



PREPARING FOR YOUR MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW

What You Will Be Assessed On

- *Physical bearing:* appearance, neatness, and confidence.
- *Communication skills:* ability to express ideas and opinions, verbal facility.
- *Personal characteristics:* friendliness and ability to relate.
- *Motivation:* derivation and strength of desire for a medical career.
- *Knowledge:* of self, medical profession, and issues in the field.
- *Maturity:* commensurate to age, ability to handle responsibility, commitment, etc.
- *Interests:* activities, recreational, athletic, and research.
- *Concern index:* compassion, social service, and empathy.
- *Emotional stability:* ability to relax, support system, etc.
- *Gut reaction:* overall impression, subjective feeling about the applicant.

Scheduling

- Try to group interviews in the same geographical area if applicable.
- Always *ask* for format of interview (how many, with whom, blind, length, etc.)
- Go one day early and try to connect with medical students. Investigate housing options.
- Tour the medical school and hospital facilities.
- Make arrangements for sitting in a class in advance if you can.

Preparation

- Conduct self-assessment and become familiar with typical medical school interview questions:
 1. Refer to the handout, Medical School Interview Questions
 2. See medical school interview feedback online from students interviewing nationwide at <http://www.studentdoctor.net/interview/index.asp>
- Key to your preparation is to review your verified AMCAS or ACCOMAS applications and your secondary essays.
- Think of more examples to quote during your interviews to support your statements.
- Practice, practice, practice:
 1. Practice with a friend, or, if you prefer, rehearse on your own in front of a mirror – with a recorder if necessary
- Learn how to approach and discuss medical ethical and hypothetical questions – acknowledge that these are often complex matters with no absolute right and wrong answers; state the main ideas behind both positions on the argument at hand; do not be afraid to take a stand but do explain your rationale.

- Read magazines and newspapers for current issues in the health field and issues related to health care reform and its impact (i.e., *New Physician*, *New York Times*, Kaiser Family Foundation: <http://healthreform.kff.org/>).
- Review websites to learn as much as you can about the school you are getting ready to visit. Minimally, become familiar with class size, curriculum, facilities, cost, teaching style, mission, philosophy, etc.
- Retrieve (or develop) your list of criteria for school selection to help you generate a list of school-specific questions to ask your interviewer.
- Decide what you are going to wear and wear it for at least an hour before your interview.

At the Interview

- Give yourself plenty of time to get to the school (approximately 15 minutes before)
- Be polite and respectful to everyone with whom you come in contact, since you are “on” from the moment you have interaction with anyone involved with the interview.
- Do not be deceived how casual an interview or interviewer may be.
- The medical students with whom you have interviews will be your toughest interviews.
- Use your voice, hands, and face to communicate.
- *Think* and, if necessary, *pause* before answering questions.
- Answer questions *briefly* but exhaustively.
- Be honest!
- Turn questions into opportunities to share a little more about you.
- Keep your cool with “difficult” questions.
- Ask your *own* questions!
- Get a timeline for a decision at the end of the interview.

After the Interview

- If you feel any illegal or inappropriate questioning occurred, contact the Admissions Office immediately.
- Consider sending a thank-you letter or a professionally written e-mail to the Admissions Committee – usually better than a card.
- Write your impressions about the interview and the school as a whole when things are still fresh in your mind to reflect on and learn from this experience.
- Consider developing your own post-interview checklist to guide this and future interviews’ reflection exercises.
- Adapt your preparation for the next interview based on what you learned.
- How did this school fulfill your selection criteria?

This handout was adapted with permission from the resource, *Understanding the Medical School Interview*, The Career Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan and from “Tips on preparing for medical school interviews”, Tahnee C. H. Prokopow, MPH, Hope College, Holland, Michigan