



CAS Career Services

Interviewing for Medical Programs

Before the interview

- Research the school/program and prepare questions to ask during the interview
- Review any core competencies, ethical codes, and medical/health-related news and trends
- Know your driving directions, interview location, and parking information ahead of time
- Review your application materials. If it is in your application, they may ask about it.
- Practice interviews with a mock interview or Interviewstream on www.HireOSUGrads.com.
 - To access it click interview button on left menu then click practice interviews. Choose any of the pre-health options. You can access this with any computer that has a camera or webcam, 24/7.

During the interview

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early and bring the best, professional version of yourself
- Take a moment to organize your thoughts before answering challenging questions
- Draw from your skills, experiences, coursework, and other examples to answer questions
- Speak clearly and concisely while maintaining enthusiasm and positivity for the program
- If you get stuck, avoid saying "I don't know," instead ask to come back to the question later

After the interview

- Ask the interview committee your prepared questions and take notes on answers
- Maintain professional communication until you receive an admission offer
- Complete any further instructions given at or after the interview

Professional dress tips

- Use unscented deodorant liberally and mints/mouthwash to prevent distracting odors
- Be mindful of accessories that could be distracting, such as jewelry, scents, and tattoos
- Groom hair, nails, and make-up in a clean, professional, and simple fashion

General Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.

This question is extremely common for an opening question. Take 60-90 seconds to give an overview of who you are. Talk about why you chose a specific path of study, why you are interested in the medical/health profession, how your values, personality, and skills would align with the mission and vision of the medical/health profession, and how becoming a medical professional would help you accomplish short- and long-term goals. You should not spend a lengthy amount of time on any one area but briefly mention all the key details that are relevant. This is also the perfect time to make sure you point out anything from your application that you want them to know.

2. Why do you want to become a _____?

Why are you interested in medicine/healthcare?

Answer this question by explaining what drew you to this field. What makes this type of work sound interesting and rewarding for you? What made you want to apply to medical school? Describe how the medical field and specific program are a good fit for you. Avoid clichés. Tell them why you uniquely should be a medical professional.

3. What types of exposure have you had to the medical field?

What steps have you taken to acquaint yourself with what a _____ does?

What experiences do you have to prepare you for this work?

Explain in detail how you have sought out experiences that helped you better understand the field of medicine. You can talk about job shadowing, jobs, internships, classes, class projects, volunteer positions, clubs or student organizations, or campus involvement that demonstrates how you built skills that directly connect to preparing for work in medicine. Pull examples from more than one experience and make connections to what this taught you or what was important about the experience. Explain what you learned, saw, evaluated and how this helped you better understand your career goals. Describe your understanding of the medical field and various environments.

4. Behavioral questions

Behavioral questions are an attempt to determine how you would behave in a given situation. Answer these questions by telling a story from your personal, academic or work experience. Listen to the question carefully to make sure you understand the question before you start to answer. Use the STAR formula to organize your answer but also include enough detail to stay unique and memorable. Before the interview, determine what stories and examples you could share so the information is fresh in your mind. Practice your delivery, but do not memorize the dialog so you can be flexible with delivery. If you have to tell a story or describe a specific experience, it will be a behavioral question. General indicators of a behavioral question:

- Describe a time when you had to...
- Give me an example of...
- Tell me about a situation where...

Use the **STAR** method to help outline your response

Situation + **T**asks Required + Your **A**ctions Taken = **R**esult

- Situation: What was challenge or situation?
- Tasks: What were you required to achieve?
- Actions: What did you do?
- Results: What was the outcome of your actions?

Examples of behavioral questions (adapted from the AAMC Core Competencies for Entering Students):

- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Give me an example of a time you witnessed an “-ism.” What happened, and what did you do?
- Describe a time when you had to work with someone different from you.

- How would you define your style of communication?
- Give me an example of an ethical decision you had to make.
- Give me an example of a time you had to use time management.
- Tell me about a time you failed or didn't meet expectations.
- How do you receive feedback or constructive criticism?
- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem.
- What is your process for completing writing assignments?

5. How has your education and experience prepared you to become a _____?

Discuss classes, assignments or projects that you had during your time as an undergraduate. Relate this type of learning to preparation for medical/health school. Discuss the influence of faculty, mentors, TAs or other individuals who helped you be successful in the classroom. Include information about how you were successful in academics and how your undergraduate program prepared you for medical training.

6. What are your strengths?

List 1-3 strengths you can offer the institution/program and outline where you used them or where you learned them. This answer will be stronger when you can prove you have the skills by including examples utilizing the STAR method.

7. What are your weaknesses?

It is time to be honest and identify an area that needs development. Do not mention something that would make this type of work impossible for you, but put some thought into an area you want to improve. At the same time, do not make any excuses. Finish this answer with a positive spin by talking about how you have overcome this weakness or what you are doing to improve in this area.

8. What are your long and short term goals?

What does success look like in ten years in this profession?

This requires you to describe where you see yourself in the future. Do not answer with goals that would not align with the education you are seeking. Have an idea of what you want to do with your professional career. You do not need to know specifics because you have not had medical training, but interview committees want to know how you want to develop professionally.

9. What motivates you?

Interview committees want to know what you like doing and why you like doing it. Answer this honestly, and the content is likely to be personal. Avoid money motives and clichés, but the possibilities are endless. Respect, helping others, problem solving, accomplishment, goal driven are some options.

