

Interviewing for Residency

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An interview is a conversation between two people.

The interview is your chance to sell yourself. You will want to observe and collect information for yourself as well but do not miss the opportunity to positively portray your best attributes and show your accomplishments and why you would be an asset to that program.

Key Personality Traits Interviewers Seek

Personal: drive, motivation, effective communication skills, chemistry, enthusiasm, determination, confidence, grit.

Professional: reliability, honesty and integrity, pride, dedication, analytical skills, listening skills, clinical skills, problem solving ability, initiative

About the Interview:

- Know with whom you are meeting: what is that person's specialty? what is that person's role in the residency program?
- Be courteous to everyone. It is often the office staff who will tell the Program Director how you behaved and treated them. They can sometimes "make or break" you.
- Be professional. Do not be negative. Do not say negative things about other programs or individuals. Look the part. This is not to discourage personal creativity but how you prepare for the interview and your appearance will be the first impression that you will make.
- Do NOT ask about salary, benefits, call schedule etc. You can find this out in other ways. It is a real turn-off to the interviewer.
- Be honest. Don't make things up!
- Be prepared to discuss anything on your CV. If you are the 10th author on a paper you better know the details of the methods and results of that paper.
- Have a good knowledge of the program and be prepared to ask questions.
- Be careful with humor. Do not make inappropriate comments and be sensitive to race-related, gender-related issues.
- Do not drink coffee, smoke on site (even outside- someone may see you), chew gum. Never leave trash in the interviewer's office!

Strategy:

Choose three attributes you want the interviewer to know about you. Identify three stories that demonstrate those attributes and practice them. Look for opportunities to share those stories before the interview is over.

Interview Questions for Residency Applicants

Present

- How do your friends describe you?
- What makes you unique?
- What do you do for fun? What do you do in your spare time?
- What are your greatest passions? Why?
- Who do you most admire in medicine? Why?
- Why have you chosen this field?
- Why might you choose to match here (as opposed to other programs)?
- What will you bring to this program?
- Why should we take you into this program?
- What is your greatest weakness and how will it affect your performance in our program?
- Describe a difficult decision you had to make in the past few years and how did you deal with it?
- Tell me about yourself, outside of medicine.
- Have you ever had a crisis in your life? How did you deal with it?

Future

- What would you do if you did not match?
- With respect to your career, are you more inclined to go into academic medicine or the primary care of patients?
- Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
- What things are YOU looking for in a residency?

Additional Questions to Consider

- Who is your personal hero?
- What types of people do you have trouble working with?
- What types of people have trouble working with you?
- Tell me about an influential patient experience you had in medical school.
- What was your most difficult experience in medical school?
- Can you think of anything that you wished I would have asked you but did not?
- What important thing would you like to tell me that isn't in your file?