



UNDERSTANDING THE MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW

Role of the Interview

- Interviews are conducted for screening and/or recruiting purposes.
- Some schools immediately screen out candidates who are ineligible because of their residency status.
- Many others do a first screening based on numerical criteria.
- Interviews help in assessing candidates' personal traits and characteristics beyond academic abilities.

How Many?

- The most common number of interviews is two, less often one, least often three.
- Candidates for the MD/PhD program generally receive several additional interviews with the relevant research departments.

How Long and Format?

- Some schools interview small numbers of applicants on several days during the week, while others tend to bring larger groups in on a single day.
- The latter model promotes a more elaborate and comprehensive interview day experience.
- Most institutions have a group orientation, a session on financial aid, campus tours, and lunch with medical students.
- Students sometimes have an opportunity to attend classes if they make arrangements in advance.
- Some schools bring students in for two days (attend classes, visit university campus, etc.)
- Most interviews last about 30 minutes, although longer is much more common than shorter.

When?

- Most interviews are concentrated in the period from September through April, although Early Decision Program (EDP) candidates usually interview in August and September.
- Many schools will attempt to accommodate requests from students to coordinate their interviews geographically.
- It is possible to reschedule interviews, if needed, as long as the request is presented professionally and with reasonable advanced notice.

Who Is Interviewed?

- Most generally, only students who meet certain academic and extracurricular requirements are granted interviews.
- Some state schools are committed to interviewing all in-state residents; some interview all applicants from their own undergraduate college; some have specific agreements with feeder schools; some show preference for children of faculty, alumni/ae, or other special groups although some of these interviews are often for counseling rather than admission purposes.

Who Conducts the Interviews?

- Virtually all schools use both their clinical and basic science faculty.
- Some schools *also* use medical students, administrators, alumni/ae, physicians, and other members of the community, liberal arts faculty, etc.
- Occasionally, alumni/ae conduct regional interviews; but, if you can afford it, always go to the actual campus.

What Do Interviewers Know In Advance About the Candidates?

- Some interviewers have access to the entire application file, some just to the personal statements, others to everything but the academic credentials. When interviewers have limited access to a candidate's file, the interviews are referred to as "blind or semi-blind." You may wish to adjust your responses accordingly.