

# Applying a culture awareness scholarship



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Application for Cultural Awareness Scholarship To understand cultural awareness, it would be important to appreciate that cultures are different across the globe. This is informed by the need to develop self identity, and with that, a sense of belonging to some group. This diversity has caused the perception of other people under the filter of one's culture. Ethnicity propagates this phenomenon where an ethnic group would share a common cultural identity that separates them from other groups. Picardo, the Guardian Professional editor, differentiates this from race noting that as opposed to sharing physical characteristics, it would entail shared norms, values and ideas. Therefore, different cultural groupings would have different values and norms. Because of this difference, there is need for cultural sensitivity. With cultural sensitivity, despite knowing the existing cultural differences and similarities, no values would be assigned to such differences. This understanding and sensitivity critically inform the tenets of cultural awareness. Thus, cultural awareness would mean the development of understanding of and sensitivity to another ethnic group. It involves appreciating one's culture and accommodating with respect other people's cultures. This would require continuous development of knowledge of other people's cultures, especially by interacting with such people.

Cultural awareness is an important attribute to cultivate because it fosters peaceful and harmonious coexistence in this multi-cultural environment. What is considered as appropriate in one culture could be interpreted as inappropriate in another. Thus, misunderstandings could arise if a person uses own meanings to make sense of the other person's reality. Important to note is the argument by Picardo that cultural awareness is difficult as naturally, culture is not conscious to humans. From birth, humans have

learnt to do things unconsciously. Our values, experiences and ethnicity cause actions in a specific way. It is important to get out of our cultural boundaries so as to realize the impact our cultures have on other people. Seeing both the negative and positive aspects of our cultural differences would be an important approach in fostering peace and harmony in our societies. This cultural awareness would particularly be important when an organization seeks to expand its solutions and identity so as to take a different approach to its problem solving procedures. It not only promotes flexibility but also creates new valuable behaviors and skills. In business, cultural awareness creates knowledge on the expected body language, words and actions when interacting with the business community, thus enhancing chances of success.

I have been keen to promote cultural awareness to the best of my ability. Having been born in Sierra Leone, West Africa, it was a challenge fitting into the American culture. However, from constant interaction with my peers, I have come to learn and appreciate their culture. I have also taught most of them the African culture so as to avoid misunderstandings during our interactions. Furthermore, I have made friends from other parts of the world including Asia and have similarly sought to learn their cultures and teach them our culture. From this experience, I have come to appreciate that cultural awareness is among the basics for achieving success in a social context. Living in a world of diversity, being cognizant of what to do, say and hint in different settings determines people's reaction, which directly influences one's ability to meet the intended goals.

#### Work Cited

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