

How to Conduct an APAP Interview

2021-22 Season

The Role of the Interview

The APAP interview is an applicant's opportunity to speak with a Washington University alumni volunteer. We encourage you to view the APAP interview as an informal exchange of information. You are an advocate for the student and an ambassador for WashU. It is your goal to get to know the student by name and story and to bring out the student's best qualities, as well as to help the student learn more about WashU. The interview is both informative and evaluative and should provide a positive and comfortable experience for the student.

Optional APAP interviews are offered on a first-come, first-served basis to students who have submitted their applications. APAP does not take requests for interviews. We do not match applicants for APAP interviews if they have already had an interview through the Admissions Office. Find out [what we tell applicants about APAP interviews](#) on the [Undergraduate Admissions website](#).

Your interview report will become part of the applicant's file. Your feedback will help the Admissions Committee advocate for the student.

All APAP interviews will be conducted virtually via video conference or telephone during the 2021-22 admissions cycle.

While you may want to familiarize yourself with the current climate on campus, **the focus of your interviews with applicants should be getting to know the students by name and story and sharing your WashU experiences.**

Arranging the Interview

- Your first contact with the applicant should always be by email. Please utilize the template provided in the [Volunteer Portal](#).
- When emailing the student, please indicate the platform you would like to use. We suggest Skype, FaceTime, or Zoom. If you do not have access to a virtual platform, you can [download Zoom](#) at no charge. We advise against using social media platforms such as Facebook. Please note that some students may not be comfortable on a video platform and would prefer a phone call.

- Please attempt to reach the student three times within a two-week period to arrange the interview. Your initial contact should be by email, but feel free to follow up by phone. If you are unable to reach the student after three attempts over two weeks, simply mark the Interview Report Form as "Could Not Reach" and submit it so we know that the assignment is complete. While we hope the student will accept your interview offer, a big part of your role is the act of reaching out to offer the interview. If you have time, we hope you will accept additional assignments and continue to offer interviews to more applicants.

Preparing for the Interview

Once you have scheduled your interview appointment, take some time to familiarize yourself with the following:

- [Member Resources](#) section of the APAP website
- [Admissions Information Guide](#)
- [Undergraduate Admissions website](#)
- Sample interview questions (below)

Sample Interview Questions

- How did you first hear about Washington University?
- What courses are you taking? Which are your favorites?
- In which extracurricular activities are you involved? Which are your favorites?
- Are there areas you've been thinking about studying when you go to college? (Note to interviewers: WashU is a GREAT place to be an "explorer." Entering first-year students do NOT have to know their intended major. We want prospective students to know that they may explore all of their interests here.)
- Tell me about your high school. Are there things about it that you would change if you had the opportunity?
- If I could meet with your teachers and ask them to describe you, what would they say?
- If I could meet with one of your classmates and ask them to describe you, what would they say?
- What are you looking for in a college or university?
- Do you have any questions about Washington University that I can answer?

Conducting Virtual Interviews

- Choose an area where there won't be any distractions and where you can maintain confidentiality.
- Make sure the area behind where you will sit and the lighting are appropriate. You are welcome to use a virtual [WashU background for Zoom](#).
- We do not typically include parents in APAP interviews, but if a parent requests to be present, please make accommodations to include them. Please let the parent know that the interview will take place between you and the student, but that you would be happy to answer their questions when the interview is over.
- Assure the student that there is no need to be nervous; this is an informal conversation.
- We encourage applicants to turn their cameras on during the interview, but some may not feel comfortable doing so; this is not a problem. We strongly encourage interviewers to turn on your cameras unless it is not possible.
- Spend approximately 20 minutes getting to know the student and answering questions about your experience at WashU and the many opportunities the university offers.
- At the end of the interview, ask the student, "Is there anything else you would like me to share with the Admissions Office?" and/or "Have I missed anything that is important to you or that you hoped we would discuss?"
- If you cannot answer a particular question or if the student requests information, please encourage the student to contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at admissions@wustl.edu.
- Please do not record the interview unless the student specifically requests it.
- Encourage the student to visit campus in-person and/or virtually.