10. How will you finance your education?

Health professions school is very expensive. The interviewers are looking to see that applicants have made a financial plan for how to cover those costs. Whether it be through family support, loans or employment be able to describe how you will handle the costs associated with receiving medical training.

11. What are some of the current trends in medicine?

What are new changes in medicine?

Be able to discuss any current trends in your area of medicine. Read relevant publications and news sources to stay abreast of ongoing issues. Know enough to demonstrate that you understand how social and political forces can impact the healthcare industry.

12. How would you navigate the ethical issues of euthanasia/abortion/vaccinations/others?

This is not the time to give a textbook, factual answer. Do not try to interpret what the interview panel "wants to hear." Truly evaluate your own thoughts and feelings on the subject and discuss them. Include information on how you came to that conclusion through research, articles, class exposure, influential people, personal situations, individual experiences, and your own morals, ethics or beliefs.

13. What type of research or lab work have you completed?

Include details on any student positions as Research Assistant, Lab Tech, or other roles working with research. Be able to describe the project as a whole as well as your role on the team. What types of chemicals, equipment, materials and technology have you worked with? What was the goal of the project? Did you present, make a poster or contribute in a significant way? What did you learn? What did you find the most interesting? How did you time in the lab/field compliment your education?

14. What are your plans if you are not accepted into medical/dental/osteopathic/etc. school?

Having a plan B is always a good idea. Acceptance rates make it fact that not everyone will move forward in their plans to study medicine. What will you do to prepare for the application process again in the future? What will do you instead of practicing medicine? What other career interests do you do have?

15. How have you built leadership skills?

How have you demonstrated leadership?

Describe a situation where you acted as the leader using the STAR method. This could be with a group project, an executive position with a club or organization on campus or a volunteer position that put you in charge of something/someone. Discuss any situation where others relied on you to make decisions and give direction. What key skills did you demonstrate? What type of leader were you? Were you successful in your leadership role?

16. Why should we choose you over thousands of other qualified candidates?

This is your time to sell yourself. Describe what makes you different from other students. Tell them what you can bring to the table and describe key experiences or skills that set you apart. You have something to offer – here is where you show that!

17. Do you have any questions for us?

Do not ask something that can be found easily on a website, brochures, or other promotional material. Ask questions relevant to the curriculum, evaluations, support, policies, etc. to determine if you would be a great fit for the program. Prepare 4-5 questions, but you will only ask some of them.

- What modalities are used for student lectures?
- How are students evaluated academically?
- What kind of academic, personal, financial, and career counseling is available to students?
- What support services are available for ethnic/cultural minorities, LGBT students, women, etc.?
- How would you describe studying resources or extracurricular facilities?
- What type of clinical sites are available or required for clerkships?
- What services/staff are available to assist students with budgeting and financial planning?
- What protocols are established for dealing with student exposure to infectious diseases?
- What types of residency programs did recent graduates get accepted into?
- What does the school do to prepare me for residency?
- Why did you choose to come to this school?
- What is the most exciting research going on at the school this year?
- Are there opportunities to be involved in research during the first 2 years?
- What kind of health and wellness resources are provided to students?
- How is technology being used to enhance the curriculum?
- What happens when you have students that need to remediate coursework?
- Is community service a big part of the curriculum?

Core competencies for entering medical students. (2014). Retrieved May 11, 2017, from <https://www.staging.aamc.org/initiatives/admissionsinitiative/competencies/>

Preparing for the Medical School Interview - Sample Questions, Tips, and Format. (2017). Retrieved May 11, 2017, from <http://www.missouristate.edu/bms/CMB/InterviewPrep.htm>

Selecting a Medical School: 35 Questions I Wish I Had Asked. (2015). Retrieved May 11, 2017, from <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/selecting-medical-school-35-questions-i-wish-i-had/>

Multiple Mini-Interview Questions

The multiple mini-interview (MMI) is a method to evaluate candidates' interpersonal skills. Similar to circuit training or speed dating, candidates will rotate through multiple rooms and interviewers and answer specific questions to evaluate personal and professional characteristics.

Each station will have interviewers and one case study, question, or activity. Questions will be on a timed circuit, where you have two minutes to read the prompt and eight minutes to address the situation. Answer the question based on the information provided, not your assumptions

Possible MMI scenarios

- Role-play scenarios with an actor
- Essay writing station
- Group activities with other candidates
- Ethical dilemmas involving social and political implications

Answering MMI questions

- Remain non-judgmental at all times and gather all of the missing facts
- Identify who is directly and indirectly impacted by your decisions
- Consider all ethical, social, and cultural implications regarding the prompt or situation
- Recognize the question type and prepare your course of action before you enter the room
- Use an if/then and best/worst approach to navigate difficult questions and situations
 - If I had to give the kidney to the older patient, then the best/worst outcomes are...
 - Do not hesitate to entertain additional options in a forced-choice question (e.g., dialysis)

Example of an MMI setup (adapted from the UAB)

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Group activity
8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes team activity part 1
8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes one-on-one	8 minutes team activity part 2

Moemeni, B. (2017, August 30). Top 8 Strategies to Prepare For and Ace Your Multiple Mini Interview (MMI). Retrieved January 4, 2019, from <https://www.studentdoctor.net/2017/08/30/multiple-mini-interview-mmi/>

University of Alabama at Birmingham. (2019). Interviews. Retried January 4, 2019, from <https://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/future-students/admissions/interview-information>