

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW

Medical school interviews can cause stress, panic, and anxiety for many premedical students. Many applicants will prepare and rehearse weeks in advance. But rather than looking at the interview as an overwhelming obstacle, reconsider this opportunity as your chance to showcase your tremendous ambition, knowledge, and everything else that is great about you.

You have the ability to answer and control the conversation to express exactly what you want to convey and stand out among the others. Prioritize any significant experiences that have been crucial to your journey to medicine. These events/incidents/adventures should reflect the wisdom and insight that you have gained. You want articulate, thoughtful, and well-conceived responses.

Focus on some core items, such as: why medicine, why that particular school, and what makes you unique. Instill enthusiasm, passion, confidence, and warmth in your responses. Rather than generic statements, emphasize on retelling short anecdotes to depict your positive traits and abilities. The energy you bring should be similar to how you told your best friend about your favorite band's concert, or how much you enjoyed that movie you've been looking forward to for months.

Be aware of who you are as an individual. Schools are attracted to candidates that are cognizant of their cultural, social, and economic background. And remember, the admissions committee has already invited you so they believe you can handle their curriculum. The only thing you have to do is share who you are.

Wardrobe and Appearance

Dress conservatively. Wear suits and comfortable shoes as you may tour through the school, make eye contact, speak in a friendly tone, and smile. Avoid strong cologne, visible tattoos, and flashy jewelry.

Men: Mustaches and beards should be neatly trimmed.

Women: Avoid big hair. Minimal or natural-looking makeup. Minimize jewelry. No stiletto heels.

Listen and be engaged. The interview day is full of a series of conversations and opportunities so do not feel that you should speak only when spoken to. Also, the committee will observe to see if you're not paying attention when another candidate is speaking.

What is the MMI?

The Multiple Mini Interview typically consists of approximately 6 to 10 minute timed stations that the applicants rotate through. Each station presents the applicant with a question, scenario, or task. Generally, schools look at your reasoning and thought-process: how you chose your answer, rather than what answer you chose. Studies have shown that the MMI format assess how individuals think of their feet, ability to listen, and their collegiality/rapport. If faced with a collaborative task, be sure to use communication and teamwork. Appearing too competitive could be seen as a negative.

Stations may include:

-Teamwork related task

-Essay writing

-Standard interview questions (Why do you want to be a physician?)

-Communication skills

For example: The parking space at your work has assigned spots. When leaving one day, you back into a BMW and crack his left side mirror. A security officer observes you doing this. The officer gives you the name and office number of the BMW owner. The officer explains that he has called the owner, Chris, and is expecting to see you shortly. *Enter Chris's office.*

-Ethical dilemma, social or policy issue

The following is ethical dilemma regarding placebos.

(Dr. Heyman recommends homeopathic remedies to her patients. He recommends homeopathic medicine to people with mild and non-specific symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, and muscle sores, because he believes it will do no harm. Consider the ethical problems that Dr. Heyman's behavior might pose and discuss them with the interviewer.)

Below are some enlightening articles on the MMI:

<http://uss.tufts.edu/hpa/PDF/MMI.pdf>

https://www.aamc.org/download/261110/data/aibvol11_no7.pdf

Panel Interviews

Interactive and group oriented, the panel interview is usually conducted by two or more interviewers (sometimes including a medical student). Questions are asked and collaborative group activities usually implemented.

Do Your Research

Investigate the school. Review information on their website, MSAR profile, and articles. You may also want to speak with some current medical students at the school to gain perspective.

<http://www.tomorrowdoctor.org/> is a great website that can offer information you can use for the interview. Is the school PBL or traditional curricula? Also it is suggested you look into MSAR and AAMC.

Do a mock interview. You can schedule an appointment for a mock interview at The Center for Student Success, 310.338.2833.

After the Interview

Send a thank you letter. Mention some topics they covered and include their name(s). If you are wait-listed, you can send supplementary material that wasn't included in your application to help, such as semester grades.

SAMPLE MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ✓ Tell me about yourself.
- ✓ Why are you interested in medicine? What inspired your interest and what did you do to pursue this decision.
- ✓ What memorable experiences do you have in the medical and clinical setting?
- ✓ What makes you a good candidate for our medical school?
- ✓ What do you feel will be the biggest challenge for you going into medical school?
- ✓ What are your reservations and/or hesitations about medical school?
- ✓ What has been your most rewarding experience working with others?
- ✓ Describe to me an experience you had working on a team. What was your role and how was the interaction?
- ✓ What are some mistakes that you've made in life? (Explain what you learned and how you applied it to your life)
- ✓ How do you cope with stress?
- ✓ What do you find to be the most pressing issue in healthcare today?
- ✓ What has been your experience working in underserved communities?
- ✓ How are politicians currently impacting medicine today?
- ✓ What disparities do you see in the US in terms of healthcare, what would you change?
- ✓ What is the difference between Medicare and Medicaid?
- ✓ Why did you choose your major? How has it prepared you for a career in medicine?
- ✓ How do you spend your free time?
- ✓ What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- ✓ Why should we pick you? What makes you unique?
- ✓ How might you calm a nervous patient?
- ✓ What are your plans if you don't get accepted into medical school?
- ✓ Is there any additional information you would like to share with the admissions committee that wasn't in your application or that we haven't talked about?
- ✓ Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years? Do you have any specific goals in medicine?
- ✓ If you are reapplying, what have you done since your last application to medical school?
- ✓ Do you have any questions?