

Navigating the Healthcare Admissions Interview

UConn Center for Career Development &

UConn Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Advising Office

AGENDA

Part 1: Interview basics

- Purpose of the interview
- Importance of the interview
- Types of interviews

Part 2: How to prepare

- Performing a self-assessment
- Researching the school/program
- Planning for the day of

Part 3: The interview itself

- Types of interview questions
- Tips for answering common questions
- Sample questions/practice

Part 4: Additional considerations

- Ethics
- Communication
- Questions to ask
- Follow-up

Interview Basics

PART 1

Application Process

PREPARE

Take entrance exams

Determine schools to apply to

Write resume/CV and personal statement(s)

Gather letters of recommendation

Attend open houses (if offered)

APPLY

File primary applications

Send score reports

File secondary applications

INTERVIEW

Meet with program representatives, faculty, current students, etc.

DECIDE

Wait for offer(s) to be extended

Weigh options and choose a school to attend or an alternate plan

Purpose of the Interview

To assess your:

- Level of interest in the school/program
- Fit with the current faculty/students
- Potential in the field of healthcare
- Holistic candidacy

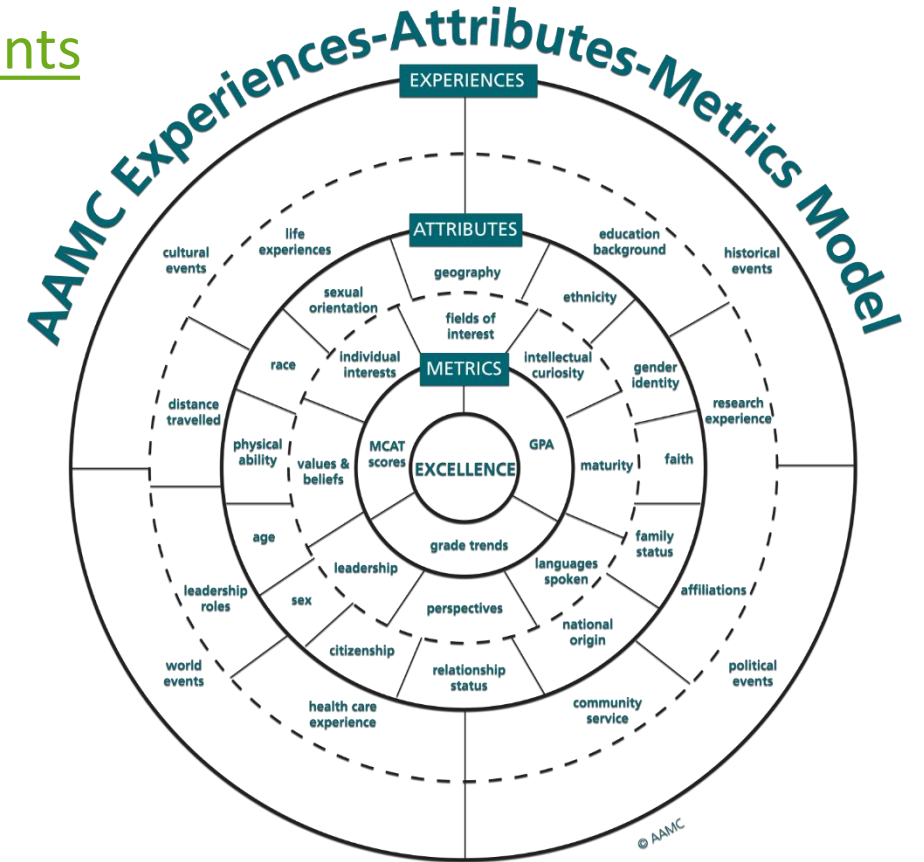


What is Holistic Review?

Holistic review is an admissions process that considers each applicant individually by balancing their academic metrics with experiences and attributes. These factors are viewed in combination to consider how an individual might contribute value not only as a medical student, but also as a future physician. Nearly all medical schools report using some elements of holistic review.

