Commonly Asked Interview Questions (shared by Lafayette students/alumni):
- Why medicine? Why do you want to become a doctor?
- What is the biggest challenge we face in medicine?
- Tell me about your health care experiences. How would you handle giving bad news to a patient?
- What if one of your patients didn't speak English?
- You seem to have a lot on your resume - what do you do for fun?
- Describe yourself in a 4 letter word.
- Why now? Why not wait to go to med school?
- What will you provide to our medical school that another applicant won't?
- What is the role of humanism in medicine?
- Can physicians be both caring and competent?
- Tell me about how service has impacted your decision to pursue a field in medicine.
- What was the most difficult challenge you faced, and what was your biggest failure/how did you learn from it? (Very difficult/important question)

Practice Questions available to you via Lafayette.InterviewStream.com:

**Question Set #1:**
1. Why do you want to be a doctor?
2. What do you think is the most pressing issue in health care today?
3. What do you do in your spare time?
4. How are you a match for our medical school?
5. There are a thousand applicants that are as qualified as you. Why should we choose you?
6. What will you do if you don't get accepted to medical school?
7. Tell me about a pressure situation you were in that would demonstrate your ability to work under pressure.
8. Give an example of a failure or disappointment that you've experienced and what you learned from it?
9. Today’s healthcare venues serve a diverse population of patients from all walks of life, economies, and cultures; tell me about any experience you have had that you feel has prepared you to interact and serve this diversity effectively.
10. How would you describe the relationship between science and medicine?

**Question Set #2:**
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about something that you accomplished that required discipline.
3. What is the most important thing you have learned in service to others?
4. What exposure have you had to the medical profession?
5. What have you learned about having empathy for a patient?
6. What is your view of managed healthcare and changes in the US healthcare system?
7. What you think about ethics and healthcare (e.g., abortion, cloning, euthanasia)?
8. Tell me why you see yourself as a good fit for this medical school.
9. What do you think will be your greatest challenge in completing medical school or learning how to be a doctor?
10. Name three adjectives that describe you.
Sample Questions to Ask the Interviewers

- Are there opportunities for students to design, conduct, and publish their own research?
- Is there flexibility in the course work (the number of electives) and the timing of the courses (accelerating, decelerating, and time off) during the pre-clinical and clinical years?
- How do students from this medical school perform on National Board Examinations? How does the school assist students who do not pass?
- How are students evaluated academically? How are clinical evaluations performed?
- What kind of academic, personal, financial, and career counseling is available to students? Are these services also offered to their spouses?
- Is there a mentor/advisor system? Who are the advisors--faculty members, other students, or both?
- How diverse is the student body?
- Tell me about the library and extracurricular facilities.
- What type of clinical sites — ambulatory, private preceptors, private hospitals, rural settings — are available or required? Does this school allow for students to do rotations at other institutions or internationally.
- Is there budgeting & financial planning assistance?
- What medical school committees (e.g., curriculum committee) have student representation?
- Are students involved in (required or voluntary) community service?
- What are typical residency programs to which recent graduates were accepted?
- What would a typical 1st year academic work load look like?
- Do you have an orientation/mentoring program for 1st year students?
Thank you notes are a useful, clever final move in your interview experience. However, like all acts of communication, they can be better or worse. Better thank you notes help you succeed; worse ones do not. To be effective, a thank you note should be sent within 24 HOURS of the interview. Submission can be paper or electronic. The note should have the following parts:

- Appropriate greeting
- Thank you for time
- Specific experience from the interview
- Final pitch for good qualities
- Appropriate close

You will send a thank you note to one of the interviewers following your interview – you do not have to send it to Dr. Schafer, but she MUST have a copy of it for grading purposes! You may send an email or hand-write a note.

