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# Preparing for a Successful Health Profession School Interview

**GECCDC**  
GLOBAL EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER



# Workshop Overview

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- Purpose of the interview
- Types of interviews
- What to expect
- How to prepare



# Purpose of the Interview

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- Final step in the admissions process
- Determines your fit for the school
- Opportunity to make a positive impression on your application
- Allows candidate to interview the perspective school



# Types of Interviews

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- Open file
  - Entire file has been reviewed
- Semi-open file
  - Essay only reviewed
- Closed file



# Types of Interview Questions

- Traditional
- Behavioral
- Hypothetical Scenarios



# Traditional Questions

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- Factual information is provided
- School takes your word at face value

Sample Questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose your major?
- What is a weakness you have?



# Behavioral Questions

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- Assumptions about your future performance based on past behaviors and attitudes.
- Require concrete, specific examples to reveal skills

Sample Behavioral Questions:

- Give me an example of a challenge you experienced and how you dealt with it.
- Tell me about a time when you exhibited teamwork.



# Behavioral Questions

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Recommend "**STAR**" framework to structure your responses:

What was the **S**ITUATION?

What was your **T**ASK?

What **A**CTION did you take?

What was the **R**ESULT?



# Hypothetical Questions

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- Interviewee is requested to analyze a situation and present how s/he would respond.
- Interviewer assesses analytical ability and thought process.
- There are no “right” answers



# Hypothetical Questions

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## Sample Case Scenarios

- If there was an accident on the highway, would you stop to help the victims, knowing that doing so might lead to a malpractice claim against you?
- A patient who has been in an accident needs a blood transfusion. She states that her religion does not allow them. You are the physician in charge. What will you do? Will you override her strong objection? Why/why not?



## Who conducts the interview?

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- Faculty/staff member
- Admissions Committee member
- Faculty or Staff member and student interviewer
- Panel interview – More than two interviewers (rare)
  - NW Feinberg School of Medicine has a group panel interview



# What are schools looking for?

- Maturity
- Leadership qualities
- Compassion
- Motivation & passion for profession
- Understanding of Profession



# What are schools looking for?

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- Communication skills
- Intellectual curiosity
- Commitment
- Social and cultural awareness
- Fit for school



# Preparing for the Interview

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## **Know yourself**

- Motivation
- Opinions
- Strengths
- Weaknesses



# Preparing for the Interview

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Research the medical schools:

- Review Admission Requirements
- Review school websites
- Investigate curriculum, grading system, special features and available resources
- Prepare questions for each school



# Preparing for the Interview

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- Attend school visits at MIT
- Practice interview questions
- Talk with current students and alums
- Keep up to date on current health related trends, or controversies



# Preparing for the Interview

- Participate in a mock (practice) interview
- Get assistance from your Advisor
- Conduct informational interviews about the perspective school
- Keep a journal and record your thoughts after every interview



# Interview Logistics

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- Speak with your professors in advance about absences
- Acquire appropriate clothing
  - Men: suit or dress pants, shirt, tie and jacket, dress shoes
  - Women: suit (dress or pant) or dress pants and blouse, dress shoes
- Locate the interview site in advance



# Interview Logistics

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- Find out the names of interviewers. Research interviewers if possible.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early – take a deep breath and try to relax.
- Turn off your cell phone and throw out your gum.
- Review your application and personal statement.



## Final Tips

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- Articulate your enthusiasm and interest.
- Be aware of your body language.
  - Sit up straight
  - Smile
- Maintain comfortable eye contact.



## Final Tips

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- Represent yourself positively.
- Provide examples to show the interviewer what you mean or how you developed a skill.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Be yourself.



# After the Interview

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- Ask about the next steps.
- Take notes about the experience and what was discussed.
- Send a thank you note/letter to your interviewers.
- Process the interview experience with your advisor or the CDC.



# Thank You Notes

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## **Notes/Letters should...**

- Reiterate your interest.
- Mention specific characteristics about the school.
- Indicate something new or different that you learned.
- Remind the interviewer of you.



# Health Profession School Interview Resources

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- **Mock Interviews:** Call 617-253-4733 to schedule an appointment.
- **Book:** [Interviewing for Health Professions Schools](#) available in CDC library and at [www.naahp.org](http://www.naahp.org)
- **Sample questions:** <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/pmiinterviewquestions.pdf>



# Health Profession School Interview Resources

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- **Website:** [www.studentdoctor.net](http://www.studentdoctor.net) (**Note:** This is a student run website, not every interview will be as described on this site.)
- **Thirty-One Questions I Wish I Had Asked**  
From the AAMC's Organization of Student Representatives (OSR)  
<http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/about/31questions.htm>