvisable and unacceptable in some countries.

It is important that candidates have adequate formal training for the study they wish to pursue and that their language skills be commensurate with the requirements of their projects.

Graduating seniors generally will be expected to attend regular university lectures, but they are asked to describe the study programs they wish to follow in as specific terms as possible. They are advised not to expect close academic supervision and to be prepared to supplement lectures with independent work and are further advised that
they may not receive their preferred placement at a major university in the country’s capital. Graduate students will be expected to work independently without close supervision.

Candidates in the creative and performing arts are asked to submit projects indicating in some detail their reasons for choosing a particular country, the form their work will take, the results they hope to obtain, and the contribution that a foreign experience will have on their future professional development. They are required to submit samples of their work in support of their applications.

Candidates for Teaching Assistantships are asked to indicate their reasons for wishing to undertake the responsibilities involved and to submit supplementary study plans, where appropriate.

**FPA NOTE:** *In countries where placement is the responsibility of the student (see website), it is their responsibility to correspond directly with foreign universities or individuals. In addition, where there is a question whether facilities for completion of a project are available, or when the nature of the preferred university overseas is such that competition for admission is extremely keen, a letter from the university or individual regarding a candidate’s acceptance for study or testifying to the availability of resources sometimes adds weight to the application. Also, it should be clearly indicated in the proposal why a project must be carried out in a given country.*

c. **Foreign Language Proficiency**

Candidates are expected to have language proficiency sufficient to carry out the proposed study and to communicate with the people of the host country. Unless otherwise stated in the brochure, persons applying to a country where knowledge of a foreign language is required, must have a minimum of two years of language study at the college level (or the equivalent), before application. In the fields of language and literature, however, four years of language preparation (or the equivalent) are indicated. Regardless of the source of the student’s knowledge of the language, the Language Evaluation form must be completed and submitted (i.e., a second language spoken in the home must still be evaluated).

The language requirement for countries whose languages are not widely taught is sometimes waived. Please consult the website for the countries in question.

**Even for those countries which indicate that English is sufficient, the importance of the student having day-to-day, hospitality ability in the host country language cannot be stressed enough.** One of the main ideals of the Fulbright Program is to increase mutual understanding. Having conversational ability in the language of the host country will make the student’s application more competitive and greatly contribute to the student’s cultural and educational experience abroad.

It is recommended that the language professor’s report on language qualifications be read, keeping in mind the length of time and how recently the candidate has studied the language and the fact that, in many cases, he/she has another year of language study ahead. Transcripts, of course, should also be checked.
D. Evidence of Adaptability and Motivation

This indicates resourcefulness and intelligence apart from the candidate’s academic record and performance. The references, the listing of extracurricular activities, and the curriculum vitae may indicate his/her range of interest and general ability to deal with subjects outside his/her own field and situations with which he/she is not familiar.

However, a candidate who has been unable to participate in extracurricular activities because of physical disability or the necessity to work should not be at a disadvantage. In such cases, his/her interests and potential should weigh more heavily than actual participation in these activities. Awareness and sensitivity to one’s environment should be considered.

FPA NOTE: Candidates should be advised that the personal statement should be more of an intellectual biography than simply a reiteration of a family history, etc., should be a statement with a focus on professional commitments and on-campus or community activities, to which a serious commitment, or from which leadership potential is clearly demonstrated as well, it could describe events and activities in the students’ lives which have shaped their characters and which have allowed them to benefit from advantages or overcome adversity. This enables the committee members to get a feel for the candidate as a person and thus permits them to form a judgment regarding such items as seriousness of purpose, adaptability, etc.

e. Foreign Experience

In general, candidates who have not had previous extended study or residence abroad in the country of application are given preference. This means that those with such experience, even if not ineligible because of it, should be considered at a comparative disadvantage in the competition. However, vacations or undergraduate university programs abroad are not sufficient experience abroad to justify a disadvantage.

FPA NOTE: This is one of the most difficult criteria to apply. In many instances, those with previous foreign experience are better equipped linguistically and academically than those who have not had a period of study abroad. Therefore, otherwise well-qualified candidates should not be discouraged from applying simply because of their experience overseas.

“The most fatal illusion is the settled point-of-view. Life is growth and motion; a fixed point-of-view kills anybody who has one.”

Brookes Atkinson

f. Veteran’s Status

All other factors being equal, veterans are given preference.
g. **Financial Considerations**

Financial need or solvency is not a factor in the competition. Candidates who expect to be accompanied abroad by dependents, however, must present evidence of the ability to provide for their transportation, maintenance and health and accident insurance.

h. **Other**

Candidates will be considered without regard to race, color, sex, creed or age.

i. **Re-application**

Unsuccessful candidates, or those who withdrew from former competitions or declined awards, may reapply provided they continue to meet eligibility requirements. Each year’s competition is a new one and such candidates are judged on the same basis as those applying for the first time. They are required to submit a completely new application form and to provide new copies of all support materials (such as references). No materials can be retrieved from past application files, since the files of unsuccessful applicants are destroyed by April 1.