



Residency Interview Webinar  
*September 2019*  
*OSPD*



American University of the Caribbean  
School of Medicine



## Scheduling Interviews

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- Try to avoid interviewing at your top choice programs until you have completed at least one interview
  - Nervous and less confident early on so use programs in which you are not as interested in to improve your skills
- No consensus if better to interview early or late in season
  - Early because programs are fresh and excited about meeting applicants
  - Late so you'll be more memorable
  - Control what you can control
- Remember: Program Coordinator organizes the interview schedule and is closest to the Program Director – be nice!



## Residency Interview Structure

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- No one-size-fits-all structure for interview
  - Different sites will have different processes
  - Most programs will provide advance information on how the interview process will work (presentations, Q&A)
- Students are strongly encouraged to:
  - Research the program where you will interview
  - Learn about the structure of the interview: what to wear, what questions to expect, who makes up the interview committee, etc.
  - Remember that much of what you get out of your interviews depend on your attitude toward the process and what you seek to accomplish through the experience
  - Make the most out of what's likely to be the one and only opportunity to actually see and experience what the program is like



## Interview Day Common Activities

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- Pre- (or post-) interview dinners or other social activities with residents
- Orientation to institution and residency
- Tour of patient care and educational areas
- Opportunity to participate on rounds
- Interviews with staff, residents or both
- Exit interview with someone from program leadership



## Preparing for the Interview

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- Familiarize yourself with [common interview questions](#)
  - Tell me about yourself?
  - How do you handle stress?
  - Why did you apply to this program?
  - What's your greatest weakness?
- Research the program
  - Go beyond the website homepage
  - Are they known for research/new technology?
- Create method to track/rate programs
  - [NRMP's PRISM App](#)
  - [AAMC's Residency Program Evaluation Guide](#)





## Preparing for the Interview

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- Proper mindset is key
  - Happy, confident and excited to be in the interview conversation, but not desperate to get the job
  - Mutual opportunity for you and the program to see if it's a good fit -- not there to impress or please anyone
  - Role play common questions with a friend/family member
    - Familiarize yourself with the answers, but don't memorize them
    - Aim for a natural, relaxed delivery
- Identify most impressive/important character traits and why
  - Use character traits to answer difficult questions



## Tell Me About Yourself

- Include something interesting/unique about yourself
- Opportunity to show why you should be selected
- Avoid restating exact info from personal statement/CV
- 2-3 minutes (not too short, not too long)

<b><i>Something memorable about yourself +</i></b>	<b><i>Skillset//experience you possess that will add value to their program +</i></b>	<b><i>Why you're a good fit for their program</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Where are you from</li><li>▪ What did you study in undergrad and why</li><li>▪ What inspired you to study medicine</li><li>▪ Interesting experiences outside of medicine</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Exposure to variety of cases and treatments</li><li>▪ Diverse patient populations</li><li>▪ Research/previous work experiences</li><li>▪ Proficiency in ACGME core competencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Train and practice in your home state</li><li>▪ Interested in what program is known for: research-intensive vs community-based or teaching philosophy toward residents</li></ul>



## Tell Me About Yourself

<b><i>Something memorable about yourself +</i></b>	<b><i>Skillset/experience you possess that will add value to their program +</i></b>	<b><i>Why you're a good fit for their program</i></b>
<p>My name is Jane Doe, and I come from a family of physicians so medicine has been a part of my life for a long time. My mother is a pediatrician ...</p>	<p>AUC's clinical program provided me with exposure to a diverse patient population where I was able to see a variety of cases and treatments. I love working with patients and thrive in a team environment.</p>	<p>I'm from the area and my goal has always to positively impact the community in which I grew up. The small size and family atmosphere are important to me, and I feel I would thrive if offered a position here.</p>





## Difficult Questions

- Identify most impressive/important character traits and why
  - Trustworthy, quick learner, good judgement, team player, open to constructive criticism
- Use traits to show what you learned or how you persevered in a situation that didn't result in a favorable outcome
- Always end on a positive note

<b><i>Explain the situation without making excuses and take ownership +</i></b>	<b><i>Character trait that allowed you to overcome adversity +</i></b>	<b><i>What was the result</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I wasn't used to studying in a group setting prior to med school. As a result, I became overwhelmed with the amount of information and failed two courses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I've always prided myself on my ability to quickly and accurately identify issues and to seek out feedback for continued improvement.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I did not fail any additional courses and went on to post a competitive Step 1 scores for Internal Medicine. It was a great learning experience.</li></ul>



## Role Play With Common Interview Questions

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- Why did you become a doctor?
- How would your friends describe you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are you interested in our program?
- What are you looking for in a program?
- Why should we choose you?
- Can you tell me about this deficiency on your record?
- If you could not be a physician, what career would you choose?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What is your most important accomplishment?
- What motivates you?
- What problems will our specialty face in the next 5-10 years?
- How well do you take criticism?



## Questions for the Program

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- Thoroughly research the program so you can ask informed questions
- Be ready for the interviewer to reverse roles and ask you to interview them
- Not asking questions shows lack of interest
- [Don't Forget to Ask: Advice from Residents on What to Ask During the Residency Interview](#) by AAMC



## Thank You Letter

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- Send to Program Director and anyone else who you spent enough time where you made a connection
- Send within 48 hours of completing the interview
- Handwritten letters are best; type out and sign if penmanship is not legible
- Cards are ok to send too; choose a minimal design
- You can ask the best way to send the letters (some programs may have a preference)
- Potential topics: what you saw, who you met, good experiences you had



## Dress for Success

- Dark suit (black, gray or navy)
- Minimal jewelry
- Avoid strong cologne or perfume
- Men: button-down shirt and tie with comfortable, polished shoes
- Women: pants or skirt with a flat or conservative heel
- **SMILE!**

*Mitchell Clark, MD ('12)*

*Gynecological Fellow at University of Toronto*

*Ob/Gyn at Yale University/Bridgeport Hospital*



## Resources

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- [Ask the Experts: Mastering the Residency Interview](#) by ECFMG
- [The US Residency Interview Process, Volume 2](#) by ECFMG
- [Residency Interview Tips from a Chief Resident](#) by KevinMD
- [Preparing for Residency Interview](#) by the American College of Physicians
- [Iserson's Getting into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students](#) by Kenneth V. Iserson





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## Contact

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