



Tips for Interviewing at Medical Schools/Health Professional Schools

MMI Style:

- Be sure you are connecting with the situation at hand and not simply role playing or acting. If role playing, treat the other person as a person should be treated in real life.
- Respect diversity and different points of views
- This is to test your integrity, expression of empathy, ability to connect and build rapport quickly and to think critically on your feet
- Demonstrate how you think through problems
- Part of communication is listening closely to what the other person is saying and not to judge
- Speak clearly, don't rush yourself
- What questions would you ask? What would you consider when working through the scenario? What is not being said? Are there resources you can offer beyond yourself?
- How would the other person feel? How is your demeanor, questions, advice, non-verbal communication making them feel? Would they trust you or not?
- These scenarios are not always about the solution to the problem posed, but how you connect and work with others through the scenario. Refrain from being too analytical and pragmatic.
- Do not make decisions for others... support them and challenge them to make decisions for themselves.

Medical Student advice for MMI interviews:

"I focused on the themes and characteristics in the best responses, and then reflected/took notes on how I would try to apply them to my own responses/experiences. This let me quickly apply my own experiences to some of the MMI prompts without hesitation, while still emphasizing those important themes/characteristics."

"I never tried to memorize answers, but I came into my interviews knowing the themes, experiences, and characteristics that I wanted the interviewers to see."

"Taking a moment to focus on my breath, calm my mind, and then begin to organize my thoughts between MMI stations was extremely helpful. This piece of advice was maybe the biggest game-changer for me, and is especially helpful for MMIs, when 1 station can throw off the rest of the interview."

Research: Start General and work slowly into the more minute details...

When talking about your research, practice describing it in one-two sentences as if the person is not familiar with your research at all. For example, "My research used a mice model to investigate the effect of sleep deprivation on cognition." From there, you can drill down into details such as, "The current research shows that sleep deprivation can hinder our academic performance so we wanted to see if there was a clear amount of sleep that correlates to optimum academic performance" (aka "cognition") ... From there you can delve more into the details of how the research experiment was designed, what techniques were used, and what trends were identified.

Overall Communication:

Make eye contact, relax, listen, be yourself, and don't talk too fast.

Refrain from using terms such as "like", "I like", "really neat", "awesome", "cool", etc... This makes you sound young. You want to express maturity, world and life experiences that have moved you beyond "liking" something to a more aware place of understanding how your knowledge of something can affect another person, contribute to a situation, add value to your intended career and patients alike.

Be extremely clear in framing your responses; *Structure:* General introduction sentence of your main point, followed by a very descriptive (use adjectives to paint a verbal picture) and specific account of what you mean to say—you need to define the meaning of what you are saying. Summarize with future considerations/alternative ways of thinking/future implications of the larger issue.

What you mean to say: For example, "When I observed physicians in the Emergency Room, they seemed to be under a lot of pressure." DEFINE MEANING OF PRESSURE... "They had many conflicting interests, limited amounts of resources and time, and they were constantly reassessing their priorities in order to meet the ever-changing demands of a face paced community hospital in an underserved area. They used their team members such as the nurses, techs, and social workers, volunteers to a degree that allowed patients to receive the best care possible. I was impressed by their resourcefulness and the overall willingness of everyone to play a role in making a chaotic environment more manageable for patients and their families." RATHER THAN "I shadowed physicians and saw lots of gunshot wounds, and gang violence. A few people even coded when I was there and families were upset."

Describe your interests as they align with a career in medicine-- Identify what skills you have, how you gained them, and then how they translate into the field of medicine and the art of providing healthcare services to others.

For example, "I want to help people" ... think of a different and more insightful way to express this idea. What does that even mean? What does that mean to you? How can you describe that and illustrate that idea fully to the interviewer? In what way can you use medical training to help others?

Another example, "I like science" ... What is it about learning science vs. other academic fields that is interesting to you? Is it because you are good at it? Is it because you are challenged by it? In what ways? Why does liking science even matter? You have to dig much deeper than wanting to help others and liking science. There are thousands of other careers that fall into this category.

Consider framing this same idea differently: Why is science important? What value does science add to healthcare delivery, society, and medicine? How can we make the science we know applicable to a patient? We translate, are a liaison, and an educator when it comes to science.