**Anatomy of a GOOD EXAMPLE**

**Dr. Schafer,**

I would like to thank you for taking the time to ask me a few questions and getting to know me a little better during our interview. I especially enjoyed your question concerning my experience in food service. In the medical field it is imperative to evaluate what is best for the patient, and your question made me consider a relationship between food and health I had not considered before. I appreciate your interest in my application, and I am excited to hear from the University of Florida's Physician's Assistant Program. Through my integrity, ambition, and hard-work ethic, I hope to contribute to the already dynamic, focused, and devoted program here in Gainesville. Have an excellent day, and thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Brittney C.

**Dr. Arnold,**

I really enjoyed my visit to Stanford. I want to thank you, your Dean of Admissions, and first year medical student, for taking the time to interview me. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to discuss my experience with the Shand's Cuddler volunteer program, which has been a unique hands-on learning experience for me, and my volunteering as a tennis coach assistant through which I honed leadership and interpersonal skills. I am a self-motivated, dedicated student who is steadfast in meeting my goals, and I know Stanford can use an asset like me. I am excited that you offer such great volunteer opportunities such as the SMSA (Stanford Medical Student Association) and women in medicine, which I will definitely take advantage of. However, I am most impressed with Stanford's unparalleled opportunities in clinical patient care. I am looking forward to being part of your program in the fall.

Sincerely,

Jessica S.
How Do I… Prepare for My Medical School Interview?

One of the most important phases of the application process is your interview. There are different kinds of interviews, such as standard one-on-one interviews or multiple mini interviews (MMIs). This is also an opportunity for you to tour the campus and ask questions.

What should I wear and bring to an interview?

For both men and women, it’s best to wear a neutral colored suit and comfortable shoes as you likely will go on a walking tour of campus. Don’t wear any distracting accessories or strong scents. Dress as you would for any professional job interview or visiting a house of worship. It’s okay to bring a water bottle, but it’s a good idea to keep your phone turned off and inside your pocket or bag.

Randee Reid, admissions and residency officer at University of North Carolina School of Medicine adds, “There is nothing wrong with an applicant using color to accentuate their suit and/or dress, in fact, they should be able to express themselves; but, also bear in mind that you are applying to a graduate professional school. As the saying goes, ‘dress for the part.’”

What are some questions that typically are asked during an interview?

Each interview is different, but it’s common to be asked, “Why do you want to be a doctor?” To answer, you may want to tell a story about an experience or series of experiences that have led to your decision. You also may be asked, “Why do you want to attend our school?” Make sure you’re ready to explain why that school is a good fit for you and your goals.

What do I do if I feel I have been asked a question that is inappropriate?

Although interviewers are instructed by admissions officers and guided by federal statutes on what are unfair or discriminatory pre-admission inquiries, there may be an occasion when an interviewer asks an inappropriate question. You have the responsibility to report this to help prevent further occurrences. Medical schools have the responsibility to establish procedures that enable applicants to report such incidents in a confidential manner, and they should inform applicants of these procedures prior to interviews and assure them that reporting an incident will not bias the applicant’s evaluation.

If a medical school did not inform you of its procedure and an incident occurs, report the interviewer’s name and the interview question(s) that was asked to an admissions officer, in confidence, during the interview day. If that is not possible, email this information to an admissions officer within 24 hours of the interview noting the date and time of the incident. Furthermore, you have the right to ask for another interview to ensure an unbiased evaluation of your application to that medical school.

How can I practice or prepare to interview?

It’s a good idea to practice answering interview questions with a friend or mentor, but be careful not to memorize answers to the point where they sound rehearsed and no longer genuine. You also should review your application so what you wrote is fresh in your mind, and do your research on each school and their mission. Be sure not to ask any questions that are easily answered by reading the school’s website or in materials already provided to you. It’s okay to bring notes with you so you remember what you wanted to ask and also to keep information for later to help you differentiate one school from another.

After the interview is over, should I send an email or thank you note?

