**FIP Leader Responsibilities**

Being a FIP leader is a year-long responsibility. Together with your co-parents you will be welcoming incoming students to the Harvard environment and introducing them to the broader FIP and international community on campus. FIP primarily takes place during a 6 day period before First-Year Orientation; however, you will have duties prior to, during and after the official orientation.

Responsibilities might include:

**Before FIP:**

* Attending the mandatory April training session
* Bonding with your co-parents
* Communicating with you family to establish a rapport
* Completing committee work in a timely fashion and communicating with committee members

**During FIP**

* Leading family events and participating in FIP-wide events
* Fulfilling committee responsibilities
* Maintaining open and honest communication with your family and Co-Chairs

**After FIP**

* Maintaining relationships with your family and serving as a point of contact regarding any questions or concerns
* Looking out for your kids and other FIP participants
* Contributing actively and positively to the international community

Leaders will be required to participate in the April training, return to campus **August 20**, and give FIP their full attention from **August 21-29**. Please message us directly if this poses an unavoidable conflict for you. If you are unclear about your summer plans, we encourage you to apply anyway and keep us updated if your plans/commitments change at any point during the application process.

**Applications are due on Sunday, March 26 at 11:59 PM EDT.** Please fill out the application form [here](https://forms.gle/kx2FG2Rhg1gnTAFD6).

For any questions, please contact Manas ([mkulkarni@college.harvard.edu](mailto:mkulkarni@college.harvard.edu)) or Sara ([saradahiya@college.harvard.edu](mailto:saradahiya@college.harvard.edu)). We will also be holding **FIP Leader Application Office Hours** in Adams Dining Hall for the application on:

* Tuesday, March 21, 6 - 8 pm
* Friday, March 24, 4 - 6pm
* Saturday, March 23, 2 - 4 pm

Feel free to contact us about alternate times, if these hours don’t work for you.

**Please find the application questions below.** Feel free to make a copy of this document to save and edit your application responses before officially submitting on the Google Form.

**FIP Leader Application 2023**

*Basic Information*

* First Name
* Last Name
* Harvard Email
* Class (e.g., 2024, 2025, etc.) If you have taken a leave of absence, please select ‘Other’ and tell us your original social class and anticipated graduating class.
* Phone number (with area code in parentheses)
* House
* Concentration (First Years, you can indicate intended concentration.)
* Extracurriculars (List up to five activities.)
* Please describe your previous involvement with FIP.
* Have you previously been a FIP leader?

