

Video 2: Medical School Interviews

Today, medical student Tony Chang will be discussing the interview process for medical schools. At this point, you have submitted your primary and secondary applications, and you are waiting to hear back from schools about your interview.

General Interview Timeline

Interviews can run from August until March of the application cycle, and they can come at any time. After an invitation, you usually have about 2 or 3 weeks in advance to schedule your interview. In the past, interviews have been in person where you fly out or drive out to the school just to check it out; But, nowadays with Covid, a lot of schools have shifted to virtual practice. Going forward, we are likely to see a mix of virtual and in-person interviews.

Interview Day Schedule

In the past, an interview day might be a full day from morning to afternoon. But with the virtual interviews, they have been finding a lot of times that can be more efficient and can be as short as half a day.

The interview day usually consists of a tour of the school or a tour of the facilities. They usually have a couple of speakers talk about events, different organizations, and different research opportunities available at the school. They are going to try to sell you what makes their school unique. There is also usually a Q&A with faculty members or other students currently attending the school. This is really an opportunity for you to get a feel for the school and see if this is an environment in which you will succeed.

Types of Interviews

In terms of types of interviews, each school will have a different interview process and is usually going to be a combination of one of three types of interviews: traditional interview, group interview, or multiple mini interviews.

A **traditional interview** is what we typically imagine when we think of an interview. This is usually a one-on-one session with a faculty member, another student, or another member of the admissions committee. These are usually booked for half an hour and these are usually behavioral-type questions. For instance, *Why did you go into medicine? Tell me about ___ experience. Why do you think you are a good fit for the school?* There is usually room for questions at the end. For a given school, they may schedule you for one or a few traditional interviews.

In a **group interview**, you will be in a room with a handful of other applicants. There will be an interviewer ask you the same questions, and each person will go around the room giving their responses. Sometimes the group interview can be task based. For example, different students

receive different sets of instructions and are told to perform a task or work together to complete a certain task. Sometimes there will be certain rules, such as not being able to use certain words, but you are still having to prepare the same task with this room of other people. Usually, this is to assess your communication and teamwork skills.

Lastly, the **multiple mini interviews (MMI)**, which are not as scary as you may think. They are a series of usually 5-10 short interviews ranging from about 5-10 minutes each. You go from one station to the next, either by physically moving rooms in-person or switching breakout rooms virtually. Each room will have a different question or scenario of one of three different kinds: behavioral, situational, or role-play. A behavioral question is a question along the lines of why medicine or tell me about a certain experience. A situational question provides a problem or issue and asks how you would approach this scenario. The role-play station will present you with a problem or scenario and you have to communicate something to the interviewer who is role-playing someone else. For example, they may give you a card that says you are a medical student at XYZ and you need to tell this patient certain information as a way to assess your communication skills.

Tony has experienced a variety of different interview combinations at various schools. Schools will often play around and mix and match different interview styles, questions, and tasks for applicants to complete.

Good luck to everyone applying!