It’s always a good idea to email or write to your interviewers to thank them for their time. A legible, handwritten note is a nice personal touch that makes a good impression. It is also a good way to keep you fresh in their memory and differentiate yourself from other applicants.
Examples of inappropriate questions:

- What is your race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, opinion on abortion and/or euthanasia, income, value of your home, credit score, etc.?
- Are you planning on having children during medical school?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Will you require special accommodations?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Have you ever done drugs?
- How old are you?

Sample response to inappropriate questions:

Q. What are your plans for expanding your family during medical school?
A. Can you please clarify your question? I want to make sure that I’m providing information that is most relevant to my candidacy.

Q. Have you ever done drugs?
A. I am uncomfortable discussing my medical history and possible use of prescription medications during this interview.
What’s It Like to… Participate in Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)?

What is a Multiple Mini Interview or MMI?
The Multiple Mini Interview (MMI), developed by McMaster University, is an interview format that gauges an applicant’s potential to successfully interact with patients and colleagues. The MMI is designed to measure communication skills, specifically verbal and nonverbal skills that cannot be measured using standardized written exams or by reviewing coursework transcripts. The MMI typically consists of six to 10 very short interviews that revolve around a specific scenario. (See examples of possible scenarios on next page.)

Why are admissions committees moving towards this format?
Based on the research, schools using the MMI format believe it produces a more reliable assessment of a candidate and limits interview biases due to the number of interactions. Because students interact with multiple interviewers in multiple assessments over the course of the MMI, opinions of a single interviewer are not over-emphasized. The MMI allows applicants multiple opportunities to showcase their skills throughout the interview, unlike the traditional one-on-one interview.

What is the format? How long does it take?
Typically, a series of six to 10 “mini” interviews is conducted over a period of nearly two hours. Each mini interview includes a two-minute prep period before engaging in a conversation that lasts between five to eight minutes. “The MMI benefits students in many ways that perhaps other formats do not. Not only does the student know the topic that will be discussed, but also has time to prepare a response before walking into the room, unlike other formats wherein questions can be asked on the spot from any subject area. Additionally, the student has the unique opportunity to make multiple first-time impressions. If one question is tough and the student does not feel he/she performed well, the next room is a new chance to do better without any previous bias,” says Tara K. Cunningham, Ed.D., assistant dean of admissions and recruitment at the University of Arizona (UA) College of Medicine – Phoenix. An applicant who completed the MMI at the College of Medicine echoed Dr. Cunningham’s belief saying, “I can definitely see the benefit of this format, as I feel some of my stations went very well and others did not, and it was nice to get a fresh start at each station.”

What kind of topics are covered in the MMI?
As with any interview, the MMI is designed to assess communication skills as well as provide additional information that is helpful in assessing a student’s readiness for medicine. According to Stephen Manual, Ph.D., assistant dean of admissions at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, “The MMI scenarios also are developed to assess a candidate’s skill and proficiency in areas such as problem solving, logical thinking, interpersonal skills, and ethical judgment. For example, one scenario may ask a candidate to describe what they would do if they learned that a physician was giving patients placebos instead of actual medications. There are also scenarios that involve teamwork and assess the ability to work with a partner to solve a problem. Communication skills also can be assessed through scenarios where actors pose as patients.” An applicant at the UA College of Medicine – Phoenix said, “I felt like the MMI allowed me to act for the first time in an interview as a genuine person. Not only does this format allow for such a wide range of skills to be assessed (communication, problem solving, etc.), it does it in such a way to make the entire process informal enough to personally interact with the interviewers. It gave me a chance to work with other applicants to solve ridiculous tasks. I truly enjoyed myself because I know that I was able to give every interviewer a glimpse of my personality as to the type of doctor I will be.”
What is the best way to prepare for the MMI?

The MMI does not test specific knowledge. The format is designed to allow candidates to showcase their communication, interpersonal, and critical thinking skills. The best way to prepare is to practice expressing yourself articulately and logically in a timed environment.

