

Interviews



MSC Medical
Schools
Council
Selection Alliance

Did you know?

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many medical schools will be holding online interviews this year.

Useful stuff

WHAT DO MEDICAL SCHOOLS WANT TO SEE?

Interviews are usually designed to test your suitability and aptitude to study medicine and become a doctor. Medical schools appreciate that some candidates will be nervous and will, of course, make allowances for this. Medical schools will have information available regarding what they are looking for at interview. In general medical schools are looking for an applicant's:

- **Ability to communicate**
Applicants should be able to express their ideas clearly and coherently and to be able to follow a reasoned argument. Applicants who give spontaneous yet well thought-out answers to questions are more likely to impress the interviewers than those who give obviously rehearsed and 'coached' responses.
- **Attitude**
Medical schools look to see if applicants have the right attitudes to study medicine and be a doctor. This includes flexibility, integrity and conscientiousness.
- **Motivation to be a doctor**
Medical schools will want to see evidence of the experiences that have influenced an applicant's decision to study medicine. They will want to know that an applicant has an understanding of what a career in medicine entails.
- **Previous caring experience**
This can be from an applicant's work, home or voluntary experience. Medical schools will not only want to hear about the type of experience but also what an applicant has learned and their emotional response.
- **Knowledge of what is happening within medicine**
Applicants will not be expected to have a detailed knowledge but have an intelligent layperson's view on areas of medicine that are currently within the media or in the spotlight. It is important that applicants demonstrate an awareness of scientific and medical issues. Medical schools will want to see the applicant's intellectual potential.

Key dates

Most interviews will take place in January or February, but some can start as early as November and last until March.

This information is endorsed by all undergraduate medical schools in the UK who are members of the Medical Schools Council. The information relates to UK medical schools only. It is correct and accurate at the time of publication (July 2020), and relates to the 2021 admissions process. It will be updated annually but we advise you to check individual medical school websites.

What you should do...

There are many different types of interview at medical school, for example Multi-Mini Interviews (MMIs) or panel interviews. The preparation advice is the same. The most important thing is that you get used to talking about yourself and expressing your views. Think about the type of questions you might get asked. Preparation is important but coached or overly rehearsed answers will not come across as well as more spontaneous but well-considered answers. Think about the questions you may not wish to get asked and consider how you would answer them prior to the interview.

Before the interview, re-familiarise yourself with your personal statement, the medical course, its structure, the type of teaching and assessment, and any additional opportunities it provides. Follow any medical developments making the news or within dedicated journals (such as the British Medical Journal).

Make sure you know where the interview will be held and how you will get there in plenty of time. Wear smart, clean clothes. Avoid wearing jeans or ripped clothing. Imagine how you would expect a doctor to dress.

During the interview day make sure you listen to any briefing and read any instructions carefully. Don't forget to breathe and stay calm! You should:

- Be confident. Just being invited to interview is a huge achievement.
- See this as an opportunity to demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm about studying medicine.
- Address all interviewers, and not focus on one
- Be yourself.

After the interview, reflect on the interview on the journey home, it will help you to prepare for any future interviews. Think about what you felt went well and what you could improve.

Top facts

- All medical schools interview school leavers.
- Some medical schools may ask the applicants attending interview not to disclose the questions or the details of the stations. This is to ensure that all applicants are treated equally and some do not have an unfair advantage.

Be aware

This year many interviews will be held online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Make sure you are well prepared by reading the instructions sent to you by the university before the interview.

What they say...

"When it comes to interviews, try to relax, as you'll be able to think more clearly and will make a better impression. One of the best ways to do this is by practising giving mock interviews for your friends! Seeing for yourself how everyone gets nervous will actually help you feel less alone and more confident on the day, and give you insight into how an interviewer thinks!"

Clarissa Grondin, fifth year medical student, Leicester Medical School.

More help & advice

For a guide on what to expect from interviews and how to prepare, see our interview prep website at www.mscinterviewprep.co.uk and read our guidance on online interviews at www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2735/guidance-for-candidates-taking-online-interviews.pdf

Test yourself

Ask a friend to ask you some questions. Think about how you will demonstrate your understanding of medicine as a career, and your skills and aptitude for the subject and profession. Questions could include:

- During work experience what was the most important thing you learned about yourself?
- Why did you choose this medical school and university?
- What elements of medicine particularly interest you?