

The Interviewing Process

UNH Health Professions Advisory Committee and Medical/Dental Schools

The UNH Committee interviews are conducted in the spring semester upon completion of the applicant's file in the Health Professions (HP) Advising Office. Applicants will interview individually with the Chair and two other Committee members. A Composite Letter of Evaluation will be written by the Committee Chair based on the applicant's transcripts, personal statement, letters of recommendation, interviews, and, if available, exam scores.

The UNH and HP school interviews are an opportunity for the applicant to express and explain themselves to the interviewers. You will be able to discuss your situation and who you are. The interviewers will be assessing: character, maturity, sense of responsibility, motivation, communication and interpersonal skills. Be yourself and react naturally and honestly. If you have done your homework, thought about how you will respond to various questions and situations, and participated in a mock interview (schedule one with the UACC), you should be able to handle any interviewing situation that might occur!

Prepare Yourself

- Self assessment: Know yourself- strengths and weaknesses
 - Know the information you have included in your file/application
 - Review personal statement and secondaries
 - List of three or four points, specific accomplishments
 - Be ready to discuss any negative aspects of your application/record
 - Current issues: Know what's going on in the world and in medicine READ!
- Try To Relax and Be Yourself
- Be honest
- Be Clear and Concise
- Be Enthusiastic and Confident
- Don't be afraid to say: "I don't know"
- Be Prompt and Dress Appropriately
- Know the school; have questions ready
 - Strengths of specific medical school
- Take the Tour and talk to students

What to Wear

Dress professionally and comfortably. It shows you care enough to spend time on your personal appearance as well as implying that you respect the individuals you will be meeting with. Men should consider wearing a suit and tie or slacks and a sport coat and tie. Women should wear a business-like suit/dress. It is important that you are comfortable in what you choose to wear. Try out your interview outfit before you go. Put on what you are planning to wear and make sure everything looks and fits right. (If you are traveling, you may need to iron packed clothes) You will probably be given information and materials during your visit. It is useful to bring a nice folder or small organizer with you to keep these organized and out of the way.

The Interview

Medical/dental school interviews usually consist of individual meetings with two or even three different people, at least one of them a faculty member and another often a medical student. Interviews may be scheduled to last for an hour or more but may only go for 20 minutes. Usually the interviewer will have read your application, but sometimes they know nothing about you before the interview (referred to as a blind interview). You might also encounter a group interview - more than one interviewer and/or applicant at one time.

Spend some time thinking about your opinions/beliefs on current healthcare issues. Not simply how you feel but the basis for your positions. In addition, a general knowledge of trends in medicine and the world events make for interesting conversation. You might be asked about a book or movie you liked. Topics such as in-vitro fertilization, abortion, euthanasia, socialized medicine, the AIDS epidemic and the high costs of medicine are often brought up as an exercise in current awareness and logical thought. At some point during your visit, you may be asked to complete a "Writing Sample". You may be given a choice of topics and asked to write a brief essay on the subject.

On the tour or campus visit

- Make sure you like what you see. You will be spending four years there. Do you like the people that you meet there?
- Talk to the students in the programs you visit not just the ones you meet in the interview or on the tour.
- Talk with random people; in the cafeteria, the library and ask them what they think of the school.
- Try to get a sense of daily life at the school. What conditions will you be expected to live and function in. Do students seem happy, satisfied, stressed?
- Which schools feel "comfortable"- is it a place you want to spend time at, where the people and environment are a good fit for you?
- Are the students in competition with each other or do they work cooperatively?
- What opportunities are present for activities that will help you maintain balance and sanity?
- Try to talk with students in different years. Do they feel well prepared, are the supports/resources available to help them succeed, how well has the school prepared them for their internship/residency?
- Is the library open 24 hours, are the labs?
- Is there public transportation; is it a safe campus if you need to get across campus late at night?

Thank You Letters

As soon as possible after the interview, make notes of individual's names, and any thoughts and impressions of the interview/school. You should immediately write a thank you letter to everyone you interviewed with. If possible, send the letter out the day after the interview. A simple card is sufficient with a few sentences to thank the interviewer for taking time out to interview and perhaps reiterate the reasons for your interest in the school. You also might want to point to specific things that you learned from the interview day, or clarify a point raised in the interview itself. Do not write a long letter or try to continue the interview.

Final Thoughts

Be yourself and answer questions in your own voice. Don't try to give answers you think a committee "wants to hear". Listen to the questions and take time to think about your response. Put yourself in the position of the interviewer. Ultimately when they meet you, they want to know if you are someone they would want to work with and invite in to their community.