According to an applicant who completed the MMI during the 2013 admissions season at UA College of Medicine, “I felt like the MMI allowed the interviewers to get responses that couldn’t be so easily prepared for in advance, thus giving them a very realistic picture of the applicant and enabling them to make better decisions. I felt prepared to show who I am in everyday life!”

Possible interview scenarios:

- Scenarios involving interactions with an actor
- An essay writing station; this station may be take longer than the others
- A standard interview station
- A teamwork station where candidates must work together to complete a task
- An ethical scenario involving questions about social and policy implications
- A “rest” station to help students catch their breath and relax
Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI) for Medical School

The Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI) format is used by some medical schools as an alternative to the traditional personal interview format. The approach is believed to reduce interviewer bias and primarily evaluates noncognitive but important skills utilized by successful health care professionals.

The links below provide information about MMI history, sample questions, prompts used by interviewers, & qualities sought by medical schools.

- **The Multiple Mini-Interview for Medical School Admissions: What to Expect and How to Prepare** – By Carleen Eaton, M.D. published by [The Student Doctor Network](https://www.studentdoctor.net).  
- **Manual for Interviewers** – Includes instructions on how to evaluate two sample scenarios and a rubric. From the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine at McMaster University.  
- View [ten MMI scenarios](https://www.studentdoctor.net) in the appendix (p. 325) of this article: “An admissions objective structured clinical examination (OSCE): the multiple mini-interview” by Kevin W. Eva, Jack Rosenfeld, Harold I. Reiter, & Geoffrey R. Norman in *Medical Education* 2004; 38: 314-326.  
- The Appendix of this article (p. 609) has a list of 9 MMi scenarios used by McMaster University in Spring 2002. The section “The Multiple Mini-Interview” (p. 603) has qualities admissions committees use to select medical school applicants. “The Relationship between Interviewers’ Characteristics and Ratings Assigned during a Multiple Mini-Interview” by Kevin W. Eva, Harold I. Reiter, Jack Rosenfeld, & Geoffrey R. Norman in *Academic Medicine* 2004; 79: 602-609.  
- **Practice MMI Questions** – Posted by the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine, School of Physical Therapy.  
- Appendix (p. 359) includes a [sample MMI question, description of what the question is designed to convey, and prompt questions](https://www.studentdoctor.net). “Validating a multiple mini-interview questions bank assessing entry-level reasoning skills in candidates for graduate-entry medicine and dentistry programmes” by Chris Roberts, Nathan Zoanetti, & Imogene Rothnie in *Academic Medicine* 2009, 43: 350-359.  
- **Nine MMI scenarios from the University of Calgary Medical School**—Includes probing questions associated with each scenario.  
- Authors of this article distilled [key qualities physicians should share](https://www.studentdoctor.net) from a variety of sources. This table may help you understand the scenarios and think about what to include in your responses. “Factors affecting the utility of the multiple mini-interview in selecting candidates for graduate-entry medical school” by Chris Roberts, Merrilyn Walton, Imogene Rothnie, Jim Crossley, Patricia Lyon, Koshila Kumar, David Tiller in *Medical Education* 2008, 42: 396-404.  
- The Department of Physical Therapy in the School of Medical Rehabilitation at the University of Manitoba published a PowerPoint on the MMI. [Descriptions of the types of stations (discussion, acting, collaboration, and written) and suggestions for responding can be found on slides 11-16.](https://www.studentdoctor.net)  
- Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine provides a [video that outlines the Multiple Mini Interview](https://www.studentdoctor.net) process.  
- **Video of a response to a sample MMI Interview question** – Included in general MMI information from the University of Calgary Medical School.  
- **First-person account of a Multiple Mini Interview experience** published on YouTube.  
- **OHSU student reflects on his MMI experience** in a blogpost.  
- **Emil Chuck**, Director of Admissions at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, publishes a blog that includes [MMI-like situational interview questions](https://www.studentdoctor.net).  