AAMC 15 Core Competencies

- The Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students
- Real Stories Demonstrating Core Competencies
- Anatomy of an Applicant: Self-Assessment Guide



Adapted from *Workforce America: Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource*, McGraw Hill Publishing, 1990.

AAMC 15 Core Competencies

- Demonstrating Competence in an Unconventional Application Year webinar

Through holistic review we can assess your competencies

- Essays – Service orientation, teamwork, resilience and adaptability, capacity for improvement, cultural competency, capacity for improvement, written communication.
Personal statement and secondary questions can be a good place to talk about competencies demonstrated during the last few months
- Experiences – Reliability and adaptability, service orientation, social skills, teamwork, oral communication, scientific inquiry
- Letters of recommendation – can touch on interpersonal, intrapersonal, thinking and reasoning and science competencies
- Interview - can touch on interpersonal, intrapersonal, thinking and reasoning and science competencies



AAMC 15 Core Competencies

- Demonstrating Competence in an Unconventional Application Year webinar

Plan your mission!

- **Resource assessment:** What are my resources (experiences & competencies) and how do I best utilize/maximize them?

Tip: Keep a journal listing your experiences, hours, contact info and write about what you've learned and how experiences relate to competencies!

- **Execute the mission:** Communication, communication, communication!!!

- Most meaningful experience description
- Personal Statement
- Reference letters

Tip: give updated resume & brief written summary of your most meaningful highlights

- Supplemental application

Tip: This is where you can really personalize your application

- Interview



Importance of the Interview

If you are offered an interview, that means you are a qualified candidate, but it also means everyone else interviewing is a qualified candidate.

According to the AAMC, in the 2019-2020 cycle:

53,371 prospective students applied to medical school

21,869 students matriculated into U.S. programs

That's roughly
41%

Types of Interviews

TRADITIONAL

One-on-one or group conversation between you and program representatives

Topics include: your background, motivation, depth and breadth of interest, hot topics, ethics, empathy, teamwork, your experience

MULTIPLE MINI INTERVIEW

A series of short, structured interview stations involving live and/or prepared scenarios

Topics include: ethical decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, current healthcare and societal issues



AAMC VIDEO INTERVIEW TOOL FOR ADMISSIONS (VITA)

A one-time, one-way video (recorded) interview designed to help medical schools assess applicants' pre-professional competencies important for success in medical school

VITA Key Facts

- Takes place using HireVue, a video interviewing platform and is a one-time, one-way experience
- Will consist of 6 questions
 - Interviewers have one minute to read the question and think about their response followed by up to three minutes to record a response
- Designed to measure some core competencies for entering medical students
- [AAMC VITA Website](#)
 - Includes a full list of participating schools, the policy and procedure guide, FAQs, preparation tips, and accommodation info
- [AAMC VITA Practice Interview](#)
- [AAMC's Prep for Success in your Virtual Interview webinar](#)

AAMC Situational Judgement Test

- “The AAMC SJT is a standardized exam that presents a series of hypothetical scenarios students may encounter in medical school and asks examinees to evaluate the effectiveness of a series of behavioral responses to each scenario.”
- Piloted by two medical schools (UC Davis SOM & U Minnesota Medical School Twin Cities campus) for the 2021 Cycle
- Focuses on eight core competencies
- 30 scenarios / 186 test items / 75 minutes to complete
- [AAMC SJT Essentials](#)
- [AAMC SJT Examinee Preparation Guide](#)



CASPer Test

- Situational judgment test offered by Altus Assessments
- Often functions as part of a school's secondary application
- 12 sections / 60-90 minutes to complete
- Each section contains a video or word-based scenario and three open-ended questions
- Test takers have five minutes to respond to all three questions
- [Official site with list of participating schools](#)

DO programs & virtual interviews

July 8, 2020 Update:

“At this time, AACOM doesn't have a centralized asynchronous interview platform similar to the AAMC. That being said, each of our institutions will be utilizing a variety of platforms to host their virtual interviews, some using asynchronous interview platforms, while others will use ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, Webex, or other software vendors they choose.

