

Steering Committee

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Dear FOP Leader Applicant,

Thank you again for your interest in the First-Year Outdoor Program. The majority of information about FOP can be found on our [website](#). Please be sure to have read our [application information](#) page thoroughly before submitting your application.

This year, Steering Committee '20 has chosen to focus on the following strategic priorities:

- Improve the diversity of the FOP community through **holistic educational opportunities** for leaders during training and after FOP, as well as **intentional outreach** to diverse communities on and off campus
- Improve the inclusion of the FOP community through **building support systems** for FOPpers and leaders from underrepresented backgrounds and communities
- Improve the way we communicate with people outside of the FOP community including, but not limited to, **collaboration** with other Pre-Orientation programs and other student organizations
- Improve the accessibility & equity of the FOP community through promoting a **common, fruitful experience** for all members that values individuals from all backgrounds and experiences
- Create and improve structures that **promote accountability** for leaders while on campus and trainees during the training process
- Provide educational opportunities that promote **responsible stewardship** of the public lands that FOP uses as a medium for programming and community-building.

FOP leaders take on a serious responsibility guiding a group of 8 to 12 first-year students and must have the capacity to learn both outdoors and interpersonal skills. Applicants must be able to learn and demonstrate the following skills by the end of training:

- Communicate and work effectively with co-leader(s)
- Discuss views on the Harvard experience with an open-minded perspective
- Navigate potential conflicts between group members while maintaining group safety and balancing individual and group needs
- Engage with difference in a thoughtful and respectful manner
- Demonstrate comfort and confidence with technical skills necessary for backcountry travel
- Effectively handle emergency and unexpected situations

We look forward to reading your application!

- FOP Steering Committee 2020

FOP 2020 Leader Application

FOP applications will be collected via online submission at <https://fop.fas.harvard.edu/application>. Please use the following document to think about your response. Once you have composed your answers, you should copy and paste them into a template available for download on our website.

Please answer the following questions. Due to the large volume of applications we receive, we kindly ask you to limit each response to no more than 150 words. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be specific in your answers and illustrate using concrete examples.

Section F(ree Response) of FOP

Question 1

We would like to know more about you! Several possible prompts are below. We emphasize that you are not restricted to these prompts and encourage you to tell us whatever feels most authentic.

- Tell us about an aspect of your life that you consider a fundamental part of your identity.
- If you had to pick one person in the world to describe you, who would it be, and how would they describe you?
- Discuss a community that you're a part of and why it's important to you.

Question 2

Reflect on your own transition into Harvard. What is one piece of advice you would share with incoming first-years before they start their first year at Harvard? Why is this advice important to you? Please be specific.

Question 3

Describe a time in your life you felt challenged. How did you respond to that challenge? Try to focus on how this challenge contributed to your personal growth.

Question 4

In FOP, we are actively and constantly working toward making our trips and community as inclusive as possible, though we recognize that we still have significant room for growth and programmatic development. What does the idea of inclusion mean to you in the context of helping incoming first-years make their transition to college life? What steps would you take to create an inclusive space on your trip? Please try to be specific and concrete.

Section O(outdoors and co-leading experience) of FOP

Question 5

FOP is centered around using the outdoors as a medium for an inclusive growth experience for participants and leaders alike. Many FOP leaders come into training with no previous outdoors experience and offer a variety of important perspectives. We also acknowledge that people have varying relationships with the outdoors, which can be complicated, difficult, or not exist at all.

What is your relationship with the outdoors and what about FOP or the outdoors drew you to apply?

Question 6

Each FOP trip is led by groups of two or three leaders who work together to plan and execute their trip. Describe a time that you worked closely with one or two other people (it doesn't have to be in a formal

leadership role). What were the strengths and challenges of your relationship? Which aspects of it worked well and which didn't? How did this relationship inform the way you approach working with other people?

Section P(ut your feet in their boots) of FOP

Imagine you are leading the FOP trip described in the scenario below. After reading it, please list three of your concerns, elaborating about why they are concerns for you, and how you would react to them. There are no right or wrong answers, but you should try to pick the three concerns that you feel are the most pressing. Please note that the situation described below is not necessarily reflective of an actual FOP trip, and any resemblance to previous trips is purely coincidental. (400 word limit)

You have just finished your third day of hiking with your group of 9 FOPpers. Although you have arrived in camp at a reasonable hour, the day was longer than you expected. The length of the day was due in part to Tobi, your co-leader, taking the group down the wrong trail for half a mile and the thunderstorm that passed through around 1 p.m. Still, almost all of your FOPpers tell you what an incredibly positive time they are having.

Two of your female FOPpers, Lizzie and Palak, have been getting along very well all week and have talked about everything from their favorite TV shows to their liberal political views. Recently, they both have been talking about the many vacations they took throughout their childhoods, such as Lizzie's family trip touring all of Luxembourg and Palak's hikes throughout New Zealand. Renee, a FOPper from a small town in Missouri, used to chat with Lizzie and Palak while hiking, but ever since they started talking about their upbringings, Renee has been hiking directly behind you. She also started to talk less and less, usually responding to direct questions with one to two word answers.

Meanwhile, Mark, a FOPper from northern New England, is helping Tobi cook. He is by far the most helpful FOPper, and is always the first one to volunteer when you arrive at camp. In fact, when you were moving things around to set up the tarp earlier, you noticed that Mark was carrying a huge amount of weight—he had taken most of the group gear and even some personal gear of other FOPpers. Everyone seems to have taken a liking to Mark, especially a FOPper named Fernanda. Fernanda always hikes close to Mark and volunteers for all the same tasks as he does. She takes pride in asking him to help her, and Mark certainly doesn't seem to mind the attention.

Lloyd is a very athletic FOPper from New York City. He deferred a year before starting college and enjoys telling you about what he did in his year off, such as surfing in Australia and backpacking through Greece. Daniel, another FOPper, always listens attentively to Lloyd's stories. He seems very impressed by Lloyd, and tries to interest Lloyd in his own stories, in addition to asking him if he wants to "get trashed" together when they get back on campus. Lloyd is quite unresponsive to Daniel, and instead spends a lot of time talking to Tobi, more than to the other FOPpers. Daniel sometimes slips in comments about how much he matured over his year off and how he identifies more with your more mature point of view. Tobi listens to all of his stories and occasionally asks questions, but once while Lloyd was recounting a trek through the Alps you think you may have caught an eye roll coming from Tobi.

The other FOPpers, Xiao and Jack, are fairly quiet. They smile and respond positively when approached but do not talk too much with each other or the rest of the group. You often see Xiao shivering during breaks, but when you ask them about it they say they are fine and just need to keep hiking. They enjoy doing nice things for others, such as giving away their cookies and dessert treats because they get full quickly.

In the valley you're in, the sun sets quickly. Before you got into camp, Tobi announced that each leader would take a group of FOPpers and there would be a competition to put up the tarps the fastest. He also warns the FOPpers to stay away from the dangerous Gage Caves, a quarter-mile to the northeast of camp.

As dinner cooks, you wonder what to do next. As a leader of the group you want to make sure everyone gets the most out of this FOP trip. Tomorrow the group is hiking a decent distance over fairly challenging terrain. You wonder how best to prepare everyone for tomorrow and the remainder of the trip.