

the MMII

multiple mini interviews guide



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the multiple mini interview

What is the multi-mini interview (MMI)?

The MMI is an interview format that employs many short independent interviews in a timed circuit. It includes an assessment of non-cognitive skills in order to better predict success in medical school and in the subsequent years as a physician.

Questions are standardized for each applicant of the school in order to ensure fairness and prevent interview bias. Applicants have the chance to recover from a session that did not go as well as intended.

Applicants will be evaluated on intellectual abilities and interpersonal qualities such as:

- Communication skills
- Initiative and resilience
- Problem-solving abilities and critical thinking
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Ethical and moral reasoning
- Professionalism and composure under stress
- Maturity
- Confidence
- Knowledge of the medical field
- Passion
- Compassion
- Service
- Knowledge of current events and issues related to healthcare

What does the MMI entail?

An MMI generally consists of six to ten timed stations through which applicants rotate. At each station, the applicant is presented with a question, scenario, or task. Typically, eight to ten minutes are allowed at each station before moving onto the next one.

- 2 minutes to read the question outside of the interview room
- 6-8 minutes to enter room and respond
- Move to next station
- Sometimes there is a rest station
- Different interviewers in each room
- Each interviewer submits a score per station
- A global score is calculated at the end

The interviewer stays in the same room while applicants move through all the stations. Each candidate starts at a different location. The interviewers can be someone from a medical school, a doctor, or even a current medical school student.

Since MMIs are significantly different from traditional interviews, it is important to understand and practice the logic behind successfully addressing the questions or scenarios posed. Mock interviews are extremely important and are offered in Human Ecology's Career Exploration Center (CEC), 162 MVR. A three-day advance notice is required.

preparation

Preparing for these interviews does not require knowledge of the exact questions being asked. Instead, applicants should focus on developing their ability to formulate logical, thorough responses within a strict time frame. Although the scenarios may not involve medical issues, familiarity with bioethics issues can be helpful in understanding the approach to ethics issues in general. Also, start reading about current events and policy issues.

Topics to review

- Bioethics cases
- How to reason with people/patients
- Dealing with under-aged (<18 y/o) patients
- Current events in healthcare
- Near end-of-life scenarios
- Breaking bad or sensitive news
- Basic laws

(Carleen Eaton, MD)

MMI rubric & scoring system

Key stakeholders Throughout the mini interviews, the interviewers will be provided with rubrics to assess that the responses provided address the key stakeholders within each scenario. Each question has its own unique rubric, so it is suggested that you view practice questions *and* their expected responses online. In general, however, such key focal points include the mentioning of stakeholders (the patient, the community, cooperation with existing/nearby health facilities), communication and cooperation with others, exhibiting empathy and compassion, considering a business strategy/marketing plan to inform the community of something new, and trying to encompass broad considerations of key persons and strategies within answers.

- Elements to Scoring:**
1. A structured checklist (with items marked from 1-4, four being “excellent”, one being “unsatisfactory”).
 2. A Total Score (added individual scores to give an overall mark out of 20 for each individual station; scores from each station will be added up to give a total score which is the applicant’s final MMI score).
 3. Independent Global Score (the interviewer makes an overall assessment of the quality of your response)
 - 1:** Did not perform, or clearly unsatisfactory
 - 2:** Performed, but at the level of satisfactory
 - 3:** Performed to a good standard
 - 4:** Performed to an excellent standard

Excellent: The applicant shows a degree of originality and creativity in their answer. There is evidence of the ability to generalize the subject content to areas not covered in the formal scenario. There is strong evidence of critical reflection on professionalism of both themselves and that of others. There is identification of strategies for how they themselves and others might behave in the given circumstances. The answers appear authentic.

Good: The work shows a good appreciation for the general issues in the context of the topic with relevant and reasoned argument. The answers demonstrate a clear view of how the various aspects of the topic relate to one another. There is reasonable evidence of critical reflection on professionalism of both themselves and that of others. The answers appear authentic.

Satisfactory: The answers are relevant, but do not address all aspects of the topic. There is demonstration of understanding of the issue being considered and just enough evidence that a reasonable

argument has been advanced. There is evidence of critical reflection on professionalism of both themselves and that of others but the answers are more descriptive than analytical. The answers indicate a modest understanding of the topic but appear authentic.

