Hello Everyone,

This applicant email is about:

**Starting to Prepare for Interviews**

---

**As a reminder, your AMCAS should have been submitted by now. If you have not submitted, do so immediately. Any small changes you make now to the application will not impact you as much as the delay in submission.**

Although formal med and dent school interviews do not start before September (late August at the earliest), there are some steps you can take now to start preparing. Do not wait until the last minute.

1 – See the attached handout on interviewing to get you started.

2 - Reflect on who you are, even more than what you did for your personal statement, as questions you will be asked, or situations you will be placed in through the MMI format, will require that you have self-awareness.

3 – Get into the habit of reading – a good newspaper and/or some very helpful online resources from professionals such as the sites mentioned on the handout. Also, check out this book list: [https://students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/article/great-summer-reads-aspiring-physicians-vol-4/](https://students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/article/great-summer-reads-aspiring-physicians-vol-4/)

4 – **Virtual Interviews**

You each have the experience of an interview – and a virtual interview at that - through your meeting with your HPRC faculty interviewer. It is almost certain that your med and dental school interviews this cycle will also be virtual.

We want you to be aware of a new tool being implemented this cycle, the **AAMC Video Interview Tool for Admissions (AAMC VITA™)**, which will be available for use during the 2021 application cycle. Participating medical schools will select applicants to complete the AAMC VITA interview as part of their admissions interview process. AAMC VITA will be offered at no cost to applicants during the 2021 admissions cycle.

AAMC VITA provides medical school admissions staff with the opportunity to
gather the important information captured during the traditional in-person interview while adhering to social distancing guidance, avoiding the challenges of travel during this time, and prioritizing the health and safety of all involved.

For more information about AAMC VITA, including details on how interviews will be conducted, other frequently asked questions, and virtual interviewing resources, please visit aamc.org/VITA. **PLEASE use the AAMC website for official information on this new tool** – not the many “know-it-all” sites on the Internet that will get you more nervous and anxious.

- Students who express a need to apply for accommodations can submit their application as soon as possible. A link to the accommodations form is available on all AAMC VITA web pages (on the right-hand side).

- Many U.S. medical schools are still deciding how to approach virtual interviewing. The AAMC plans to begin listing participating schools on its website in mid-July.

- U.S. medical schools will begin to send AAMC VITA invitations to applicants.

One medical school is offering a webinar to help students prepare for virtual interviews. Pre-Med students are invited to join the audience for a round of medical school mock interviews. To Register and access the Zoom link: **Click Here**
WesternU COMP-Northwest & OPSO Present:
Medical School Mock Interviews
Tuesday, July 7, 2020
7:00 PM until 9:00 PM
(Pacific Daylight Time)

Join us for a round of medical school mock interviews hosted by the faculty and medical students at WesternU COMP-Northwest via Zoom.

Three pre-med students currently applying to medical schools have volunteered to be mock interviewed live, followed by feedback and discussion with the panel.

This is part of the Osteopathic Awareness event series brought to you by WesternU - College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific-Northwest and the Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of Oregon (OPSO).

Questions about the evening or if you'd like more information about WesternU COMP-Northwest, please feel free to email me at lrtrauch@westernu.edu

Regards,
Amanda and Ericka
INTERVIEWING FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS

The interview is an important component of the health professions application process. The invitation to interview generally means you are academically qualified to be admitted; however schools cannot admit all those who are qualified. The school wants to take a further look at you and determine if you have the personal qualities it considers important. Qualities such as integrity, leadership ability, decision-making skills, honesty and concern are important in a health professional.

The interview is a two-way street. It is not only a chance for the interviewer to evaluate you, but an opportunity for you to learn about the school. Your interview should be a conversation in which you both answer and ask questions, as opposed to a firing line where you wait for an interviewer’s next question. You will find that most interviewers are supportive of you and will give you ample opportunity to engage in conversation. To make the most of your interview, however, there are some guidelines you should follow and some preparation you should do:

**Appearance**

You are seeking to enter a profession, and in your interview you should appear comfortable in that role. You should dress and act professionally. For men, that means a sports coat and tie or suit; for women, a suit (skirt or pant), dress or skirt with blazer. Being clean and well groomed is obviously of great importance. Dress modestly – no low-cut blouses or low hanging pants. Tone down the jewelry and cologne; get rid of the piercings. Remember that body language is a powerful means of nonverbal communication. Gestures and movements can speak volumes. Be conscious of slouching (boredom?), playing with a pen or paper clip (nervousness?), and crossing your arms (hostility?). Try to be relaxed and poised.

