



Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on how organizations conduct business, including the way in which medical and dental schools interview prospective applicants. Rather than exclusively relying on traditional face-to-face interviews, most schools now use video conferencing platforms in order to meet with applicants. Because of this, Pre-Professional Advising has put together a few tips and tricks for presenting your best self in these interviews. We encourage our prospective medical/dental school applicants and alumni volunteers to review these tips before your mock interview so you can have the best virtual experience possible and so that applicants and alumni can get the most out of this program.

Before your Interview

Before your interview, there are numerous items to consider to ensure you are ready and prepared. Many (if not all) of these tips apply to the actual interviews with your prospective medical/dental schools as well.

1. Check your Technology

When conducting an online interview, one of the most important issues to be aware of is the technology you are using. Before the interview, you want to make sure you run through the following checklist:

- ✓ Securing a Proper Device for the Interview – Although cell phones have access to the same video conferencing platforms as computers, you should avoid using them for interviews. Practice interviews should be dry runs of the real thing, so you should use the same device for both.
- ✓ Video Platform – Prior to any interview, you want to confirm what video platform you will be using with your interviewer. There are several different video platforms out there, so it's imperative that both parties confirm what they are using.
- ✓ Camera & Microphone – Whether your device has a built-in camera and microphone or you use an external one plugged into the device, you want to make sure that both

are properly working. Most video conferencing programs have the ability to test your camera and microphone to ensure they are working properly ahead of any meetings. If you are installing a new video conferencing platform for the interview, often your device will ask for confirmation for the program to use your camera and microphone. Be sure to allow this otherwise you will need to change the settings later.

- ✓ Device Charge – The last thing anyone wants during an interview is for your device to run out of power. Ahead of an interview, make sure your device is fully charged and plugged in.
- ✓ **DOUBLE CHECK YOUR TECHNOLOGY THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW** – Even as you may check the items above in advance, you want to do so again the day of. Video platforms (or your device) may have updates that need to install, you may need to charge your device, or any number of other technical issues may arise. It is better to run through this checklist again in advance of the interview, allowing enough time to fix any problems that may occur.

2. Preparing for your Interview

Just as important as preparing your technology is making sure that you have a location to set up in for your interview and that you prepare yourself physically. The tips below will help you to make sure you and your location is as ready as it can be.

- ✓ Sound – Ahead of your interview, you want to make sure your space is quiet. This can mean making sure that a pet will not disturb you, closing windows, silencing a phone, discussing your planned interview with family who live with you or roommates, and/or disabling programs that have sound notifications on your device.
- ✓ Lighting – You want to ensure that the space you are in is properly lit. Ideally, you want the room to be lit from directly behind the computer, which places the light's focus on you. Overhead lights should be turned off, avoid having a window located directly behind you, and blinds closed if at all possible. This will avoid glares and other issues.
- ✓ Background – You want to ensure that your background not distracting. The focus of the interview should be on you, not what is behind you.
- ✓ Positioning your Camera – Make sure to position your camera in a location to present you best. Ideally, you want to position the camera at just above eye level and ensure you are centered in its view.
- ✓ Check your Chair – Some chairs can sway or turn very easily while sitting in them. This can be distracting for interviewers. Check to see if you can lock your swivel chair in place or use a stationary chair.

- ✓ Dress Properly – Even though this is a mock interview, you want to ensure your experience is as close to the real thing as possible. That means dressing the part. Even if you do not use the outfit you ultimately will use for the interview itself, wearing something as close as possible will help you get into the right mindset.

3. Prepare Possible Questions & Answers

Once you have done the physical preparations, it becomes time to prepare mentally. Think about the sorts of questions that might be asked and what answers may look like. According to [AAMC Guidelines](#), medical school interview questions typically fall into three categories

- ✓ Behavioral Questions – These questions aim to get an idea of the scope of experience, knowledge, and skill that applicants have in different areas.
 - Ex. from AAMC - Please describe a time when you observed a teammate behave in a manner that was inappropriate. Explain what the situation was, what actions you took, and the outcome.
- ✓ General Questions – These are broad questions designed to get applicants to speak about themselves.
 - Ex. from AAMC – Tell me why you are interested in this medical school.
- ✓ Situational Questions – These are questions that put the applicants in a hypothetical situation to see what they would do. As with Behavioral Questions, these are designed for the interviewer to get a better sense for the applicant's knowledge and skill.
 - Ex. from AAMC – 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?

During your Interview

While you are being interviewed, there are a few important considerations to be mindful of.

1. Answer the Questions Posed – It is important that you answer questions that are being posed. Although you may have a variety of different experiences and skills that could be relevant, make sure that it is clear why you may be bringing them up and that they connect back to the relevant question. This avoids potentially rambling answers. If you believe you misheard a question or do not fully understand it, restating the question in your own words can help get clarification, both for you and the interviewer.
2. Body control – Be sure to control your body during the interview. To the extent possible, you should be mindful of fidgeting and unnecessary movement.

After your Interview

Time permitting, mock interview program participants should discuss how the interview went. Alumni interviewers have been briefed on giving an honest assessment of the interviewee's performance. It is also a good idea to send a thank you note to your mock interviewer, as well as your professional program interviewers, no less than 24 hours after your interview has concluded.

Best of luck to everyone during the interview process!

Sincerely,
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