



The Medical School Interview: Winning Strategies from Admissions Faculty

By Samir P. Desai, Rajani Katta

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Did you know that the interview is the most important factor in admissions decisions? What can you do to achieve maximum success during the interview?

In 2011, the AAMC published a survey that evaluated the importance of 12 variables on admissions decisions. These variables included total MCAT scores, science and math GPA, and the interview. The interview was rated the most important factor, receiving a score of 4.5 (scale of 1 [not important] to 5 [extremely important]).

High GPA and MCAT scores do not guarantee admission. In the aforementioned study, approximately 8% of applicants with undergraduate GPAs and total MCAT scores of at least 3.8 and 39, respectively, failed to gain admission. As you can see, the interview is never just a formality. It can absolutely make or break your chances of acceptance. Consider the following:

- "The interview is an important and integral part of the selection process," writes the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.
- "Faculty interviews with critical evaluations are the only method...for the assessment of the important nonacademic attributes..." writes the Penn State College of Medicine. "The Selection Committee places great importance on these evaluations in making decisions on admission."
- "High grades and/or MCAT scores alone are never enough," writes the LSU Shreveport School of Medicine. "For those interviewed, impressions from the personal interview are exceedingly important."

What does it take to impress a medical school interviewer? We review the data on the decision-makers. What do these interviewers care about? We review the data on the criteria that matter to them? How can you convince them that you would be the right "fit" for their school? We provide concrete, practical recommendations based on this data.

Our recommendations are based on data from a full spectrum of sources. We have scoured the research on medical school admissions and discussed the interview process with deans and admissions committee members to give you the

detailed information needed to deliver compelling answers to interview questions. How can you best prepare for the MMI, group interview, panel interview, and behavioral interview? What qualities would make applicants less likely to be admitted? What personal qualities are most valued by admissions faculty?

In our book, you'll find the answers to these questions and much more. Learn how to develop the optimal strategy for interview success and gain that extra edge.

Note: This book provides an overview of the MMI. For applicants seeking detailed guidance for the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI), please see our book *Multiple Mini Interview: Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty*.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Either way, this is an extremely thorough handbook, covering the questions applicants are likely to be asked and the appropriate and inappropriate answers...likely to be found indispensable by readers embarking on the arduous process of applying to medical school."

- Kirkus Reviews

From the Back Cover

Studies have found that the interview is the most important factor in admissions decisions. What can students do to achieve maximum success during the interview?

- A survey of medical schools identified the personal characteristics that are most highly valued in applicants. What are they, and how can students emphasize these qualities during interviews?
- Do you know how to prepare for the multiple-mini interview (MMI)? This approach is being increasingly used by medical schools across the country, and requires that the applicant move from one station to another, responding to scenarios, tasks, or questions. **NOTE: This book provides an overview of the MMI process. We will be publishing an extensive book covering MMI preparation in June 2015 - Multiple Mini Interview (MMI): Winning Strategies from Admissions Faculty - written by Dr. Samir Desai**
- Research has identified qualities that would make applicants less likely to be admitted. How can applicants avoid suggesting these qualities during the interview?
- Have you read about the ethical dilemmas facing modern medicine? Researchers found that approximately 10% of interview questions focused on resolving an ethical dilemma.
- The questions that you ask during an interview can either strengthen your application or weaken it. What questions should you avoid asking?
- What are your weaknesses? Why are you interested in our school? These standard interview questions are most often met with standard, generic responses. This represents a significant lost opportunity. Learn how you can deliver memorable and impressive responses that stand out.

Utilizing a unique combination of evidence-based advice and an insider's perspective, this book will help you achieve your ultimate goal:

MEDICAL SCHOOL

About the Author

Dr. Samir Desai has served on the medical school admissions committee at the Baylor College of Medicine for about ten years. He is the author of 16 books, including the best-selling *Success in Medical School: Insider Advice for the Preclinical Years*. To help students reduce the cost of medical education and strengthen their credentials for the residency match, he wrote the book, *Medical School Scholarships, Grants, and Awards: Insider Advice on How to Win Scholarships*. He provides mock interview consulting services to applicants at TheSuccessfulMatch.com.

Dr. Rajani Katta is Professor of Dermatology at the Baylor College of Medicine. She is the author of *The Successful Match: 200 Rules to Succeed in the Residency Match*.

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Sandra Bland:

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