

**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 health profession 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/email 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](http://www.aacom.org/colleges)

### **Useful Web Resources:**

[www.studentdoctor.net](http://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?