The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) encouraged all 36 colleges of medicine to provide our applicants with an option for a virtual interview in place of the traditional in-person interview throughout the entire 2020-2021 application cycle. Read the full news release [here](#).”

School types & virtual interviews

- **Dental programs** / [COVID-19 updates page](#)
 - See individual school entries for available information about virtual interviews this cycle.
 - [General information about dental school interviews](#)
- **Texas medical & dental programs** / [COVID-19 updates page](#)
 - See individual school entries for available information about virtual interviews this cycle.
- **PA programs** / [Virtual interviews: The Current “Normal” for Admissions](#)
- **Optometry programs** / [Virtual Interviews Chart](#)

Preparing for an Interview

PART 2

Performing a Self-Assessment

After an interview, the interviewer remembers 3-4 key takeaways.

- What are the **main pieces of information** I want to make sure I cover during my interview?
- What **core competencies and other skills** do I want to demonstrate that I have during my interview? Do I have stories/examples to back them up?
- What makes me **unique** in comparison to other candidates?
- Am I able to elaborate on everything included in my **application materials** without being repetitive?
- How do my **values, interests, and skills** align with this particular program?
- Can I explain my **research** in a way that is accessible to others?

Researching the Program

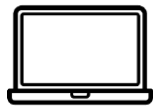
WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?

- Mission and values
- Program curriculum
- Other program elements, like experiential learning, affiliated student organizations, service opportunities, etc.
- Key faculty and staff
- Faculty research topics
- Recent recognition

WHERE SHOULD I LOOK?

- National and regional associations (ex. AAMC, ADEA, SAPTA, etc.)
- Program's website
- Social media
- LinkedIn
- Husky Mentor Network
- News outlets
- Student Doctor Network

The Night Before & The Day Of



Check your technology, especially internet connection, needed software, and audio/visual capabilities



Lay out clothes and get a good night's sleep



Make sure your interview space has good lighting, a professional background, and is clear of any distractions



Set up at least 10 minutes early and join the call 5 minutes early



Be “on” from the beginning and make a strong first impression

Dress Like a Healthcare Professional



The Interview Itself

PART 3

Types of Interview Questions

TRADITIONAL

Usually relate to your personality, background, and values

Allow interviewer to get to know you better as a person and candidate

VITA CALLS THESE “MEDICAL SCHOOL JOURNEY QUESTIONS”

BEHAVIORAL

Used to find out what type of behavior you have used to handle specific situations in your past experiences

Allow interviewer to predict how you may react to similar situations in the future

VITA CALLS THESE “PAST BEHAVIOR QUESTIONS”

CASE

Put your critical thinking and problem solving skills to the test on the spot

Can allow the interviewer to see how you interact in a collaborative setting

VITA CALLS THESE “SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS”

Translating the Question

How can I tell what they're really asking?

- Listen for keywords
- Put yourself in their shoes
- Focus on transferrable skills/content
- Avoid cliché responses

Translating the Question - Examples

Why are you interested in becoming a _____?

- Looking for your genuine interest in pursuing the field because graduate school is not easy and they want to make sure you're committed/ready

Tell me about a time you were part of a successful team.

- Looking for you to describe your teamwork skills because working in healthcare requires collaborating with many other professionals, and that requires quite a bit of teamwork

If you won \$1 million tomorrow, what would you do with it?

- Looking for you to talk about your values and how your actions align with them

Sample Traditional Questions

- Why do you want to be a _____?
- Why do you want to attend our school/program?
- What will you do if you don't get into medical school?
- What are the biggest problems with today's healthcare system?
- What are the most important characteristics of a [physician/dentist/PA, etc.]?
- How do you see this profession being fulfilling to you in 10 years?
- Is there anything else I should know about you? *(at the end of the interview)*

Behavioral Questions

Behavioral questions usually start with:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Give me an example when...
- Describe a moment when...

