

# An Interview Preparation Checklist For Health Professional School Applicants

Preparing for your medical, dental, optometry, pharmacy or other health profession school interviews can feel overwhelming, so it's helpful to break it into manageable steps. Materials available to help you prepare for your interviews can be found on the list below. Although many are pre-med focused, most resources can be adapted and used by applicants in all fields. Check off as many of these resources and activities as you can, and you'll find yourself on the way to interview-readiness!

## STEP 1: KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT – THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS INTERVIEW

- \_\_\_ Read the UCSD Career Services Center's "Professional School Admissions Interview" handout.
- \_\_\_ Attend a workshop on interviewing skills in the Career Services Center in Fall or Winter quarter.
- \_\_\_ Check out section IV of the "Pfizer Medical School Manual" for information, preparation tips and sample questions at [www.positiveprofiles.com/content/pandp/tier\\_3/pandp\\_students\\_manual.asp](http://www.positiveprofiles.com/content/pandp/tier_3/pandp_students_manual.asp).
- \_\_\_ Read the "Interview" sections of the following books found in the Professional and Graduate School Library:
  - *Getting Into Medical School* by S. J. Brown, M.D. (pgs. 67-72)
  - *The Princeton Review Medical School Companion* by M. Ross-Dolen, M.D. et al. (pgs. 17-20)
  - *Medical School Admissions: The Insiders Guide* by J.H. Zebala et al (pgs. 60-67)
  - *Medical Professions Admissions Guide: Strategy for Success* ed. by B.W. Corder (pgs. 22-26)
  - *Getting Into Medical School: A Guide for the Perplexed* by K.V. Iserson, M.D. (pgs. 305-390)
  - *Getting into the Physician Assistant School of Your Choice* by A. J. Rodicam (chapters 7-9)
- \_\_\_ Learn what admissions directors want to see from interviewed candidates by watching the videos in the Professional and Graduate School Library. Videos include:
  - "Interviewing for Admission to M.D./Ph.D. Programs" (15 mins.)
  - "Interviewing at M.D. Programs" (20 mins.)
  - "Interviewing for Admission at Optometry Schools" (15 mins.)
  - "Interviewing at Pharmacy Schools" (15 mins.)
  - "Interviewing for Clinical Psychology Programs" (20 mins.)

## STEP 2: GET COMFORTABLE WITH THE PROCESS – PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT (OR AT LEAST BETTER PREPARED)

- \_\_\_ Think about the questions you might be asked. Check out commonly asked questions and tips on suggested answers at [www.mymedline.com/premed/int\\_sampleqa.php3](http://www.mymedline.com/premed/int_sampleqa.php3). Think about what your answers to these questions would be. Find other common questions in the resources in Step 1 above.
- \_\_\_ Practice interviewing by answering questions in front of your mirror or have a friend or family member ask you questions to work on your answers and delivery. Have that person critique your performance. If you can, videotape yourself and then watch the tape; watch for nervous habits like wringing your hands or overuse of "like" or "um," etc.
- \_\_\_ Get online, on-camera practice with Interview Stream. Use your own webcam or come in to the Career Services Center to use ours. Visit <http://career.ucsd.edu/sa/interviewing.shtml> for details.
- \_\_\_ Brush up on current issues in your chosen field of study – chances are you'll be asked about them. Use the websites for each profession (you can find links at <http://career.ucsd.edu>) and online journals and periodicals.

## STEP 3: NARROW YOUR FOCUS – LEARN THE SPECIFIC PRACTICES OF THE SCHOOLS AT WHICH YOU'RE INTERVIEWING

- \_\_\_ For each school you interview with, do your homework! Learn all you can about that school, the program you're applying for and something about the city it's in. Use the schools' websites, the synopses in the admissions requirements books for your field, and any other printed materials you have for this research. Pre-med students can also use [www.amsa.org/premed/medsurvey](http://www.amsa.org/premed/medsurvey) for information on medical schools from a student perspective.
- \_\_\_ Learn about other students' experience at each school's interviews on [www.studentdoctor.net](http://www.studentdoctor.net) (M.D. and D.O., dental, pharmacy, optometry, podiatry and veterinary school interview feedback), [www.intransit.us/reviews](http://www.intransit.us/reviews) and [www.mdphds.org/programs.shtml](http://www.mdphds.org/programs.shtml) (MD/PhD program feedback), and <http://141.211.90.52/medfeedback/searchmed.html> (M.D. and D.O. school interview feedback).
- \_\_\_ Develop questions that you can ask your interviewers. Look at "31 Questions I Wish I Had Asked" at [www.aamc.org/students/applying/about/31questions.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/about/31questions.htm) for ideas. Use these suggested questions and your research about the schools to show you've done your homework and that you're interested in that *specific* school.

## STEP 4: WRAP IT UP – FOLLOW UP, ASSESS YOUR PERFORMANCE AND GET ON WITH THE SHOW

- \_\_\_ Promptly send handwritten thank-you notes to each person who interviewed you. Personalize the notes with details from your interview to refresh their memory of your interview.
- \_\_\_ Prepare for your next interview, or – if that was the last one – relax and wait for the results of your hard work!

For help with these resources call 858.534.4939 for an appointment with an advisor, visit <http://career.ucsd.edu> for more information, or visit our Professional and Graduate School Library. Good luck and have fun preparing!