Tips for Successful Interviews

- You are the student's advocate.
- Listen carefully in order to tailor the interview to the interests of the applicant.

- The interview should be a conversation to allow the applicant to learn more about WashU and your experiences, and for you to get to know the student.
- Don't ask to which colleges or universities a student is applying. Instead, ask what the student is looking for in a college or university, as well as why the student is interested in WashU.
- Respect those who are different from you.
- APAP volunteers should dress in business casual or WashU branded attire.
- Do not make judgements about a student's attire. We tell students to dress however they feel most comfortable.
- It is okay if a student has only limited knowledge of Washington University. Please use this as an opportunity to tell the student more about what WashU offers and why it is a great place to spend four years.
- Do not interview people you know. If the applicant is someone you know, please decline the interview in the Volunteer Portal. Although you will not conduct an interview with the applicant, you are welcome to write a letter of recommendation on the applicant's behalf.
- Do not make negative comments about other colleges and universities or St. Louis. Focus on WashU's strengths, not on weaknesses of other institutions.
- Do not take notes.
- Do not discuss scores, grades, or rank in class.
- WashU Admissions interviews are not like job interviews. They are not intended to "weed out" candidates, but rather to find the best in them.
- Consider all aspects of the interview to be confidential.

Key Messages for Applicants

Please familiarize yourself with these key messages we would like you to share with the students you interview:

- At WashU, you'll be pushed—and inspired—to do great things, in ways that both celebrate and cultivate your intelligence. In an environment where curiosity leads and creativity thrives, we'll empower you to use your imagination just as much as your intelligence.
- As an undergraduate student, you'll receive a world class education from distinguished faculty leading their

fields, and you'll have the opportunity to work with them on research projects in top-notch academic facilities.

- With our flexible curriculum and personalized approach, you can explore a variety of academic areas across divisions and special programs. Through individualized advising appointments that start your first year, your advisor will help you establish academic and experiential goals for your time at WashU.
- Like you, WashU students are focused and ambitious but also collaborative and supportive. You'll find that your peers, faculty, and staff will cheer you on, encouraging your success and also pushing you to leave your comfort zone, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- We are committed to your post-graduate success from day one. Throughout your time at WashU, career advisors will help you secure internships and other co-curricular opportunities that will contribute to successful placement in top companies and graduate programs.
- We are committed to removing cost as a barrier to a WashU education and meet 100% of demonstrated financial need for all admitted students. Our financial aid team is here to help navigate your unique situation and explore options for financial assistance.

Completing the Interview Report Form

- Please complete the Interview Report Form in the [Volunteer Portal](#) after the interview and not in the presence of the student.
- The Interview Report Form asks you to respond to the following topics:

Personal Qualities: What personal qualities best describe the student?

Intellectual Engagement: Comment on the student's academic experiences. How will the student engage academically in classes and on campus?

Motivation and Commitment: What activities are most important to the student? Have they made any significant commitments during their time in high school?

WashU Interest: How did the student learn about WashU? What is their degree of familiarity with WashU?

Additional Comments: Any brief, overall comments? Is there any additional information we should know about the student (e.g. family situation, time abroad, obstacles overcome, job, etc.)?

- The interview report should convey a student's best qualities to the Admissions Office. Please do not be harsh when evaluating students.
- Help us to gain a better understanding of the applicant's background, achievements, and interests. Describe the student's personality, warmth, sense of humor, and ability to communicate. Please do not comment on the student's physical attributes.
- Keep your comments brief, but informative.
- Check one overall impression "rating" at the bottom of the report form. Whatever rating you assign should be supported by the rest of your report. Most students you interview will fall into the middle part of the rating scale (3).

Deadlines

Please complete the Interview Report Form within one month of accepting the interview assignment.

Final deadlines for all Interview Report Forms:

Early Decision I – due by December 1

Early Decision II – due by January 15

Regular Decision – due by February 1

If you have any questions about this information, please contact the APAP office at (314 or 800) 935-4826 or apap@wustl.edu.