



Guidance for candidates taking online interviews

Due to the pandemic and the need to physically distance, many medical schools will not be able to hold their normal interview days. Even though the rules around physical distancing are gradually relaxing, there is concern that there may be peaks and local surges in infection rates. It is also anticipated that this might get worse over the winter months.

In response, many medical schools are proactively planning to run their panel interviews or multiple mini interviews (MMIs) online instead. Some medical schools are considering using asynchronous interviews too in which candidates record themselves answering set questions and then submit the video.

Many medical schools have run online interviews for some candidates (e.g. those overseas) for several years already, so this is not a totally new concept.

Below are some top tips from medical schools about how you can prepare for your online interview experience.

- You will need a quiet area where you will not be disturbed. This might mean that you need to talk to your parents/family/housemates, about giving you some alone time and space. If this is not possible, perhaps you could talk to your school or college about using a room for the duration of the interview.
- You must be alone in the room when you do the interview. The interviewer might ask you to move your camera around the room so that they can see you are alone.
- You will need a device that has a camera and a microphone. This might be a desktop, laptop, tablet, or phone. If you do not have a suitable device, you could ask your school or college if you could borrow one.
- Read all the information that each medical school who has invited you to interview sends you. This will include information on how to join the interview, what

online platform they will use and how to get in contact with them on the day.

- Most medical schools will ask that you test out the software before your interview date. It is ESSENTIAL that you do this before the interview.
- Anyone can have IT problems on the day and medical schools will understand this. They will ask that you try to mitigate any issues beforehand, such as by making sure your device is plugged in or has enough battery, that you have strong WiFi signal and that the camera and microphone work.
- Make sure that you are clearly visible and that your face is not in shadow. Position yourself directly in front of the camera, ideally with some natural light from a window or a bright lamp in front of you. If you sit with a window behind you the examiner will not be able to see your face clearly enough.
- Even though the interview is online, it is still a formal process and you must dress and present yourself appropriately.
- Bring photo ID with you as you will need to show it as proof of identity– this could be a passport, a driving license, a school or college ID card.
- Although it may be tempting to read out any prepared answers that you have written, it is not recommended as you will not engage with the interviewer. Even if you are completing an asynchronous interview it is still best to engage with the camera rather than reading out a prepared answer.
- Have a glass of water nearby just in case you need it.
- The interviewers want to get to know you and understand your experiences and why you want to study medicine. Listen closely to the questions and ask the interviewer for clarity if you are unsure of the question.
- Do not record the interview or copy the interview questions down.¹ If you do so, this will be viewed as a professionalism issue and could result in your offer being rescinded, even after you have accepted it.

¹ NB: You may have been sent the questions in advance, which a few medical schools do.

How to prepare for online interviews

There are lots of simple things you can do to prepare for online interviews and MMIs;

- Use the MSC Interview Preparation website.² Although the content is based on face to face interviews it will give you an idea of the different types of interviews medical schools run and some example questions as well as tips on preparing.
- Practice talking to people via video call. You can use free platforms like Microsoft Teams, Skype, or Zoom (free for first 40 mins), WhatsApp, and FaceTime – there is no need to pay for a video call service. This will help you learn how to communicate effectively over video call and will also let you test what sort of environment will help you feel the most comfortable during your interview.
- Look at your personal statement and practice talking about what you have written there. As mentioned above, overly practiced responses are NOT what interviewers are looking for, so practice talking about your experiences without writing out a formal response.

² The MSC Interview Preparation Website can be found at www.msclnterviewprep.co.uk.