Unsatisfactory: The discussion of the issue is not always relevant and accurate and key points may have been omitted. There is doubtful evidence of any clear strategies to guide how they should behave or others should. There is an attempt at reasoned argument, but of doubtful quality. There is insufficient reflection on the behaviors of themselves or others. Sometimes the answers appear contrived.

**Example of Structured
Checklist Components
(Rated from 1-4)**

- Has a sense of establishing the facts to ensure fairness
- Demonstrates an awareness of the dilemma from a range of perspectives
- Able to balance conflicting interests to come to a judgement about what is right
- Appreciates the need for students to consider the consequences of personal behaviors
- Is able to draw lessons from experience to inform future learning

**Categories Interviewers
Look for You to
Address:**

- Ethical understanding
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Continuous learning and teaching
- Personal well-being
- Understanding of practitioner's relationship to society

**Attributes Interviewers
Look for You to
Embody**

- Integrity
- Respect for diversity (race, religion, disability, gender, socioeconomic status)
- Sensitive to the needs of others and ability to establish rapport
- Effective communicator
- Demonstrates insights
- Effective decision maker
- Information manager
- Ability to make a shared plan
- Self-directed learner
- Understands the role of health in society



Red Flags that Interviewers Consider:

- Lack of evidence of commitment to medicine
- Unrealistic ideas about a career in medicine
- Inability to clearly articulate a problem or question
- Inability to sustain a conversation and listen to the interviewer
- Lack of preparation including lack of specific examples to substantiate an argument
- Perceived lack of intellectual curiosity
- Perceived lack of sensitivity to issues of diversity
- Perceived lack of commitment to the importance of teamwork
- Inability to take a stand
- Rigid or extreme points of view
- Perceived lack of empathy
- Poor eye contact
- Immaturity
- Nervous or distracting habits (hair twirling, giggling, foot shaking, etc.)
- Lack of poise
- Poor use of English or poor command of the language

- If you are offered an interview, take the first one available and don't cancel unless there is an emergency. A cancelled interview can affect future applications to that school. Talk with your premed advisor if you need to discuss your situation. If you are traveling a distance for several interviews in the same general location, it is possible to talk with admission offices about arranging interviews to be held during the same time period.
- If you are offered an interview, the school has already determined that you have the academic qualifications to succeed at their institution. Therefore, the purpose of the interview is to get to know you. Follow the rules of a good conversation – make good eye contact, let your posture express interest (no slumping in your chair or twirling your hair!), be honest, and follow the cues of your interviewer. Is this person listening or is he/she showing signs of boredom or impatience? Is the interviewer trying to get a word in edgewise? Is the interviewer repeating a question that you might not have answered well the first time?
- Everyone you meet will be important – the administrative staff at the medical school, the staff at any hotels you may be staying at, the current students you may meet, and other interviewees that day. You will be evaluated on all of your interactions so do not let your guard down!
- It is better to take a brief pause to gather your thoughts before answering a question than to dive in and figure out the answer while you are talking. A pause can demonstrate thoughtfulness.
- If you do not understand the question, ask for it to be repeated
- If you finish early, do not make small talk. It would be best to review your answer to see if you can make any additional comments
- There is a difference between confidence and arrogance. Confidence is important but so is humility. Acknowledge others who played a role in your successes such as mentors, faculty, and teammates.
- You have strengths in some areas and limited knowledge or skills in others. If you are asked to role play or discuss a situation that is outside of your skill set, don't hesitate to say that you would seek professional, medical, or legal advice from others
- Interviews will be assessing your problem-solving skills, attention to detail, flexibility, multi-cultural sensitivity, compassion, and open-mindedness. Prepare examples of times when you demonstrated these qualities. You do not want to try to think of examples on the fly.