Resources

Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR)

The book *Medical School Admission Requirements*, or MSAR, (Kimberly S. Varner, ed., ISBN 1-5775-4007-7) is often considered the premedical student's "bible." Published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), it contains information on premedical requirements for each of the MD schools in the US and Canada, as well as information and statistics about admissions, financial aid, and minority student issues. It is revised each April, so make sure you get the most recent edition. You should definitely get this book if you are considering medical school. A copy is available in the Premed/dental Advising library. You can buy a copy from an online bookstore, or direct from the AAMC.

Official Guide to Dental Schools Basically the same concept as MSAR for Dental Schools. Published by The American Dental Education Association and available from the ADEA website as well as in the Premed/dental Advising library

Schools and Colleges of Optometry Admission Requirements: Available in the Premed/dental Advising library.

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine: www.aacom.org/colleges

Useful Web Resources:

www.studentdoctor.net Maintains a list of students' interview feedback for medical, dental, and pharmacy schools

[31 Questions I Wish I'd Asked](#) (on AAMC site but applicable to all types of programs)

To Get You Thinking:

The following questions can give you a place to start preparing yourself. Express *your* thoughts. The interviewers want to know what you think and how you form your opinions. Be ready to give examples of experiences that have helped inform your thoughts, decisions and plans.

Do you have any questions for us?

Explain any problem(s) that may be in your academic record.

Give an example of how you work as part of a team.

Describe how you have challenged yourself to become more knowledgeable and comfortable in working with people from different backgrounds (ex. Socio-economic, religious, racial, cultural, etc.).

How could you affect the health care system?

How do you feel about animal research?

How do you intend to finance your medical/dental education? (Whatever method, show that you have thought about it.)

How do you respond to criticism? Describe a situation where your work was criticized. What was your immediate reaction to the situation? What did you learn from this experience?

How did you choose your major?

How do you see the field of medicine/dentistry changing in the next ten years? How do you see yourself fitting into those changes?

How do you work under pressure? Give an example. What, in hindsight, were you most dissatisfied with about your performance?

How has your interest in medicine developed? How do you know that medicine is for you? When did you decide this?

How would friends describe you?

If you had to change anything about your education, what would you change?

In your opinion, what are the three most important problems in medicine?

Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like us to know about you?

Tell me about your research. Are you interested in research? How do you imagine the balance of research and clinical work in your future?

Tell me about yourself.

What are the negative aspects of being a doctor?

What are your 2 best points? What are your 2 weakest points?
 What can be done about rising health costs?
 What do you see as the most pressing problem facing medicine today?
 What do you think about physician assisted suicide? alternative medicine?
 What do you think is the most important quality a physician should have?
 What do you think of euthanasia? What do you think of abortion?
 What do you think of government's involvement in health care?
 What do you think will be your greatest difficulty in med (dent.)school/medicine?
 What field of medicine/dentistry interests you most?
 What has been your biggest failure and how did you handle it? What did you learn from your experience?
 What have you done that shows initiative?
 What is a favorite book/movie? Why?
 What is the reason for your poor grades in x class/year?
 What is your worst quality?
 What last bit of information would you like me to know about you?
 What makes you special?
 What non-science courses did you like the most?
 What problems do you see in patient care? medical education? medical school admissions?
 What will you do if you are not accepted to medical/dental school?
 What will you find most difficult about medical school? How will you handle that?
 Where do you want to be in ten years?
 Where else are you applying? Have you been accepted anywhere? (Tell them if you have been accepted.) What is your first choice?
 Why choose medicine over some other career in health?
 Why are you interested in attending our school? What do you like/dislike about this school?
 Why do you want to be a doctor/dentist?
 Why should we choose you over other applicants?

Questions to Consider Asking (if you really are interested in the information)

Do your homework first and asked informed questions. Asking questions with answers that are readily available in the schools literature will not show you in the best light. You should gather as much information as possible about the school *before* you go!

Keep in mind that the interview represents a time for you to learn, so don't be shy about asking anyone your questions. However, be sure you have done your own research on each school (at a minimum, study their catalog/web site). Asking questions which seek more detailed information about specific programs at the institution demonstrates your interest in the school and can help you make more informed decisions.