*New Leader Application*

1. Why do you want to be a FIP Leader? (100 words)
   1. When I first came to the US I was still quite unsure about whether I really wanted to spend the next 4 years of my life. I felt like I had a lot in common with people from other countries, but not so much with Americans. While I did not go through FIP or First Year Orientation, I had a very similar experience at Rice. I was put in an Orientation Week family of 8, with kids from all over the country and the world, and had a full week packed from morning to night of activities. I would like to pass that forward to the Class of 2027 and help them make as good memories as I have while helping them transition to the US lifestyle.
2. What would make you a good FIP leader? (200 words)
   1. When it comes to being a good FIP leader, I think I've got a few things going for me. First and foremost, I've got experience teaching, which means I know how to break down complex topics into bite-sized pieces that are easy to digest. I think this skill will come in handy when I'm helping new students understand what life at Harvard and in the US is all about.
   2. I'm also pretty good at reading people's emotions. If someone's feeling overwhelmed or homesick, I think I'll be able to provide the support they need to get through it. And if I'm not the right person for the job, I can direct them to the other leaders of the FIP family, or someone else in the FIP leadership that can.
   3. Another thing that makes me a good fit for the job is my own experience as an international student. I moved to the US as a freshman two years ago, so I know what it's like to navigate a new culture and a new academic system. I think this shared experience will help me connect with new students..
   4. Finally, I'm a pretty outgoing and friendly person. I enjoy meeting new people and striking up conversations, which I think will be important when it comes to helping new students make friends and feel like they're part of a community. I think a strong sense of community is really important for making FIP successful, and I'm excited to help create that.
3. What does FIP mean to you? (50-100 words)
   1. To me, FIP is a comfortable space that provides a supportive community for international students transitioning to life at Harvard. As someone who has experienced the challenges of adapting to a new culture firsthand, I understand how overwhelming and isolating it can feel to arrive in a new country without a familiar support system. FIP is important because it creates a space where students can connect with others who are going through a similar experience and build friendships and support networks that can last a lifetime.
   2. Additionally, the program provides a wealth of resources and information to help new students navigate the practical challenges of living in the US. When I came here, I struggled, and still do, with piecing together all the disparate information about immigration rules, tax laws, etc. Having it explained to you by someone that has gone through the same process is incredibly valuable.
4. What would be the biggest challenge of being a FIP leader for you? How would you deal with this? (150 words)
   1. As a FIP leader, I believe that my biggest challenge would be managing the various administrative tasks and responsibilities that come with the role. There are a lot of emails, forms, and requirements that need to be completed before and during the program, such as waivers, trainings, and schedules. It can be overwhelming at times to keep track of everything while also providing support to the students.
   2. To overcome this challenge, I have developed a system to manage my time effectively. I have allotted 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon to check important emails, so I don't miss any important communications. Additionally, I will keep a detailed calendar of all the tasks that need to be completed and set reminders to ensure that I stay on top of everything. I believe that this approach will help me stay organized and focused on my responsibilities as a FIP leader, while also allowing me to be there for the students when they need me.
5. FIP aims to promote a sense of belonging within the broader Harvard community for international students. Describe a contribution you’ve made to a community, and how that experience might influence your approach to building inclusive environments as a FIP Leader. (150-200 words)
   1. I applied and was selected to be an OWeek advisor at Rice, so I underwent the training required to handle difficult social situations, make people feel comfortable, and create activities that everyone in the group would enjoy. We learned about the best ways to build an inclusive community.
   2. One specific example of a contribution I made to a community during that time was by making posters for new students based on their interests. I found this to be a great way to help students connect with each other and form friendships. It was rewarding to see the impact of these posters as students started to bond over their shared interests.
   3. I believe that this experience will translate well to FIP as I work to build an inclusive environment for incoming international students. I know how important it is to make people feel welcomed and supported, especially when they are in a new environment. I plan to use my skills and experiences to create a space where students feel they belong and can thrive.
6. What were some aspects of FIP that you think could be improved? If you were not on FIP last year, what would you say would need to be done to make an in-person FIP successful? (150-200 words)
   1. A key factor of the FIP experience is ensuring that the new students have the resources and support they need to adjust to life at Harvard and in the United States. A lot of information is scattered across many government websites, emails, and documents. We need to provide comprehensive information regarding topics such as immigration, academic expectations, and cultural norms so that the FIPpers can hit the ground running when the semester starts.
   2. It is also important to create a sense of community and belonging. This can be done through group activities (like the one described below) and social events, such as outings to local landmarks, as well as cultural events. Providing opportunities for FIPpers to connect with each other and build relationships is especially important since international students are likely to feel homesick or isolated due to the sudden change of environment. These friendships will ease the transition into the first semester at Harvard and will hopefully remain part of their core support system for all 4 years of college.
   3. Lastly, it is important that we evaluate in a somewhat objective manner the success of the program, and collect feedback from the new students to identify areas for potential improvement. This would allow us to make adjustments to the program that make the experience better for future FIPpers.
7. Give us three examples of activities you are passionate about and would like to include in this year’s program.
   1. A great way to bring people together is by making them collaborate toward a common goal. Even better if they get to eat the common goal. We did a Sushi-making Social for HUQT and it went great. It was also a great opportunity for older and younger people to connect, which may not always happen in other activities.
   2. In the same spirit as the previous one, there is a very fun game for large groups to play that involves setting up many different “mini-games” in different rooms of the same building and splitting everyone into moderately large teams. Every person in a team has to sign up, by rounds, for the mini-game (they can’t play the same one more than one in a row), and the result of the mini-game determines how many points get added to their team scoreboard. The team with the most points at the end wins. The idea is to make most mini-games collaborative so that two people from each team have to participate. This is usually set up so that there is a lot of running and energy going around, and people are focused on the mini-games, providing a low-pressure social environment for people to meet each other. We did this during an HUQT retreat and it worked wonderfully. I still remember many of the people in my 15-person team.
   3. Tour around Boston downtown. I did that the first week that I was here and still remember how much fun I had going with my roommate around the city looking at the historical buildings.

*Returning Leader Application:*

1. Why would you like to return as a FIP leader? (100 words)
2. How did you positively contribute to the FIP experience in previous years? What were your strengths? (150 words)
3. Given your experiences in previous years, how do you think you could improve as a FIP leader? (150 words)
4. How do you think FIP could improve for next year? (150-200 words)
5. Given that FIP will continue to be fully in-person for next year, please give us three examples of a new activity that you think we should include, or a way in which we could expand our current in-person programming to use this extra time effectively.

*Simulation Questions*: The following questions are simulations for what FIP participants might ask you. In a paragraph that addresses the student, provide an appropriate response. These questions are required for both new and returning FIP Leaders and can be a brief paragraph.