- If a controversial topic comes up in a discussion or scenario, be honest and also demonstrate openness to other opinions. It is helpful to state different perspectives but you will also be expected to take your own stand.
- A patient-centered approach is imperative. As you evaluate a question or scenario, keep in mind what is best for the patient.
- You must be able to articulate why you want to be a doctor and support your knowledge of the profession with specific examples from your personal and clinical experience. Interviewers will want to know if you are knowledgeable about the demands and challenges, as well as the rewards of being a physician.
- Be honest and authentic! Anything written in your application is fair game for questioning. Don't exaggerate but also don't be timid in promoting yourself as a qualified and well-prepared applicant.

**Tips on Things
to Avoid:**

- Extreme views which demonstrate racism, sexism, religious, political, or other prejudicial beliefs
- Laxity regarding ethical or moral situations
- Immature or unsophisticated understanding of the medical profession
- Arrogance (as opposed to confidence)
- Timidity and inability to have a point of view which you can substantiate with logic or examples
- Lack of compassion or empathy
- Inability to communicate effectively
- Dishonesty or lack of sincerity

- Situational** An issue or situation is posted at this station and you will be asked to discuss it. Interviewers are provided with background information regarding the issue. Frequently the scenarios entail ethical scenarios or situations that require problem-solving skills. The best way to approach an ethical question is to put the patient's welfare and best interests first.
- Behavioral** This is the traditional type of interview entailing questions about your interests and personal characteristics such as why you want to be a doctor, and why you applied to the school where you are interviewing.
- A common question is, "If you don't get into medical school, what will you do?" It is best to include some variation of, "I will find out why I did not get accepted, will address the shortfall, and then will reapply." Although you should always have a back-up plan, discussing other career options with the interviewer could be interpreted as a lack of commitment to a career in medicine.
- Acting** A scenario is on the station door. You will enter the room and engage with an actor who will be role playing a part. You may need to give the actor bad news, confront the person about a problem, or gather information. An observer present in the room will rate the applicant based on his or her interaction with the actor.
- Collaborative** Instructions are posted on the station door. You will be asked to complete a task or activity with someone else in the room. An interviewer will also be in the room and will assess your communication skills and teamwork.
- Written** A question will be posted at the station. You will be asked to write a response that will be evaluated on content, clarity, spelling, and grammar.
- Rest Station** Some schools provide a station to stop and regroup. This is not a time to judge your past performances but rather breathe and collect your thoughts.

types of interview questions

Standard Interview Why do you want to be a doctor? Discuss this question with the interviewer.

Ethical Decision Making Dr. Smith recommends homeopathic medicines to his patients. There is no scientific evidence or widely accepted theory to suggest that homeopathic medicines work, and Dr. Smith doesn't believe them to. He recommends homeopathic medicine to people with mild and non-specific symptoms such as fatigue, headaches and muscle aches, because he believes that it will do no harm, but will give them reassurance. Consider the ethical problems that Dr. Smith's behavior might pose. Discuss the issues with the interviewer.

Critical Thinking Universities are commonly faced with the complicated task of balancing the educational needs of their students and the cost required to provide learning resources to a large number of individuals. As a result of this tension, there has been much debate regarding the optimal size of classes. One side argues that smaller classes provide a more educationally effective setting for students, while others argue that it makes no difference, so larger classes should be used to minimize the number of instructors required. Discuss your opinion on this issue with the examiner.

Communication Skills The parking garage at your place of work has assigned parking spots. On leaving your spot, you are observed by the garage attendant as you back into a neighboring car, knocking out its left front headlight and denting the left front fender. The garage attendant gives you the name and office number of the owner of the neighboring car, telling you that she is calling ahead to the car owner, Tim. The garage attendant tells you that Tim is expecting your visit. Enter Tim's office. Tim will be played by an actor.

Societal Health Issues Due to the shortage of physicians in rural communities, it has been suggested that medical schools preferentially admit students who are willing to commit to a 2 or 3-year tenure in an under-served area upon graduation.

Consider the broad implications of this policy for health and health care costs. For example, do you think the approach will be effective? At what expense? Discuss this issue with the interviewer.

Teamwork You and another applicant will be working together to perform a task. You will be provided with a sketch; the other applicant will have a copy of the sketch. Using verbal communication only, describe to the other applicant how to draw the sketch. During the station, you and the other applicant will be seated so that you are unable to see one another.

