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Medical School Admissions Doctor



What to Expect During a Medical School Multiple Mini Interview

This nontraditional system is gaining popularity at U.S. medical schools.



The model of seven to 10 short interviews instead of one long session can be a way for medical schools to get a more detailed picture of each applicant's personal qualities and characteristics.

By [Jessica Freedman, M.D.](#)

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The multiple mini interview, or MMI, is becoming increasingly more common at [medical schools](#) in the U.S. This year, my company has seen MMIs used at nearly 30 allopathic medical schools in the U.S., rather than traditional one-on-one interviews. We've also seen a few [osteopathic medical schools](#) also adopt the MMI model.

Some students are terrified of the MMI. However, after experiencing it, many realize the format is appealing.

In the traditional interview, an interviewer will typically judge an applicant very quickly and this creates a "halo effect" that affects how that applicant is evaluated and perceived throughout the interview. The MMI is a scenario-based interview developed by [McMaster University](#) in Toronto, decreases this halo effect and often better assesses an [applicant's personal qualities](#) and characteristics.



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The MMI consists of a circuit of seven to 10 stations. At each station, students are given two minutes to read a prompt. The prompts presented are not complex and do not require any medical knowledge.

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Prompts are written so a college senior could understand the issues presented. Applicants are assessed on their ability to navigate issues that anyone in society might encounter and should have general knowledge of some issues including those related to patient confidentiality and cultural competence.

What students really want to know is [what they will be asked](#) during an MMI. Since all interviewees are asked to keep the prompts confidential, the prompts are not public and might be changed from year to year. It can also hurt an applicant to know prompts and scenarios in advance, as since an interviewer could likely sense if an interviewer came in a little too well prepared and did not seem natural and spontaneous.

MMI prompts fall in to four basic categories. The first and most common is a scenario with questions. The station consists of an interviewer only. A scenario is presented with specific questions at the end of the scenario.

The second type is a role play prompt. These stations consist of an interviewer and an actor with whom the student must interact and respond. The prompt will indicate what role the student plays and what role the actor plays.

The third type of prompt applicants might see is the simple task. These stations consists of two applicants and one interviewer. The first student is asked to perform a simple task and the second student is asked to guide the first student.

The final type of station is the traditional station, which consists of one student and one interviewer. This station mimics the traditional medical school interview.

[Learn to [navigate challenging ethics questions during medical school interviews](#).]

After reading and considering the prompt and any related questions, the applicant enters the interview room. The applicant is given around eight minutes in the interview room.

Interviewers will not have discussions with the applicant, but, they may pose additional questions if clarifications are needed. One of the most difficult parts of the MMI is that interviewers won't react to an applicant's responses – they must remain neutral.

MMI interviews are not conversational. Applicants must also shift gears quickly between MMI stations and therefore cannot dwell or think about a previous station when moving on to a new one.

After the interviewee leaves, the interviewer, who might be a physician, administrator or even a civilian, completes a score sheet.

The score sheet typically takes into account seven areas, including professionalism, communication skills, teamwork, compassion and empathy, cultural competence, problem-solving skills and ethics and values. These results are then compiled and discussed when the interview day is complete.

[Here are [five ways to ace a medical school interview](#).]

Applicants must realize that there are no right answers in the MMI. Students must be able to defend their opinions and arguments by communicating effectively and demonstrating understanding of the situation.

The best MMI interviewee quickly establishes rapport with his or her interviewer and brings his own experiences in to the discussion to support the ideas presented. MMI-style interviews favor outgoing, articulate and reflective students.

Oftentimes, after an actual MMI, the same student who initially dreaded the experience will find it a fun experience. Approach your interviews with an open mind. If you are mature, thoughtful, and considerate, the MMI format will likely work to your advantage.



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