- Are students involved in (required or voluntary) community service?
- Are there any special programs for which this medical/dental school is noted? (Do your research on the school first. You can be more direct and ask about a particular program at the school that you have researched and that interests you.)
- Are there opportunities for students to design, conduct, and publish their own research? (if you are really interested in research)
- How active is the Student Council/Government? Are there other student organizations?
- How are students evaluated academically? How are clinical evaluations performed?
- How diverse is the student body? Are there support services or organizations for ethnic minorities and women?
- How many students do rotations at other institutions or internationally?
- Is there a list available of residency programs to which this school's recent graduates were accepted?
- Is there a mentor/advisor system? Who are the advisors -- faculty members, other students, or both?
- What types of clinical sites are used for clerkships?
- What school committees (e.g., curriculum committee) have student representation?

INTERVIEWING WORKSHEET:

- *List your top 5 qualities*

(Why would you be the right person for this profession/program? What makes you different?)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

- *List 5 different scenarios that demonstrate those qualities*

(Could be a life experience, a class project, volunteering, student org)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Practice Questions:

- Tell me about yourself
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Describe how you have challenged yourself to become more knowledgeable and comfortable in working with people from different backgrounds (ex. Socio-economic, religious, racial, cultural, etc.).
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish failed.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.

University Advising & Career Center

University of New Hampshire • 102 Hood House • Durham, NH • 603-862-2064 • www.unh.edu/uacc

Rules for the Road: Learn To Act Like a Professional

The way in which you act and present yourself during the internship and job search can create lasting impressions that will have an impact on an employers' hiring decision. Your written communications, phone interactions and live behavior are all judged by future employers. Put your best foot forward at all times and remember that follow-up actions speak just as loudly as in-person actions. Etiquette is not optional – it is expected at all times! People talk and your professional reputation is at stake.

Email:

- **Answer Quickly.** You should respond to all E-mails within 24 hours. If the email requires an answer that you cannot provide immediately, at least email back saying you will follow-up shortly. This applies to phone calls, too.
- **Do not write in CAPITALS or all lower case.** Your recipient may view capitals as if you were yelling. All lower case sentences are seen as unprofessional.
- **Refrain from abbreviations or emotions.** Your recipient may not know the meaning of BTW or LOL, and generally smileys ☺ are seen as unprofessional.
- **E-mails are a form of professional writing.** Each E-mail that you send represents you and leaves an impression. Employers consider E-mails and cover letters as writing samples. Just because you can send an email quickly, doesn't mean you should write it quickly.
- **Use a professional email address.** kegstandchamp@hotmail.com does not send the right message to an employer. Remember to type/sign your name at the bottom of the email, so they know how to address you in response. Your email address may not indicate your first and last name.

Phone and general communication:

- **If you commit, live up to it.** If you make a commitment to a phone call or a meeting, follow-through. Employers assume that all of your actions are a reflection of how you would act on the job. Even if your commitment is for information only, do not burn bridges – people talk!
- **Always send a thank you note.** It is **expected** that you will follow-up with a thank you note after all networking, research meetings and interviews. It is professionally required that you send a thank you to anyone who has taken the time to assist you.
- **Create a professional voicemail message.** First impressions make a huge difference and often this is the first interaction with an employer or alum. “Dude” or “yo” type language is inappropriate. This also applies when you answer your phone.
- **Nail the introduction.** If you meet someone in person, look them in the eye, shake hands and introduce yourself, “Hi my name is _____. I am a junior at UNH majoring in Psychology. I am at the career fair to search for summer internships. Do you offer internships?” If you are calling a contact to schedule a research meeting, introduce yourself and let them know how you found their name.

Interview:

- **Always arrive 15 minutes early.**
- **Research the organization.** When they ask you what you know about their organization, you better have an answer! Employers expect that you will do your homework in advance.
- **Prepare questions.** Employers expect you to have questions prepared for them about the job or internship and the organization. Write these down in advance and refer to them in the interview. When they inevitably ask, “Do you have any questions for me?” you never want to say “no”.
- **Show enthusiasm.** Do not treat the interview as a shopping event. Take every interview seriously and show your passion. Employers will not be interested in you if you are not interested in them.
- **Always send a thank you note.** Always – there are no exceptions to this rule! Send the thank you note within 24 hours. You can email it, but keep it in a formal format.
- **Turn off your cell phone.**

Updated 6/06

Thank-You Letters

As a professional courtesy, it is expected that a thank-you email or letter will be sent within 24 hours of each job interview or career research meeting. The format should always be professional. Expressing your appreciation in writing will help you stand out from other candidates as many people neglect this important step. Keep your letter brief—no more than three or four short paragraphs. Here's an outline of a sample thank-you letter:

In the First Paragraph, thank the employer for the opportunity to interview for the job. You can also reiterate your interest in the position at this time.