**Preparation**

There are several areas that will likely be discussed in your interviews. You can make a better impression and feel more relaxed yourself if you are prepared to discuss them.

THE SCHOOL: Be sure to read the material on paper and on-line that you can access. Be aware of the school’s philosophy, curriculum, affiliated hospitals, etc. If you don’t know a school’s URL, you can usually link to it from the association website, e.g. [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org) links to each allopathic medical school. Also check to see if Tufts has an alum at the school who is willing to be contacted by prospective students.
YOU: Know yourself and be able to articulate your goals, philosophy, motivation for medicine, etc. You should have thought about these things already as you prepared to write your essay. Here is another opportunity to put them forth.

HEALTH CARE ISSUES: Since you are choosing to work within the health care industry, you should be aware of the major issues facing it today. Questions about stem cell research, AIDS, reproductive rights, the Affordable Care Act (sometimes referred to as ObamaCare), the high cost of health care, genetic engineering, Medicare reform, etc. can easily come up in your interview. Health care is always in the news. It is not so important WHAT your stand on an issue is, as long as you can discuss it intelligently and articulately. The popular media frequently report on health care topics and some of the less esoteric medical journals such as The New Physician (AMSA) and Journal of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) are very readable and offer lots of information.

A book we highly recommend is called The Healthcare Handbook, written by two Washington University School of Medicine students with the support and input of the admissions dean and other faculty. The authors are Elisabeth Askin and Nathan Moore. You can get it on Amazon or visit healthcarehandbook.com.

Some websites you might consider are: https://www.statnews.com/, https://depts.washington.edu/bioethx/, http://sps.columbia.edu/bioethics/premed

THE WORLD: Have a handle on what is going on around you. Be able to discuss at least superficially issues such as the ongoing crises in Syria and North Korea, global efforts on the environment, the current political arena and major cultural and sports events.

Style

The key to success in an interview is to relax and be yourself. Try to answer questions honestly – do not try to second-guess the interviewer. Maintain a positive note – nobody likes a whiner. Use the opportunities given to you to point out your accomplishments and strong points. Try to make eye contact with your interviewer and establish a rapport. Assume that your interviewer is on your side and do not get defensive at every question that is asked of you. Also be sure to speak clearly. Take the time to think about your responses so you can be articulate.

Typical Questions

This is a sampling of questions that may be asked of you in an interview:
Tell me about yourself.  
Where do you see yourself in ten years?  
Why have you chosen medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, etc. as a career?  
Why did you choose to major in...?  
What has been the most rewarding experience of your life?  
What have you read recently?  
Why do you want to go to this school?  
What do you think you could contribute to this school?  
Why do you think you are a good candidate?  
What do you see as the greatest problem facing our health care system today?  
Tell me about your research.  
Tell me about your thesis.  
Tell me about your job/internship last summer.  
What was your most enjoyable course in college?  
How do you think the government should be responding to the uninsured in this country?  
What are your views on the Affordable Care Act?  
What exposure have you had to medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, etc.?  
How would you treat a patient with AIDS?  
How do you feel about using animals in scientific research?  
What extracurricular activity has been most rewarding for you?  
What field of medicine, dentistry, vet medicine, etc. most appeals to you?  
How would you weigh the advantages of a single party payer for national health care versus the disadvantages?  
What would you do if you were not accepted to med, dent, vet school?  

This is certainly not an exhaustive list but it will give you some idea of what to expect.