SITUATION

Brief overview
for context

TASK

The task or
project the
story is about

ACTION

Specific action
steps YOU took
to address the
task

RESULT

The outcome(s)
and your
learning

Sample Behavioral Questions

- Give me a specific example when you overcame a challenge related to your academics.
- Tell me about a time you demonstrated your ability to work under pressure.
- Describe a situation where you had to communicate a difficult message to someone. How did it go?
- Give me an example of when you successfully solved a problem with a team.

Case Questions

Case questions are not intended to test specific field knowledge; they are meant to evaluate your thought process and ability to think on your feet.

- Listen carefully
- Understand the goal (ask questions if you don't)
- Consider the question from a variety of perspectives
- Process out loud, if appropriate
- Work on time management

Case Questions

- You see your friend cheating on an exam; what do you do?
- A close friend in your 1st year medical school class tells you that their mother was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and they are considering dropping out to spend more time with her. What would you say to them?
- You are working with a patient who is adamantly requesting a certain type of treatment that you don't believe will help. What do you do?
- Why are manholes round?

Additional Considerations

PART 4

Ethics

Ethics are a theme of healthcare interviews because the program wants to ensure you will be an ethical practitioner

- Be honest and true to yourself
- Present both sides of an ethical dilemma to show you have considered them before making your decision
- Highlight your ethical and moral values and connect them to the program's whenever possible
- Your interviewers may have different beliefs than you, but so will your patients at times, and you need to be comfortable with that

Communication

NON-VERBAL

- Maintain good eye contact
- Be aware of posture, hand gestures, and fidgeting
- Maintain professionalism; treat both faculty and student interviewers equally regarding respect and professionalism
- Show enthusiasm

VERBAL

- Use formal grammar
- Do not swear under any circumstances
- Avoid fillers such as “um”, “you know”, and “like”
- Silence is okay if used sparingly
- Avoid skipping questions
- If you mess up, address your mistake, keep going, and don’t let it derail you

Questions for the Interviewers

DO ASK

3-5 questions per interview

Paths of program alumni

Specific aspects of program curriculum

Orientation opportunities

Current events impacting the program

Program's plans for future growth

Next steps in the selection process

DO NOT ASK

Anything that can easily be found online

How much money you can expect to make

Controversial topics

Program criticisms

Personal topics (to an extent)

After the Interview

Follow up with a thank you e-mail within 24 hours

An additional mailed handwritten letter or card is acceptable, but not required

If you meet with multiple people, send unique notes to each

Dear Dr. Chan,

It was a pleasure to meet you today at my UConn Medical School interview. Thank you for sharing more details about the first semester practicum course that all UConn Medical students take; I am very interested in the example placement at Hartford Healthcare you suggested and look forward to learning more about that possibility.

I also really enjoyed learning more about the cohort model of the program and how that generally improves the success of graduates. I would be honored to one day be a part of the UConn Medical School alumni community.

Thank you again for taking the time out of your day to speak with me; I look forward to hearing from you soon.

*Sincerely,
Lisa*

Resources

PRACTICE INTERVIEW AND NETWORKING RESOURCES



Mock Interview - Medical School



Sandra

Medical School

Prepare to impress in your medical school interviews and gain admission to a top program.



Suzanne

Organizational Skills

Questions about your ability to organize and stay on top of details.



Sarah

Prioritization Skills

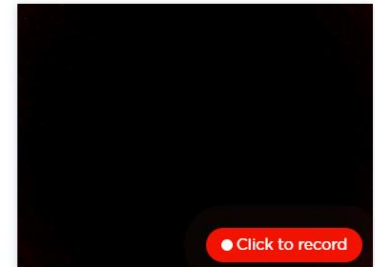
Questions about your judgment and ability to prioritize tasks.



Angela

Time Management

Questions about your ability to meet deadlines and manage time effectively.



What specialty appeals to you most?

Previous question

Next question

Center for Career Development

Handshake



1:1 Practice Interviews
Career Coaching



Practice Interviewing
Guide



Virtual Interview
Supplement

career.uconn.edu

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Questions?

TYPE THEM INTO THE CHAT BOX