



## MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEWS

Admissions officers use the medical school interview to identify candidates with maturity, empathy, and superior interpersonal skills. They already know your credentials. Now they want to know what kind of person you are and how you relate to others. Most committees are comprised of faculty members and other representatives. Some schools ask upper-level med students to take part. Some medical schools have separate one-on-one interviews. Others conduct interviews by panel. At some schools you will interview alone. At others you will interview along with a group of other candidates. The interviewer(s) may ask credential questions, opinion questions, behavioral questions, competency questions, or scenario-based questions.

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Questions about your Education

- Why did you choose your undergraduate major?
- How well did you do in your science-related courses?
- Which courses did you enjoy most? Which courses have been the most challenging for you?
- How have you tried to achieve breadth in your undergraduate curriculum?
- How has your undergraduate research experience prepared you for medical school?
- How have your medical/healthcare shadowing experiences prepared you for medical school?
- How have your volunteer opportunities or extracurricular experiences prepared you for the responsibilities of being a physician?
- What did you learn from your internship experience?
- How do you envision using your medical education?

#### Questions about Your Character and Personality

- What personality traits do you possess that you feel make you a good fit for the medical profession?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Name one of your greatest accomplishments?
- Thinking of examples from your recent past, how would you assess your empathy and compassion?
- As a pre-med student, what skills have you learned to help manage your time and relieve stress?
- If you could be granted three wishes for making the world/society/your community a better place, what would they be and why?
- What do you do for fun or leisure?
- After 20 years as a physician, what kind of success would you hope to have achieved?
- What qualities do you look for in a physician? Can you provide an example of a physician who embodies any of these ideals?
- What kind of experiences have you had working with sick people? What did you learn that you didn't know beforehand?
- Do you have any family members or role models who are physicians?
- What individuals have been influential in your decision to pursue a medical career?
- If you invited four people from the past to dinner, who would they be, why would you invite them, and what would you talk about?
- Does your academic record reflect any major challenges? If so, what are they and why did they occur?
- What contributions do you hope to make to the medical field?

## **Medicine-Related Questions**

- What excites you about medicine in general?
- What do you know about the current trends in our nation's healthcare system?
- What do you believe to be some of the most pressing health issues today? Why?
- What do you feel are the negative or restrictive aspects of medicine from a professional standpoint?
- If you had to choose between clinical and academic medicine as a profession, which would you pick?

## **Society Related Questions**

- What do you feel are the social responsibilities of a physician?
- What do you consider the most important social problem facing the United States today and why?
- How do you think national health insurance affects physicians, patients, and society?
- In what manner and to what degree do you stay in touch with current events?
- Can you think of any examples in our society when healthcare is a right? When is it a privilege? When is it not clear?

## **Questions about Ethics**

- Are you aware of any current controversies in the area of medical ethics?
- Have you personally encountered any moral dilemmas? Of what nature?
- How do you feel about euthanasia or medically assisted suicide?
- What different feelings and issues might you experience with a terminally ill patient, as opposed to other patients?
- How would you feel about treating a patient who has tested positive for HIV?
- What are some of the ethical issues that our society considers in regard to teenage pregnancy?
- Assume you have limited resources and you must make decisions in a major emergency with a wide assortment of patients from all ages, backgrounds, and degree of injury. Assume also that there is no "right answer" to this question, only considered and unconsidered responses. Who would you direct to receive the treatment first and why?

## **Questions about Diversity**

- What international travels have you taken? What exposure to other cultures have you had?
- What experience have you had with minority, disadvantaged, or marginalized populations?
- If you are a minority candidate, how would your background uniquely prepare you to be, and influence your role as, a physician?
- If you are a woman, how has your gender impacted your decision to pursue a medical career?
- If you are not a minority candidate, how might you best meet the needs of a multiethnic, multicultural patient population?
- If you are economically disadvantaged or have limited financial means, how has this adversity shaped you?
- To what extent do you feel that you owe a debt to society or to those less fortunate than yourself?

## **Questions about Medical School**

- What do you think it takes to be successful in medical school?
- What special qualities or unique characteristics set you apart from other medical school candidates?
- What qualities or features makes a medical school particularly desirable to you?
- What skills and competencies would you hope an ideal medical school experience would give you?

## **Questions about Your Motivation**

- Discuss your decision to pursue medicine.
- When did you decide to become an MD, and why?
- Why did you decide to choose medicine and not some other field where you can help others, such as nursing, physical therapy, pharmacology, psychology, education, counseling, or social work?
- How have you tested your motivation to become an MD?
- What will you do if you are not accepted to medical school this year? Do you have an alternative career plan?

## MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW TIPS

Be ready to discuss your academic background, extracurricular and leisure activities, employment and research experience, views on medical problems or relevant ethical issues, and your reasons and motivation for wanting to become a physician.

Some schools use the interview to see how well you function under stress. They deliberately put you in an uncomfortable position to observe how you behave under pressure. Typical tactics include asking questions about sensitive or controversial topics, delving into personal matters, rattling off a series of questions, or showing disapproval at everything you say. If you find yourself in this position, try to relax. Interviewers don't expect you to have a ready answer for every question, but they do expect you to be able to think on your feet and give a considered response. If a question catches you off-guard, don't be afraid to take a moment to formulate a response. If a question seems ambiguous, ask for clarification. By taking the time to make sure that your response is well-conceived and well-spoken, you will come across as thoughtful and articulate, which are characteristics essential in a good doctor.

Ask good questions. The best interview is a give-and-take dialogue. Approach the interview as a conversation. You should already know a lot about the school, so don't ask a question that you could easily find the answer to on their website or in their brochures. Instead, take the opportunity to learn more about faculty, research opportunities, and access to internships.

First impressions matter. The tone of an interview is usually set in the first few seconds. Don't forget that you are there because you are being strongly considered. Observe proper etiquette and protocol. Be on time and look the part. Dress conservatively. Carry your documents in a portfolio. Make eye contact and use a firm handshake. Smile and be positive. And don't forget to send a thankyou letter after each interview.