**The MMI**

There is a newer interview approach that was developed at McMaster University in Canada many years ago and is now spreading to the US – the multiple mini-interview. As of now, most US schools still use the traditional approach described above. But you may easily encounter a school that is using the MMI. Some examples are Robert Wood Johnson, Stanford, Virginia Tech and UC Davis. The *Medical School Admission Requirements* (MSAR) book which we have referenced in the past as the only smart med school guide to buy provides information on whether a particular school is using MMI. Also the school may inform you when you are invited.

MMIs focus on how applicants respond in a series of standardized situations. They seek to minimize the absolute subjectivity of the traditional interview
format and the impact of what a good match or a mismatch with a particular interviewer can have on an applicant’s admission. The short scenarios (usually 5 minutes) are designed to evaluate qualities such as professionalism, problem-solving, teamwork, or cultural competence. This will not be about you talking about you but you demonstrating qualities and showing flexibility in facing new situations and confidence in solving problems under challenging conditions.

The ne’ersayers are calling this speed dating but it is far from that. It is not about making a connection in a short versus a long time with an interviewer. It is about responding to a scenario or situation and the interviewer having an objective way to evaluate that response. The good news is that there will be numerous scenarios and one “bad’ one will not ruin your odds of admission. You will likely have at least 6 and as many as 10 different scenarios. This is an attempt on the part of the medical school to gather many additional pieces of information about your qualities and strengths and to do it in a uniform, fair way for all interviewees. Thus far, the schools who are using it, and seeking feedback from applicants, have received consistently positive feedback about the approach.

**Logistics for the Interview Day**

**Allow yourself plenty** of time to get to your interview, to be able to relax in the reception area and read the literature. If you have the time you can spend the previous night with a student (ask the admission office if they arrange that.) Also try to do everything that the school offers – lunch, tour, group session, etc; it will allow you to learn more about the school.

Each school arranges its own interview day, but odds are good that you will have one or two one-on-one interviews. At least one will be with a faculty member but the second may be with a student. (See MMI above for exceptions to this.) Your interview may be blind (i.e. the interviewer will not have seen your application) so do not get annoyed if they ask questions that are answered in your application. Also, things may go wrong on your interview day – your interviewer may be beeped during the interview or may have had an emergency right before you arrived. Don’t get flustered, go with the flow and remember this is all part of the profession.

What happens after your interview date is that the admissions committee makes a preliminary decision on your file. Timing and procedure vary greatly, however, and you may hear within two weeks or not for many months! Try to avoid calling early on. Send a thank you to your interviewer(s) and letters of interest periodically. Also send any significant additional material that strengthens your candidacy such as fall grades, news of research publication or health related internship. If you ask at the interview you may get a sense of what is a reasonable time to expect to wait after being interviewed.
Medical, dental and vet school protocol allows you to hold a spot in one school and withdraw from that spot once another acceptance that you prefer is received. You must also be courteous and withdraw from schools in which you are no longer interested. All schools will ask for a deposit but dental and osteopathic schools are much less lenient about the time period that the deposit may be refunded.

Frequently financial aid information is unavailable until late spring, which makes decisions difficult. It helps to complete the appropriate forms as soon after January 1 as possible. (Med school applicants should check out the website www.aamc.org) It may be necessary for you to decide on a school before you have your actual financial aid package.

Other Resources

1) Interviewing for Health Professions Schools, available for $4 from NAAHP, www.naahp.org, offers a concise set of tips with input from many admissions deans.

2) Resources available through the AAMC such as:
   Aspiring Docs “Ask The Experts”:
   https://www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/basics/280914/interview.htm

   AAMC’s “Thirty-Five Questions I Wish I Had Asked” at
   www.aamc.org/students/applying/310556/selectingamedicalschoolthirt
yfivequestionsiwishhadasked

   AAMC Podcast on Interviewing Basics:
   Go to www.aamc.org/podcasts/aspiringdocs/ for podcasts provided by the AAMC and Aspiring Docs. (no charge at the iTunes store).

   MSAR: Getting Started has a section on preparing for interviews that includes information on inappropriate questions and how to respond to them.

3) Use the following website with caution:
   http://www.studentdoctor.net/interview/index.asp to hear what others have said about their interview experiences. Look for the facts and stay away from the vitriol, self-aggrandizement and scare tactics.