In the Second Paragraph, mention any relevant skills or qualifications you forgot to emphasize during the interview, or highlight your discussion, reiterating important points you made about your qualifications and interests.

In the Third Paragraph, close the letter by thanking your contact again and refer to any next steps you and the interviewer discussed. If you really want the job, say so at this point. *“I am very interested in this position and would love the opportunity to...”*

The following sample letter is based on the outline above. Of course, your letter will be unique to you, the job you want, the employer you are targeting, and your qualifications.

Sample Thank-You Letter

Your Name Here
102 Hood House
Durham, NH 03824
603-862-2064

January 20, 2007

Robert Jones
Lab Manager
XYZ, Inc.
2234 Long Ridge Rd.
Stamford, CT 06457

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss my qualifications for your Protein Lab Junior Associate position. I enjoyed our conversation a great deal and continue to be very interested in the job.

Your comprehensive outline of the job's duties and responsibilities gave me a good picture of the position and my ability to succeed in it. As I mentioned this morning, I am confident that my previous biology and biochemistry lab experience will enable me to make a positive contribution at Protein, Inc.

Thanks again for your consideration. As you explained during the interview, I should be hearing from you within the next week regarding the second round of interviews. I look forward to speaking with you then.

Sincerely,

Your Name Typed Here

Updated 6/06

What is a Curriculum Vita?

A Curriculum Vita ("CV" or "vita") is a comprehensive, biographical statement emphasizing your professional qualifications and activities. In general, curricula vitae are three or more pages in length, however, for the purpose of your Health Professions (HP) interview, keep it to no more than two pages. An advantage to the C.V. format over the resume is the significant freedom to choose the headings and categories that best reflect your skills, training, and experience for a particular position. As with all materials you will use, have your CV critiqued by several people, including someone experienced at reading resumes and cover letters, for their impressions and suggestions. Make the appropriate changes and present the revised version for critique.

Possible Sections to Include in Your C.V.

There is no one perfect format for a curriculum vita. Emphasize the categories and experiences most relevant for each position you apply for. The following are typical sections:

Personal Information: Name, address, telephone, email.

Education: Include: degree type (B.A., B.S., M.A., etc.) and area of concentration; month and year degree was (will be) received, name of institution; city and state. Note: If you did a thesis, you may wish to include the title of your thesis. If you are an undergraduate and your GPA is 3.5 or higher, it is appropriate to include it. You may also include "**Additional Relevant Coursework**" that includes courses that may be outside of the sciences but pertain to an understanding of health/societal issues (i.e. *Law, Medicine, and Morals, Death and Dying*).

Honors and Awards: List any honors, scholarships, awards and citations you received academically and professionally.

Relevant Experience: List positions (part-time, full-time, volunteer, temporary and permanent) related to the purpose of the vita. This can be broken down into categories such as: Teaching, Counseling, Volunteer, Health, Community, Internship, Leadership, etc. Include: job/position title; complete name of department, firm, agency, or organization; city and state; dates. Provide a brief description of your activities/duties, using strong action verbs. Bullet and list these descriptions in order of importance.

Other Experience: These may be activities that do not relate directly to the health professions, but may enhance your vita by demonstrating additional skills. For example: retail sales, bartending, and food services may include organizational, supervisory, and interpersonal skills and/or demonstrate your ability to juggle academic work with other activities. Write your title, name of organization, city, state and dates. Describe what you did using action verbs. Bullet and list descriptions in descending order of importance.

Research Activity: List any contributions you have made to research activities. Describe research projects recently conducted or in progress. Include the type of research and a brief description of the purpose. List your role, e.g. principal investigator, research assistant. Note name of project, principal investigator, and where/under whose auspices research took place, and dates. Give amount funded for grants.

Leadership Activities: List other things you do in your life, such as community service.

Service: List institutional committees and professional associations you have served on, including offices held, student groups you have supervised, or special academic projects on which you have assisted. Professional Associations Memberships, including student memberships, in national, regional, state, and local professional organizations should be listed. Also, list significant appointments to positions or committees in these associations

Educational Travel: Names of countries, dates, purpose

Language Skills: Include language(s) and level of proficiency

Presentations Give titles of professional presentations, name of conference or event; dates and location; also include a brief description.

Publications: List newsletter or journal articles you have written.

Certifications List all relevant certifications and the year received.