1. **"I came with my family, and they're staying at a hotel in Boston until the official move-in day. I'm really going to miss them, and since I think I know most of the information that will be covered in today's panels, is it okay if I miss them to see my family?"**
   1. I understand that your family is very important and that you will not get to see them for while, but make your best effort to engage fully with all the activities, even if you think you know most of the information. The panels are designed by students to provide a comprehensive overview of life at Harvard and in the United States, and there may be information that you haven’t considered yet.
   2. Also, FIP is a great way to meet some amazing and super interesting people and make new friends. For me personally, it was these friends that helped me the most when I was feeling homesick during the semester.
   3. That said, if you do decide to visit your family, it is important to prioritize your safety and well-being, so be sure to communicate your plans with your FIP leader (note: assuming it is not me) and make sure that you have a safe way to travel to and from the hotel. I recommend sharing your location with your parents and taking an Uber since it will drop you at their door.
   4. Overall, while it is okay to miss your family, I would encourage you to attend all the FIP events and engage as much as you can. It will help you make the most out of the program and your Harvard experience as a whole!
2. **"A few other FIP kids and I were going to have a small party in the Grays common room tonight with just our FIP friend group. Since I'm 21, is it okay that I host the party and buy alcohol for the gathering?"**
   1. Organizing your own parties and drinking is unfortunately not allowed during FIP. You may be 21, but it is highly likely that almost everyone else is not, and that is very hard to control.
   2. You will have more than enough time during the rest of the semester to host private parties. I recommend that you try to participate in public events as much as you can during the program and if you feel there is something that you want but is not part of the organized events, come talk to us, and we can try and make it work.
3. **“I would prefer to not have roommates from Country X. It’s nothing personal – I just don’t think I’m very comfortable with them. Can you please have that arranged for me?”**
   1. As FIP leaders, we do not decide who gets to room with whom. The university is in charge of that, so do not have much room to operate. However, be sure that they make their best effort to pair you with suitemates and roommates that are compatible with you based on the forms that you filled. They have years of experience doing this and typically do a very good job.
   2. In the future, though, if you feel there is an unavoidable problem with your roommates/suitemates that cannot be resolved, there are steps that you can take to have people from the dorm intervene. Sometimes their talk is enough to resolve the issue and some other times they take more drastic measures if they see that issues are not resolved, like rearranging the rooms. For all this to happen, however, there needs to be a pressing issue, it cannot be a general discomfort with someone being from a certain country, but something that is significantly impacting your day-to-day experience at school.
4. **"After listening to the leader panel on identity, I'm sort of confused on the concept of pronouns. Why do they matter?"**
   1. That’s a great question! Pronouns are a fundamental part of how we communicate. We use them to refer to other people when not mentioning their names. Using correct pronouns when referring to someone shows respect for their identity and fosters a more inclusive environment.
   2. Not everyone’s gender identity fits into the binary categories of male or female. By using correct pronouns, you are acknowledging and affirming the person’s identity. So using the wrong pronouns can sometimes be hurtful or invalidating.
   3. Something important to note is that pronouns are not always obvious based on someone’s appearance or name. Someone who appears to be male may use they/them pronouns, and someone with a traditionally feminine name may use he/him pronouns. This is why it is important to ask for someone’s pronouns rather than assuming them based on appearance or name.
   4. The summary is that correct pronouns are a simple but meaningful way to respect someone’s identity and foster a more inclusive community. If you are unsure of someone’s pronouns, you can always ask politely.

*Identity Questions:* You are not required to answer the following questions if you feel uncomfortable providing this information.

1. What nationality/nationalities do you identify with?
   1. Feel free to include countries you’ve lived in, passports you hold or anything that pertains to your international identity.
2. Indicate your gender identity/preferred pronouns.
3. Feel free to include any other information about your identity that you feel is important for us to know or relevant to your application.

*Committee Questions*: Please indicate what committee you'd be interested in being a part of. Every leader is assigned to a committee. Your choices here will have no bearing on the rest of your application.

1. Please rank the FIP committees according to your preference and indicate whether or not you are applying to be a part of a committee.
   1. Logistics (family assignments, coordinating airport pickups, phone/bank trips, etc. )
   2. Social (planning social events)
   3. Panels (leading interactive discussion-based panels)
   4. Media & Technology (social media, photography, videography, merchandising)
   5. Wellness and Support (pre-FIP programming, working with student offices, promoting well being for all FIP affiliates, etc. )
2. Committee Preference Ranking
   1. Logistics
   2. Social
   3. Panels
   4. Media & Tech
   5. Wellness & Support
3. Would you like to be a Committee Head, and if so, of which Committee?
4. **If you said 'yes' to being a Committee Head, please write a few sentences explaining why you're interested in the position, why you think you're qualified, and any new ideas you would bring.**
   1. I think the social aspect of FIP is one of the most important ones. Many of my friends met their first friends, and some of their closest ones, through FIP. As such, I am very interested in making the social experience as pleasant as possible for all the new students.
   2. I have experience planning social events in high school (renting equipment, buying food/drinks, pubbing ads, managing list) and have experience planning events in college as a freshman representative for my residential college at Rice University (parties and camping trip, that included managing cars, renting camping equipment, etc.).

*Final Questions*

1. Please describe your summer plans along with relevant dates, however tentative.
2. In late April, there will be a MANDATORY FIP leader training. Which of these days would work the best for you? Feel free to select multiple days if you are available.
3. Friday, April 13
4. Saturday, April 14
5. Sunday, April 15
6. Please upload a photo of yourself.
7. Is there anything else we should know about you as we consider you for a FIP leader? Do you have any questions for the Co-Chairs?