(Eva, Rosenfeld, Reiter, Norman 2004)

examples of interview scenarios

Scoring Rubric Criteria will be scaled from 1 to 5 (1=Very Weak, 5=Very Strong): Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, Interpersonal Skills, Professionalism, Ethics, Opinions of Health Care Issues.

SCENARIO I You have just completed your residency in internal medicine and are relocating to a small farming community in rural Iowa where you plan to open a private practice clinic. The town consists of mostly low-income farmers from Eastern Europe. The town hasn't had a regular doctor in 17 years; hence, the townspeople used to travel 23 miles to a neighboring town to receive medical care and/or fill a prescription. Explain how you would go about opening such a clinic in this town and what factors and considerations you would have to keep in mind to ensure success.

General Guidelines to Scenario I:

- Get to know the main players in the community, assess needs, gain trust
- Assess main health issues/concerns in the community
- Logistics of office (accessibility, location, supporting staff, etc.)
- Become more culturally competent – not limited to language
- Advertise in a way that is appropriate in that community
- Plan activities to educate community and improve prevention and public health
- Understand finances, insurance coverage, etc.
- Utilize municipal services and resources to aid in set-up of practice
- Network with other doctors and health establishments in X-mile radius for support
- Think of what patients will do for prescriptions, major procedures, i.e. things outside of the capability of your practice

SCENARIO II You are a resident in the emergency room of a large hospital. Miguel, a 25-year-old male from a rural area, has fractured his jawbone. He drives for two hours to the emergency room to seek treatment. Miguel has no health insurance and is unable to pay for the \$12,500 surgery that could realign his jawbone and set it into place. If he leaves and elects a surgery at a later time, the fracture would most likely set in the wrong position and would need to be carefully broken again and reset in the correct position. This procedure, however, would cost \$48,000. Your attending physician states that the hospital won't be able to afford a \$12,500 pro-bono surgery. Miguel is sitting in the patient room, unaware of what will happen. What would you say to Miguel?

General Guidelines to Scenario II:

- Greet patient and ask how he feels (great deal of pain vs. manageable pain...)
- Explain in clear terms both options, outlining pros and cons for each course of action
- Describe the procedure and cost of surgery before and after the jaw sets
- Address timelines (when the bone should set, how long he has to receive treatment)
- Suggest talking to social worker or other hospital officials to learn about the possible financial resources available to him to cover these expenses
- Discuss what would happen if surgery never happens
- Address cheaper ways to fix jaw (clinics, smaller hospitals, alternative treatments, etc.) The student doesn't need to know what those methods exactly are, but should be open to the notion that alternate treatments may exist and should be researched to care for this patient

SCENARIO III

You are a resident working at a clinic associated with your program and, over a few weeks, you become very close to a particular patient. This patient is a single mother and currently works in a restaurant as the server. You first saw her as a patient when she received a 2nd degree burn to her hand while she was at work. Since the accident, she has been unable to work and also does not have health insurance. The bills are very burdensome to her and not being able to work is compounding the situation. One day, at the clinic, she asks if you can take some bandages and other materials from the clinic supplies because she cannot afford to buy them on her own. What do you say and what is your course of action?

General Guidelines to Scenario III:

- Sympathize with patient
- Give her a reasonable amount of bandages (for 1-2 days)
- Clearly state that you are unable to give her more because such action would amount to theft and could possibly put your job in jeopardy
- Point patient in direction of different resources that would be able to assist her (e.g. social workers in hospital or elsewhere)
- Refer her to free clinics in the area if applicable
- Suggest some alternate treatment and supplies for the burn that would cost less than the clinic supplies. (Do not expect the student to be intimately familiar with alternative options, but they should come across as open to these possibilities).

ask questions!

Ask informed questions about the medical school at which you are interviewing. Study for it. Prior to visiting the medical school, you should, at a minimum, be familiar with the segment describing the school in the annual AAMC Medical School Admissions Requirements publication. Do some online research to find out what is new at the school - perhaps new expansions, new initiatives, etc.

Asking informed questions will leave the impression that you are truly interested in attending the school, and therefore will likely come if you are accepted.

(Quinn Capers, M.D.)

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