**Miscellaneous:**  
- UC Davis study (“Does Applicant Personality Influence Multiple Mini-interview Performance and Medical School Acceptance Offers?” by Anthony Jerant, MD) shows that [MMI interview process favors extroverts](https://www.studentdoctor.net).
SAMPLE SCENARIOS

MMI Scenario #1:

You have just completed your residency in internal medicine and are relocating to a small farming community in rural Iowa where you plan to open a private practice clinic. The town consists of mostly low-income farmers from Eastern Europe. The town hasn’t had a regular doctor in 17 years; hence, the townspeople used to travel 23 miles to a neighboring town to receive medical care and/or to fill a prescription.

Explain how you would go about opening such a clinic in this town and what factors and considerations you would have to keep in mind to ensure success.

MMI Scenario #2:

You are a resident in the emergency room of a large hospital. Miguel, a 25-year-old male from a rural area, has fractured his jawbone. He drives for two hours to the emergency room to seek treatment. Miguel has no health insurance and is unable to pay for the $12,500 surgery that could realign his jawbone and sets it into place. If he leaves and elects a surgery at a later time, the fracture would most likely set in the wrong position and would need to be carefully broken again and reset in the correct position. This procedure, however, would cost $48,000. Your attending physician states that the hospital won’t be able to afford a $12,500 pro-bono surgery.

Miguel is sitting in the patient room, unaware of what will happen. What would you say to Miguel?

MMI Scenario #3:

You are a resident working at a clinic associated with your program, and over a few weeks, you become very close to a particular patient. This patient is a single mother and currently works in a restaurant as a server. You first saw her as a patient when she received a 2nd degree burn to her hand while she was at work. Since the accident, she has been unable to work and she also does not have health insurance. The bills are very burdensome for her and not being able to work is compounding this situation. One day, at the clinic, she asks you if you can take some bandages and other materials from the clinic supplies for her because she cannot afford to buy them on her own. What do you say and what is your course of action?
Excerpt from *MSAR: Getting Started*:

**Know What Type of Interview to Expect**
It will also be helpful to be ready for any number of different interview formats. At some schools, interviews are held with individual admission committee members; at others, group interviews are the norm. In addition, while most interviews are typically held on the medical school campus, some schools have designated interviewers in different geographic regions to minimize time and expense for applicants. (Information about a school’s interview policies and procedures is usually provided to applicants in the initial stages of the selection process.)

**Be Comfortable with Different Interviewing Styles**
You've probably had some experience interviewing for summer and part-time jobs (and possibly for your undergraduate school), so it won’t surprise you that interviewers have their own styles and follow different formats. Some follow a structured design, asking questions from a predetermined list and assigning numeric scores to each answer. Others prefer a more free-flowing arrangement and provide the applicant with a greater degree of open input. Still others fall somewhat in the middle. Again, be ready for any approach.

**Do Your Research**
Investigate the school thoroughly by reviewing its profile on the MSAR Online, its web site, the information packet sent to you, and any articles you can get your hands on. Try to talk with current students to get an accurate sense of what the school is like from a student perspective. You’ll want to impress your interviewer with not only your potential for success but also your interest in his or her specific institution. You can demonstrate these qualities through the answers to the interviewer’s questions as well as by the questions you ask.

**Practice**
Since most admission committee members are experienced interviewers who want to learn about the “real” person, you should be forthright and open in your meeting and not try to “game” the interviewer. If you’re apprehensive about the process, find a trusted advisor or friend with whom you can conduct mock interviews to help build your confidence.

Remember, the interview provides applicants with opportunities to discuss their personal histories and motivation for a medical career and to draw attention to any aspects of their application that merit emphasis or explanation. Make certain you present yourself in the best possible light by preparing thoroughly for your meeting. Think about how you conduct yourself among current students and staff during informal meetings, too. These interactions still create an impression of who you are and how you present yourself may come up during a post-interview discussion.

