

PREPARING FOR **LIVE & ASYNCHRONOUS**  
HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOL  
VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

SEPTEMBER 2020

**LAFAYETTE**  
GATEWAY CAREER CENTER

# AGENDA

- Virtual Interview Basics
- Effective Interviewing & Interview Preparation
- Set-Up Logistics
- Other Critically Important Details
- Things to Avoid
- AAMC VITA Prep
- Helpful Links

*Be sure to access the presentation and handout from the Spring 2020 HP Interview Prep workshop available on the [Health Professions Advising website!](#)*

# VIRTUAL INTERVIEW BASICS

- The purpose of interview
- Virtual Interview Formats:
  - “live” (one-on-one, panel or MMI)
  - “asynchronous” (e.g. VITA)
- Interview preparation
  - Prepare just like you would for an in-person interview!
- Things to avoid\*
- After the interview

*Virtual Interviews are very likely here to stay and to be used more widely!  
Interview formats and technologies will continue to develop and evolve.*

# EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW RESPONSES

- Are...
  - Detailed, complete, yet concise responses
  - Relevant, on topic
  - Utilize the STAR format for “past behavior” questions
    - Situation, Task, Action, Result
  - Stay within time constraints
  - Connect to core competencies required for success in respective health profession program
- Often do **not**...
  - Fill the entire allotted window (for asynchronous)!

## PREPARATION IS KEY

- Virtual interviews – both live and asynchronous – are distinct experiences; preparation is essential
- Prepare by practicing an array of questions and question types
  - VITA: Target the five competencies we know these questions will focus on
  - VITA: Each of the three question types (journey to medicine, behavioral, situational)

## PREPARATION IS KEY

- Review resume/CV and reflect on experiences; how can you connect these to the core competencies?
- Practice in a time-constrained format (asynchronous)
  - VITA: 1 minute for question review; 3 minutes for response
- Become comfortable gathering your thoughts under time-constraint (MMI/VITA)
  - VITA: Develop a strategy regarding how you will use your minute of prep per question

# INTERVIEWING IS A SKILL: PRACTICE

Practice → Increased confidence and comfort → Improved performance

- Asynchronous:
    - Practice tool via AAMC
    - [InterviewStream](#) - 10 three-question practice sets available for you!
      - Set up with the time constraints that match VITA (1 min prep, 3 min reply)
      - Work through practice questions sets as many times as you'd like to!
  - Live:
    - InterviewStream
    - Virtual mock interviews with a Gateway Counselor (call 610-330-5115 to schedule)
- Solicit constructive, candid feedback*

## SET-UP LOGISTICS

- Professional attire is required.
  - Career Closet
  - JCP (Virtual) Suit-Up Event – this weekend (9/13)!
- Create a quiet, distraction-free space.
- Ensure your backdrop is clear of anything distracting, eye-catching, or messy.
  - A solid wall, curtain, or sheet to block out what is behind you is recommended.



## SET-UP LOGISTICS CONTINUED

- Get the lighting right.
  - Avoid sitting in front of a sun-lit window or other overly bright lighting.
  - Be sure that your recording area won't be too dark to see you.
- Test and re-test your internet connection and your microphone.
  - Utilize practice systems to test the clarity and volume of your microphone.

OTHER (CRITICALLY!) IMPORTANT DETAILS  
BEYOND THE CONTENT OF YOUR REPLY:

- Eye contact (camera)
- Voice
  - Volume
  - Inflection
  - Clarity
- Pace of Delivery
- Positive Body Language
  - Smile
  - Sit up tall/straight (posture!)
  - Lean forward (at times)

**ENERGY! & AUTHENTICITY!**

## THINGS TO AVOID

- Distracting behaviors *such as*:
  - Talking with your hands
  - Playing with your hair
  - Adjusting your glasses
  - Sniffing
- Looking up/away from camera
- Speaking too quickly
- Mumbling, speaking too softly, shouting, or a monotone delivery
- Interruptions from a family member, roommate, pet, or otherwise
  - VITA: 4 minutes of quiet needed per question!
- Anything political, polarizing, and/or profane in view
- Running out of time/rushing
- Extending your response without valuable content to fill time

## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT AAMC VITA (VITA = VIDEO INTERVIEW TOOL FOR ADMISSIONS)

- The VITA is specifically designed to provide admissions staff with details related to your journey to medical school and five core competencies for entering medical school students:
  - 1) Social Skills
  - 2) Cultural Competence
  - 3) Teamwork
  - 4) Reliability and Dependability
  - 5) Resilience and Adaptability

*While every interview will assess the same general areas, the specific questions asked will differ.*

## THINGS TO KNOW...

### CONTINUED

- The VITA component is designed to *complement* the live interview process; though some schools are using it in place of a live interview component
  - Each school (47) will determine how they incorporate VITA into their respective selection processes
- The VITA is an invitation-only step of the medical school selection process
  - You must be selected by at least one school to complete this step; you only need to complete it once and that interview recording will be made available to all participating schools
- Your VITA responses are provided to medical school admissions staff without any evaluation or assessment (no AI is used)
  - Each school will conduct their own evaluation of your responses within the context of their respective holistic review processes
- No special technology or equipment is needed; requirements are similar to live-video platforms (Zoom, Skype, GoogleMeet)
- Applicants who require accommodations can request them via the [Request for Accommodations Form on the AAMC VITA website](#)

# AAMC VITA FORMAT

- Six interview questions presented as text prompts
- Allotted one minute to read and reflect on each written question
- Allowed up to three minutes to record a response to each question
- You may complete all six interview questions in one sitting OR you may complete any number of questions you choose as long as all questions are completed by the required medical school deadline
- You may take as long of a break between questions as you choose
- You may not view your video responses during or after you complete the interview.

*No pauses are allowed once you are exposed to a question.*

*You may choose to progress immediately to the next question OR to take an untimed break.*

## VITA QUESTION TYPES

- Questions include a combination of:
  - Medical school journey questions
    - i.e. Why did you decide to pursue a career in medicine?
  - Past behavior questions
    - i.e. Describe a time when....
  - Situational questions
    - i.e. Imagine you are working in a group and....

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [InterviewStream](https://lafayette.interviewstream.com/)  
(<https://lafayette.interviewstream.com/>)
  - Set up your free account using your Lafayette email address
  - Once logged in, “Conduct an Interview” → “Created for Me”
    - Health Professions Interviews
    - 10 sets of VITA practice questions (3 questions per set)
  - Also access the “Interview Suite” within the RESOURCES section of the landing page
- [Spring 2020 HP Interview Session Materials](#)
- Gateway Career Center  
(610-330-5115)
- [AAMC VITA Homepage](#)
- [AAMC VITA Essentials Guide](#)
- [AAMC VITA Preparation Guide](#)
- [AAMC Practice VITA Tool](#)