Gold Award Candidate Interview Tips & Tricks

- Setting Up the Interview
  - Allow plenty of time between submitting your proposal or final report and your desired interview timeframe. You should submit your proposal at least 6 weeks before you intend to start the project, and allow 2 weeks from submitting your proposal or final report and receiving an invitation to interview. Please do not contact Council Staff to check on the status of your submission unless it has been more than 2 weeks. This just makes it take longer for Council Staff to review all the materials submitted.
- Be Prepared
  - Have a notebook, something to write with, and bring a copy of your application, report, and any supporting photos or documents that might be helpful in explaining your project. (Your Project Advisor should help you prepare for the interview, but is not allowed to attend.)
- Take Notes
  - The Gold Award Committee may ask you to send followup information; make sure you write down where to send it to, the names of who you interviewed with, and any other relevant contact information. If a committee member asks or says something you don't understand, make sure to ask them to repeat or explain further.
- Display Good Manners
  - Be on time (or a bit early), dress either in Girl Scout uniform or business casual, and come with a good attitude. Be sure to wear your Girl Scout pins and sash.
- Have Fun!
  - If you are shy about meeting strangers, remember that the Gold Award Committee is here to help! They want to find out more about you, your project, and make sure you leave excited to dive in. A lot of projects require some additional small adjustments before getting approval to begin, so don't be discouraged if they have suggestions they'd like you to implement.
- Practice!
  - Interviewing is a skill, not a talent. Practice for it just like you would for a play! Have someone practice in a mock interview – other girls in your troop, your leader, or your Project Advisor could be great candidates for helping with this.

Preparing for the Gold Award Interview

- Be sure you can give an oral summary of who you are in 3 minutes or less; think name, grade, school, years in Girl Scouts, hobbies, talents, and what you love about Girl Scouting.
- Be sure you can give an oral summary of your project that is thorough, clear, and interesting in 3 minutes or less.
- Know your project; who, when, where, what, why, and how.
- How is your Project Advisor involved – what is their role?
- Know that 80 hours is the suggested minimum for a Gold Award project; be sure your projected timeline reflects at least that many hours.
- How did you decide to do this project?
- What do you hope this project will achieve?
- What impact will this project have on you as a young person? As a Girl Scout?
- What has been the most challenging part of planning your project so far? How did you handle it?
- What do you think you'll need the most help with? How will get that assistance?
- What are your opportunities for leadership in this project plan?
- How will this project help you develop more life skills?
- How will this project challenge you?
- Be prepared to leave with feedback, a few additions, and possibly minor changes.
- Remember to thank the Gold Award Committee for their time, consideration, and feedback.

Check Yourself! Post-Interview Self-Assessment

Interviews are learning opportunities – ask yourself the following questions after you've completed yours:

- Did I arrive on time? Was I appropriately dressed and groomed?
- Did I sit up straight and maintain eye contact? Was I articulate? Did I speak clearly and in complete sentences?
- Did I refrain from chewing gum?
- Was my cell phone off (completely – no vibrate)?
- Was I pleasant and courteous?
- Was I fully knowledgeable about my project – why, what, when, where, who, and how?
- Was I fully able to answer each of the interviewer's questions? If not, what tripped me up?
- Did I provide the interviewer with enough information about my experience and strengths?
- Did I leave understanding the next steps needed to complete the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Following the interview, it's a great idea to take a few minutes and write a short followup note (via email is fine, but by mail is even better) thanking your interviewers for their time. The letter reinforces your talents and skills, and it thanks the volunteers on the committee for taking the time to meet with you. You can also use this opportunity to mention anything important about yourself that you realized you left out of the interview, and to mention that you are looking forward to meeting with them again when you've completed your project.

Interviewing Online? Additional Tips!

1. Get ready before the interview.
Make sure you know how to use your computer's webcam and that you are familiar with Skype or Google, whichever you are using. The better you understand the equipment, the more comfortable and confident you will be.

2. Control your presentation by controlling the equipment.
Set up the camera so it focuses on you. If you can get a tight head/shoulders/desk shot, this is best. Try to keep other objects out of the shot, or the viewers could get distracted. Make sure the microphone is near you (most computers have a built in microphone). Because of the way video works, minimizing background movement (second hands on clocks, cars passing on the freeway outside) is to your advantage. If possible, remove any such background motion, since motion causes the equipment to work harder to transmit the image. The same principle applies to the type of clothing the candidate wears. Most people dress conservatively when going to interviews. For video interviews, it is suggested to wear solid conservative colors (but not bright white). Small stripes and busy patterns do not look good on a television screen and cause the equipment to work harder to reconcile these patterns when the person moves, causing a delay.

3. Manage the microphone.
Be conscious of where the microphone is. Remember that microphones pick up and often amplify any sound, so be careful about shuffling papers and tapping on the table near the microphone. In person, these sorts of things are filtered out by our brains, but microphones aren't that smart. In fact, mics are very sensitive. Those little noises are *very* loud and distracting on the other end.

4. Monitor yourself.
Skype will allow you to keep a "picture-in-picture" of yourself on the screen, so you'll be able to see what the other person sees. If you're concerned about your body language, the picture-in-picture can help you monitor it.

6. Listen with your eyes.
Non-verbal listening cues become more prominent in a videoconference. That is, while you are talking, you will become more aware of the facial expressions of the interviewers, and they will be more aware of yours. Try to be more conscious of what your expressions are saying to the viewer. Do you look like you are listening? They will notice.

7. Don't be afraid.
The biggest mistake people make when videoconferencing, by far, is that they are afraid of the technology, and their anxiety comes across in the interview. If the computer freezes or the connection goes down, it is important to remember that the interviewers will not blame you, nor will equipment failure reflect poorly on you.

8. Focus on the interview
Even though you are not in the same room as the person interviewing you, they can tell if you are taking cues from someone else, not paying complete attention, or instant messaging/texting during your interview. You would not do these things in person, so do not do these things over Skype.