Ethics, Health Policy, and Additional Resources

Identify the challenges we face when trying to deliver accessible, coordinated, and personalized health care in our modern society

Consider how much things cost and the economics involved in health care—health insurance, tax payers, etc. <http://sps.columbia.edu/bioethics/premed>

This link focuses on how population health (a foundational public health concept) is driving innovation with respect to delivery of and payment for health care. <http://www.guidewell.com/population-health-podcast/>

Health Care Policy Talk with Alumni Carl Patten: <https://vimeo.com/112831551> | Password: Health

Virtual Interviews: Two types of video interviews

Live Virtual Interviews connect you with an interviewer in real time. You will be asked to sit face-to-face with the interviewer(s) and answer their questions. You may be given an opportunity to ask questions.

Asynchronous Virtual Interviews are on-demand interviews that will *not* have an interviewer present. You will be asked to respond to questions presented via text or prerecorded video. Your responses will be recorded by your device's webcam and shared with reviewers at a later time.

Helpful information to know before your interview:

- Live or asynchronous
- Video interview platform
- Number of interviewers
- Interview length
- Types of interview questions
- Competencies or skills assessed during the interview

Virtual Environment & Technology Tips:

- Stable internet connection and speed – Wi-Fi vs ethernet
- Recommend using laptop computer or tablet to improve stability, not your phone.
- Check microphone and camera – place in the same spot each time you practice interviewing
- Turn off all notifications and shut down all programs on your device before interview
- Have an outlet nearby
- Interview in a private, quiet, and well-lit space – free of distractions
- Avoid bright lighting and shadows – face lamp is good
- Consider your backdrop – keep it clean and neat and free of clutter
- Record practiced interviews so that you can review your demeanor – should be calm and engaged
- Look at device's camera, not the screen
- Allow ample time to check your camera, microphone, internet, and computer battery before interview
- Have a backup plan in case technology fails – provide phone number in advance to interviewer
- If something goes wrong stay calm and take a deep breath, regain your focus, and continue the interview
- Contact interviewer or coordinator if you are having technical issues, and follow their directions calmly

Completing Your Interview

Typical Questions:

Although there are many types of interview questions, most fall into one of three categories.

- **Behavioral questions** will ask you to describe previous experiences to demonstrate your level of knowledge and skills and the extent of your experiences. For example, "Please describe a time when you observed teammate behave in a manner that was inappropriate. Explain what the situation was, what actions you took, and the outcome."
- **General questions** will ask you to describe yourself broadly. For example, "Tell me why you are interested in this medical school."
- **Situational questions** will ask you to demonstrate your level of knowledge and skill by describing what you should or would do in different hypothetical situations. For example, "Imagine you are working on a group project with a classmate. The professor compliments your work on the project. She gives you sole credit and fails to mention that your classmate played a major role. What should you do?"

Identify Sample Experiences:

- If the school has provided a list of competencies or skills to be assessed during the interview, reflect on your experiences related to them. Consider reviewing the [Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students](#) before preparing for your interview(s).

- Review your CV and reflect on your experiences and learning before you participate in the interview. Try to identify some situations you think best exemplify your skills.
- Discuss your experiences with your pre-health advisors. Which are the best examples of your knowledge and skills? Your examples should demonstrate your highest level of proficiency.
- Consider creating a brief list of experiences that demonstrate your skills and could be used in response to different questions. It may be helpful to have these experiences readily available as you prepare your response to each interview question.

Responding to Questions:

- Try to focus on providing detailed examples of behavior that you engaged in from your experiences when responding to questions.
- Use clinical and nonclinical experiences in your responses, as appropriate.
- Provide detailed responses and try to avoid speaking in generalities. Typically, one strong example is better than several weak or tangential examples.
 - Do not provide patient information that could be used separately or in combination to identify a patient, such as names, locations, diagnoses, or other distinguishing characteristics. Refer to a patient as “the patient.”
 - If your response may portray another person in a negative light, do not provide information that could be used separately or in combination to identify that person, such as a name, title, location, or other distinguishing characteristic.
- Provide a complete response to each question. In general, when responding to:
 - **Behavioral questions**, share past experiences and be sure to discuss the situation or task you encountered, the actions you took, and the outcome of your actions.
 - **Situational questions**, discuss the actions you should take, why you should take those actions, and what you would expect the result of your actions to be.