



Preparing for Your Medical School Interviews

Questions That You May Be Asked

Family

- Tell me about your family.
- Did you ever feel any pressure to become a doctor? If yes, from whom?

Personal Background

- Elaborate on _____ in your personal statement.
- Is there anything weak in your record? Why?
- What are your strengths?
- What teamwork experiences did you have? Difficulties? How were they resolved?
- What positions of leadership have you held? Describe them.
- What is your favorite piece of music?
- If you could have dinner with any three people from history, who would they be?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What three adjectives best illustrate who you are?
- If I asked your peers to describe you, what do you think they would say?
- What motivates you?
- How do you relax? What do you do in your spare time?
- How do you handle pressure?
- Provide an example of when you handled stress effectively.
- What was the most difficult decision you ever had to make?
- What is your biggest mistake/failure and what did you learn from it?
- What have been your most remarkable accomplishments?
- What do you consider to be your greatest asset?
- Give me an example of how you have recently demonstrated your problem solving skills by resolving a difficult situation.
- If you were on the admissions committee, what type of student would you look for?
- Why do you think we should admit you to this school?

Educational Background

- What were your favorite courses? Least favorite?
- What other medical schools have you applied to? Have you been accepted anywhere? Where would you most like to go?
- Tell me about your undergraduate institution.
- Tell me about your research.
- Why did you choose to attend the University of Michigan?
- Why did you decide to be a _____ major?
- How do you feel your undergraduate education has prepared you for a career in medicine?
- How did you prepare to take the MCAT?

Career Planning

- What other medical schools have you applied to? Have you been accepted anywhere? Where would you most like to go?
- Do you feel you are prepared to enter medical school?
- How will you finance your education?
- What do you expect to get from a career in medicine?
- Why are you interested in medicine?
- How do you know that medicine is a good career choice for you?
- Why have you selected medicine over other health care fields?
- What people/events/courses had the greatest influence on your decision to become a physician?
- What would you do if you were not accepted to medical school?
- Why did you apply to this school?
- Have you already identified any specialty interests?

Health Care Environment

- What is your perception of the relationship between physicians and the other members of the health care team?
- What do you think is the impact of insurance regulations, threats of malpractice, etc. on the medical profession?
- To what extent do you think the government should get involved with health care? Why?

Medicine as a Profession

- How would you rank three qualities of a physician in importance: compassion, integrity, and medical knowledge? Why?
- How would you describe the “ideal” physician?
- What is your understanding of a typical day for a physician?
- What concerns do you have about becoming a physician?
- What role do you think physicians should play in the devising and implementation of a health care reform?
- Have you ever watched anyone die?
- Do you think that physician’s pay is equitable?
- What is your personal obligation to provide medical treatment to those in poverty-stricken areas?

Hypothetical Situations

- If you were sued for malpractice, how would you react?
- How would you calm down a patient who has been waiting for you for over two hours?
- What would you tell a 13-year-old patient who came to you for a birth control prescription?
- How do you think you would respond to a bleeding patient knowing he/she was HIV positive?
- How and when would you inform a patient that he/she had a terminal illness?
- What conversation would you have with a woman approaching you about getting an abortion?

Medical Ethics

- Do you think that physicians should always tell the truth to their patients?
- How far should physicians go in an effort to help their patients?
- Do you think euthanasia is morally, socially and legally acceptable?
- Who should decide when and why medical treatment should be withheld?
- What is a physician’s ethical responsibility in helping a patient die?
- Under what circumstances is termination of pregnancy acceptable?
- What are the moral obligations of a physician to a patient’s fetus?

- Is it ethical to destroy embryonic blastocysts to harvest stem cells for research?
- How do you feel about using animals for research purposes?
- How should we protect human subjects in research studies?
- With the rise of HIV infection and other STD's, how do you think physicians should approach discussing sexual health and other safe sex practices with their patients, especially teenagers?
- Do you think hypnosis is an effective/legitimate form of medical treatment?
- What are your professional thoughts on breast implants/enlargements and other "cosmetic" types of medical interventions?
- Do you think it is ethical to offer monetary incentives to encourage people to donate organs?
- What responsibility do physicians have to contain the rising costs of health care?

Questions for You to Ask

- You should have an opportunity to ask your questions *at the end* of the interview. In general, it is a good idea to wait until then so that your interviewer can ask you all the questions that he/she has planned to fully evaluate you. This is especially true at schools with structured (vs. free-flowing) interviews.
- Review each school's literature to help you generate specific questions. Have your list of prepared questions in your portfolio - easy to retrieve if you need to. You may think of new, additional questions as you visit the campus on your interview day.
- Always ask open-ended questions vs. questions that would require a yes/no answer. Be prepared to clarify your questions as needed. *Avoid multi-part questions.* Keep your questions simple so they won't come across as too rehearsed.
- Always keep in mind who the target of your questions is. That is: Ask the right people the right/appropriate question! Please note that some of the questions below could be asked of multiple interviewers.

For Admission Officers

- In your view, what is the greatest strength of this school?
- How much flexibility is there in the coursework and in the timing of the courses?
- What's the attrition rate at this school? On what grounds have students left the school?
- How would you describe a typical entering class – backgrounds, age, etc.?
- Have your programs for recruitment and retention of minority been successful – if applicable?
- What kind of special support services (academic, personal, etc.) are available to students?
- Which school committees have medical student representation?

For Faculty Members

- I read your mission statement. What else can you tell me about the school's philosophy?
- What do you feel makes this institution unique? What do you consider to be the strengths of this program?
- What new projects or initiatives are in the works and what is driving the change?
- Which courses use PBL (problem-based learning) and how are they working out?
- What types of mentoring/advising systems exist at this school?
- What kinds of clinical opportunities are available during the pre-clinical years?
- What types of clinical sites are used for the clerkships?
- Can you describe the patient population that I will most likely have exposure to?
- What is the distribution of disease processes at these clinical sites?

- Where have your recent graduates gone, both geographically speaking and in terms of types of residencies?
- What kind of assistance will be available to me in identifying sites for residencies?
- How common is it to do rotations at other institutions or even internationally?
- How do you ensure that students obtain an adequate amount of clinical knowledge and skill prior to graduation?
- What impact has managed care, malpractice insurance, etc. had on this school?
- How does the school deal with students who are exposed to infectious diseases?

For Medical Students

- How would you describe the campus atmosphere?
- How safe is the campus environment? And the community at large?
- What types of voluntary or required community service initiatives are available?
- If you could improve something about this school, what area would you tackle first?
- What do you wish you had known prior to enrolling at this institution?
- Have any of your classmates left (transferred, dropped out...) and if so, for what reason?
- How can students evaluate the faculty?
- Can you give me an example of how responsive this school is to student feedback?
- How integrated are computers into the curriculum?
- What is the schedule for tests? How does the school's grading policy affect learning?
- How and how often are students evaluated both in the pre-clinical and the clinical years?
- What is the call schedule on the third-year rotations?
- If I were to enroll here, what words of wisdom would you have for me to help me succeed?

This list of questions was adapted with permission from the resource, *Understanding the Medical School Interview*, The Career Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.