**Know Your Interview Rights and Responsibilities**
Although interviewers are instructed by admissions officers and guided by federal statutes on what are unfair or discriminatory pre-admission inquiries, there may be an occasion when an interviewer asks an inappropriate question. (See examples below.)
You have the right not to answer what you sense is an inappropriate question. If such a question is asked, try to relax and provide a thoughtful and articulate response (two essential characteristics of a good physician). You may also respectfully decline to answer the question and explain that you were advised not to answer questions that you sensed were inappropriate.

You have the responsibility to report being asked an inappropriate question to help prevent further occurrences. Medical schools have the responsibility to establish procedures that enable applicants to report such incidents in a confidential manner. Medical schools should inform applicants of these procedures prior to interviews and assure them that reporting an incident will not bias the applicant’s evaluation.

If a medical school did not inform you of its procedure and an incident occurs, use these guidelines. If possible, report in confidence the interviewer’s name and the interview question(s) that was asked to an admissions officer during the interview day. Otherwise, e-mail this information to an admissions officer within 24 hours of the interview noting the date and time of the incident. Furthermore, you have the right to ask if another interview is deemed necessary to ensure an unbiased evaluation of your application to that medical school.

Some interviewers use the interview to assess how well you function under stress and may purposely ask challenging questions to observe how you respond under pressure. How you communicate will be a critical part of the encounter; however, this does not give an interviewer the right to ask you inappropriate questions in their attempt to challenge you during the interview.

Examples of inappropriate questions:
- What is your race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, opinion on abortion and/or euthanasia, income, value of your home, credit score, etc.?
- Are you planning on having children during medical school?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Will you require special accommodations?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Have you ever done drugs?
- How old are you?

Sample response to an inappropriate questions:
Q. What are your plans for expanding your family during medical school?
A. Can you please clarify your question? I want to make sure that I’m providing information that is most relevant to my candidacy.
Q. Have you ever done drugs?
A. I am uncomfortable discussing my medical history and possible use of prescription medications during this interview.
Lafayette-Specific Online Resources:
- InterviewStream: [Lafayette.interviewstream.com](http://Lafayette.interviewstream.com)
  - Set up your free account using your Lafayette email address
  - Conduct virtual mock interviews
  - Watch quick tutorials for strategies regarding how to respond to commonly asked questions
- Career Services Interviewing Webshops (2nd and 3rd links) & Resources: [http://careerservices.lafayette.edu/students/access-career-resources/market-yourself/in-interviews/](http://careerservices.lafayette.edu/students/access-career-resources/market-yourself/in-interviews/)

Additional Helpful Links:
- Aspiring Docs “Ask The Experts”: [https://www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/basics/280914/interview.html](https://www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/basics/280914/interview.html)
- The AAMC’s “Thirty-Five Questions I Wish I Had Asked” at [www.aamc.org/students/applying/310556/selectingamedicalschoolthirtyfivequestionsiwishihadasked](http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/310556/selectingamedicalschoolthirtyfivequestionsiwishihadasked)
- The AAMC Podcast on Interviewing Basics: [www.aamc.org/podcasts/aspiringdocs/](http://www.aamc.org/podcasts/aspiringdocs/)
- University of Michigan MMI Interview Resources: [http://careercenter.umich.edu/article/med/medical-school-interviews#MMIs](http://careercenter.umich.edu/article/med/medical-school-interviews#MMIs)
- How to Prepare for MMIs (from StudentDoctor.net):
  - [http://www.studentdoctor.net/2013/01/how-to-prepare-for-multiple-mini-interviews-part-1/](http://www.studentdoctor.net/2013/01/how-to-prepare-for-multiple-mini-interviews-part-1/)
  - [http://www.studentdoctor.net/2013/02/how-to-prepare-for-multiple-mini-interviews-part-2/](http://www.studentdoctor.net/2013/02/how-to-prepare-for-multiple-mini-interviews-part-2/)