

Graduate and Professional School Interviews

The graduate/professional school interview is a conversation between you and another person or panel; it provides the opportunity for you to present yourself and to gain information about the program. Judgments are formed by the interviewers and by the candidate. The interviewer is seeking your motivation, interest, and ability to perform in the program. You may be interested in the philosophy, emphasis, and opportunities that the program can provide.

There is no one manner in which graduate/professional school interviews are conducted. However, you may use the employment interview as a general guide for what to expect. You will find the main differences in specific content areas (for example: Why do you want to study psychology? or What qualities are necessary to become a good doctor?)

You can prepare for interviews by doing the following:

1. Spend time researching the program and the professor's interests.
2. Talk with current students.
3. Analyze your own strengths and weaknesses.
4. Prepare for possible interview questions.

Possible Graduate/Professional School Interview Questions

1. Why are you interested in this school/program?
2. What do you plan to get from this program?
3. Tell me about your experience at UNK.
4. What courses stimulated you the most?
5. What are your plans after you complete your degree?
6. What do you know about our program?
7. Do you feel your grades/test scores are an accurate reflection of your abilities?
8. How do you handle competition? Study pressure?
9. When and how did you decide you wanted to go to Graduate/Professional school?
10. What, do you feel, would be your biggest drawback to completing this program?
11. What is your greatest strength?
12. We have 800 applicants and admit only 250 students. Is there anything you want me to especially know about you?
13. If you were admitting students to this program, what qualities would you look for?
14. What was your favorite professor like?
15. What can you tell me about yourself that's not in your formal application materials?
16. So, why do you want to be a _____?
17. Who was the most influential professor you have ever had and why?
18. Describe how you study. What is your routine?
19. Tell me about a major setback in your life and how you dealt with it.
20. What are your career plans and how does our particular graduate program fit into them?
21. What will you do if you don't get in?
22. What makes you different from all the other applicants we have this year?
23. What courses did you like best? Least? Why?
24. What percentage of your college expenses did you earn? How?
25. How did you spend your vacations while in school?
26. If you were starting college all over again, what courses would you take?

27. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen field?
28. Do you feel you have done the best work of which you are capable?
29. What types of people seem to rub you the wrong way?
30. Tell me about yourself.
31. What frustrates you?
32. If you “want to help people”, why not social work? Law? Teaching? Why did you choose medicine?
33. What will you do if you are not accepted to medical school this year? If you are never accepted to medical school?
34. Where do you envision yourself in ten years? (geographical location and type of practice)
35. Since I have control of the interview, what have I not directed you to that you feel I should know about you?
36. Tell me about any work/volunteer experience you have had in a medical setting.
37. Describe yourself in terms of your greatest strengths and weaknesses.
38. Why did you choose to attend UNK for undergraduate school?
39. What motivated you toward the study medicine?
40. Tell me about your research project(s). Why did you choose to do research?
41. Describe yourself.
42. What recent books have you read? What is your favorite novel? What is the significance of this work? What newspapers/journals do you read on a regular basis?
43. Why did you choose your undergraduate major?
44. What extracurricular activities were you involved in during your undergraduate years? Why? What did you enjoy the most?
45. What qualities do you look for in a physician?
46. Where do we stand on your list of medical school preferences?
47. What is the most pressing health issue today and why? What are some possible solutions?
48. What experiences have you had in community involvement that demonstrates your commitment to medicine?
49. How do you think your personal background will affect your practice?
50. How do you plan to finance your medical school education?
51. What is special about YOU as a candidate for medical school?
52. What do you think are a doctor’s social responsibilities? How do you plan to personally contribute to society as a physician?
53. What are the negative aspects of medicine from a professional standpoint?
54. Would you like academic medicine as a career? How would you interface research with patient contact?
55. How might you deal with a terminally ill patient?
56. Describe any travels that you have undertaken and exposure to other cultures. What have you learned from these experiences? What are the relevant social problems in this region?
57. Do you prefer the idea of basic research or clinical medicine?
58. Have you an alternative career plan? If the health care field didn’t exist, what would you do with your life?
59. When you need counseling for personal problems, whom do you talk with?
60. Describe your childhood and present living conditions.
61. How will you keep in touch with community needs?
62. How did you hand blood and gore (or how do you expect to)?
63. How did you select this school and why do you want to attend?
64. Do you have a significant other? How long? What are your future plans for this relationship? Is your spouse able to move with you? Women: plans for having a family?
65. Discuss a current issue in medicine and how it affects the physician and the patient. (Current health plan proposals, National Health Insurance, HMO’s, high cost of health care, rationing health care, Medicaid problems, health insurance companies, health care as a right versus a privilege, cost of high-tech medical procedures, etc.) How would you reform health care in America?
66. What was the most difficult problem you ever faced in your life, how did you solve it, what did you learn from it?
67. Discuss a medical ethics issue. (organ harvesting, abortion, death/dying, HIV, enforced birth control, saving premature babies, human genome project, euthanasia, use of fetal tissue or embryos, Kevorkian/physician assisted suicide, legalization of drugs, gun control/teen deaths)

68. Talk about your hobbies and what they mean to you.
69. Since you are an older student, why should the committee pick you over a younger applicant with the same qualifications? Why are you changing from your present career to medicine?
70. If you saw a fellow medical student cheating on an exam, what would you do?
71. If you knew of a fellow medical student who was using illegal drugs or had an alcohol problem, what would you do?
72. Explain the poor grades on your transcript/low MCAT score(s).
73. What are some of the negative things you heard about the specialty you want to go into and how do you feel about them?
74. What problems do you envision in medicine ten years from now?
75. Questions on major world and national current events.
76. How do you know you want to be a primary care physician? Have you spent some time observing this kind of practice?
77. What drives a doctor, or anyone else, to become corrupt?
78. Outside of your family, who is your biggest role model?
79. Is there anything you would not want me to know about you?
80. Tell me about a major disappointment you have experienced in your life.
81. What accomplishment in your life are you the most proud of?

Questions You Might Ask:

1. What type of financial assistance is available?
2. What is the size of the faculty of the department? How many are full-time (dedicated to this program)?
3. Where do students in the program come from?
4. What is the ratio of applicants to admitted students?
5. What is it like to live in this area?
6. Where do students live (what housing options are available)?