Sample Scholarship Interview Questions
Brigham Young University

General questions & plans for the future

- How did you become interested in your major?
- What influenced your choice of this major?
- How did you become interested in your focus area?
- Have you traveled abroad before? If so, where? What have you learned in your travels?
- What have you learned about yourself as you've been a student at BYU?
- What do you hope to accomplish while at graduate school?
- What are your educational/academic goals? What are your future career plans? How do you plan to use your studies to achieve your future career plans?
- What would you do if you didn't receive the fellowship?
- What do you envision yourself doing in 10 years?
- What will you do with your degree in the long run?
- Why will this scholarship help you in your career goals?

Hooks from application--Know your application & review your essays

- You wrote in your application that you read poetry. What kind of poetry do you read? Who's your favorite poet?
- You said you like reading classics. What is one classical novel you recently read and did not like?
- I see your transcript includes ______ (a low grade, an odd course, etc.). Tell me about this.
- I see in your application that you're fluent in ______. Translate this statement and tell me who said it.
- How would you be a good ______ as a ______ Scholar?
- What can you tell me about the person this scholarship is named for?

Questions about recommendations and choice of recommenders

- Your high school principal wrote one of your recommendations. I'm always suspicious of applicants who need to go all the way back to high school to find someone who can say something good about them. What do you say to that?
- Your adviser wrote that you did significant research on Dean Acheson and three Ambassadors to Yugoslavia. After doing this research, do you think people make history? And if so, discuss if history would have been different if Stevenson had defeated Eisenhower in 1956, Nixon had defeated Kennedy in 1960, and Dukakis had defeated Bush in 1988.
- One of your advisers has written a lot about health care policy. Do you agree with his ideas, and if so, in one sentence, how should these ideas be implemented?
- One of your letter writes uses B.C.E. and C.E. Please define B.C., A.D., B.C.E., and C.E. Which do you prefer and why?
Research/Topics in your field--Be prepared to talk about your work and that of others

- I saw in your application that you intent to _______. Can you give us some examples, outside of your own research, of some successful studies in this field?
- Can you explain exactly what techniques or methods your propose to use in your research?
- What do you think will be the big thing happening in your field in the next ten years?
- Tell me about your honors thesis topic and describe the research methods you propose to use in your research.
- Is there anyone you would specifically like to work with?

Current events or hot political topics--Read a good newspaper; listen to opinion discussion shows.

- Do you think everyone in America deserves healthcare? How should we provide healthcare to the poor? How specifically can we encourage private industry to participate?
- I recently read about _______. What can you tell me about this?
- What do you think is the big thing happening in _______ in the next ten years?
- Do you think that a financially powerful nation could effectively alter the cultural norms of another nation?
- What are your thoughts on US interventionism?
- You have one minute to tell the Prime Minister of India how to end religious violence. What do you say?
- What should the U.S. do about the War on Terrorism?
- Do you believe in state sponsored assassinations, and if not, what about in the case of Hitler?
- Welfare reform seems like a good thing. Lots of poor people are working now, when they weren't before. What do you think?
- Name what you think are the top five diplomatic achievements in the past decade.
- What is the biggest change you would make in government to improve its ethics?
- If a patient with late stage Alzheimer's had written a document requesting that his life no longer be supported, what would you do? Follow up: What level of abuse in the system would be enough to stop euthanasia: 10 in 100 or 5 in 100?
- Explain the importance of basic science (or some other topic) as if you were talking to a group of lawmakers.
- What can you tell me about globalization (or AIDS, unilateralism/multilateralism, U.S. foreign policy, etc.)?
- If there is an attack on the embassy where you're serving, what would be your plan of action?
- The ambassador asks you to write a cable about human rights in country X. How would you go about completing this task?

Questions about a student's choice of university and degree choice
• What graduate schools/programs have you been accepted into?
• Why do you want to do postgraduate study now, as opposed to in two or three years?
• Is there anyone that you are specifically looking forward to working with?
• You say you want to study for a PhD in X, yet your university does not have department of X. How are you qualified for this?
• You say you want to study for a PhD in X, yet the majority of your preparation is in Y. How are you qualified?

Questions about your personality or how you spend your time

• What do you do for fun when you're not studying, doing research, or performing community service?
• I see you've accomplished some amazing things in your short life. In what areas do you think you can improve?
• I see you've done a lot of community service. Which service project are you most proud of and why?
• I also assume you've been involved in some leadership experiences. Please describe your most meaningful leadership experience and explain why it was most meaningful.
• What kind of music do you listen to?
• What is a novel or book that you've read for pleasure recently and like, and why did you like it?
• How would you define life? And what is your position on abortion? What is more important--someone agreeing with you on these issues or someone figuring out their own stance on these issues?
• What is your "Top 5 " list for the following? Favorite novels, favorite non-fiction books, favorite movies, favorite contemporary political leaders, favorite historical political leaders.
• What would you do if you won a billion dollars in the lottery?
• You have a strong desire to give back to the world. Where does this desire come from? Your family, religion or somewhere else?
• If someone was writing your obituary, what would you want it to say, and what work of literature would it quote?
• What is your philosophy on service that keeps you dedicated to it?

They may give you an opportunity to say whatever you want, so be ready.

• Do you have anything else to add?
• Why should you be one of the 10 people to get this scholarship?