Additional Assistance: Web resources: www.rileyguide.com/resprep.html www.rileyguide.com/resprep.html#cv

The University Advising & Career Center (UACC - Hood House) offers resources on CV writing for your reference. Stop by Hood House Room 102 to take a look. Walk-in hours for a quick consultation (10 minutes) are Monday-Friday 12:00-3:00pm. **Let them know it will be for HP interviews.** For a more in-depth review, schedule an appointment by calling 862-2064.

Skills List for Your Resume

Management Skills	Formulated	Computed	Appraised	Coached
Administered	Influenced	Designed	Audited	Counseled
Analyzed	Interpreted	Engineered	Balanced	Demonstrated
Assigned	Lectured	Fabricated	Budgeted	Diagnosed
Attained	Mediated	Maintained	Calculated	Educated
Chaired	Moderated	Operated	Computed	Expedited
Contracted	Motivated	Overhauled	Developed	Facilitated
Consolidated	Negotiated	Programmed	Forecast	Familiarized
Coordinated	Persuaded	Remodeled	Managed	Guided
Delegated	Promoted	Repaired	Marketed	Referred
Developed	Publicized	Solved	Planned	Rehabilitated
Directed	Reconciled	Trained	Projected	Represented
Evaluated	Spoke	Upgraded	Researched	
Executed	Translated			Clerical or Detail Skills
Improved	Wrote	Teaching Skills	Creative Skills	Approved
Increased		Adapted	Acted	Arranged
Organized	Research Skills	Advised	Conceptualized	Cataloged
Oversaw	Clarified	Clarified	Created	Classified
Planned	Collected	Coached	Designed	Collected
Prioritized	Critiqued	Communicated	Developed	Compiled
Produced	Diagnosed	Coordinated	Directed	Dispatched
Recommended	Evaluated	Developed	Established	Executed
Reviewed	Examined	Enabled	Fashioned	Generated
Scheduled	Extracted	Encouraged	Founded	Implemented
Strengthened	Identified	Evaluated	Illustrated	Inspected
Supervised	Inspected	Explained	Instituted	Monitored
	Interpreted	Facilitated	Integrated	Operated
Communication Skills	Interviewed	Guided	Introduced	Organized
Addressed	Investigated	Informed	Invented	Prepared
Arbitrated	Organized	Initiated	Originated	Processed
Arranged	Reviewed	Instructed	Performed	Purchased
Authored	Summarized	Persuaded	Planned	Recorded
Corresponded	Surveyed	Set goals	Revitalized	Retrieved
Developed	Systematized	Stimulated	Shaped	Screened
Discussed				Specified
Directed	Technical Skills	Financial Skills	Helping Skills	Systematized
Drafted	Assembled	Administered	Assessed	Tabulated
Edited	Built	Allocated	Assisted	Validated
Enlisted	Calculated	Analyzed	Clarified	

Examples of Transferable Skills

Leadership

- Exhibit self-motivation and a positive attitude
- Motivate individuals and groups to perform
- Encourage effective teamwork
- Design and implement plans of action
- Set goals and follow through
- Assess and evaluate situations effectively
- Manage time efficiently and effectively through scheduling and prioritizing
- Handle multiple demands for commitment of time, energy, and resources
- Identify critical issues quickly and accurately
- Meet the needs of both the organization and the employees when possible
- Use integrity in decision-making

Program Administration

- Interpret rules and regulations
- Analyze data and information
- Create innovative solutions to complex problems
- Ensure that tasks are completed on time
- Prioritize daily workload

Information Management

- Research, investigate, and compile information
- Synthesize facts, concepts, and principles
- Compile, sort, and interpret data
- Identify and combine a variety of resource materials into final copy
- Formulate relevant questions and develop ways to supply and clarify answers
- Communicate facts and ideas clearly both orally or in writing
- Manage a budget and keep accurate financial records

Creativity

- Solve problems creatively, logically, and practically
- Write interesting and clear articles, reports, etc.
- Design activities to interest participants
- Market and display products to appeal to target audience
- Create visually intriguing and skilled designs, displays, or works of art
- Demonstrate convincing public speaking or acting skills

Interpersonal Communications

- Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- Display understanding of, and respect for, people from diverse backgrounds
- Understand and work within the group culture
- Listen actively and attentively
- Delegate tasks and responsibilities
- Interpret behavior and emotional patterns in individuals and groups
- Teach, supervise, and train others using easy-to-understand concepts and hands on experience
- Conduct in-depth interviews
- Express ideas and thoughts based on facts
- Mediate conflict with tact and diplomacy

Personal Development

- Instill self-confidence and self-esteem in others
- Demonstrate flexibility and commitment to change and learning
- Learn the value of hard work and persistence
- Devise means of dealing with extra stress