PREPARATION

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. The well-prepared candidate will be more comfortable, more confident, and will better represent his/her strengths and qualifications to the school. The following are six suggestions to help you prepare for your interview.

1) Research the Institution/Program
Find out all you can about the institution and program before going to the interview. This will help you show specific interest and allow you to formulate intelligent questions to ask the interviewer(s). Consider and be prepared to discuss why you believe that the program and you are a good match. Sources of information include the institution website and other online information, curriculum catalogs, your pre-professional advisor, and students or alumni of the school to which you are applying.

2) Know Yourself
Be prepared to discuss your strengths and qualifications as they relate to the program to which you are applying. Review your application materials for strengths and experiences that you would like to emphasize during the interview (as opportunity permits). Be prepared to comfortably discuss your reasons for choosing your professional path/major as well as your strengths, weaknesses, achievements, failures (including what you have learned from them), motivation, and career goals.

3) Know Your Profession
Become informed regarding current events and important professional issues in your profession. Be prepared to clearly articulate your own views and values if requested, but make sure you understand and are sensitive to both sides of difficult issues (you do not want to come across as narrow minded or simplistic). Pay attention to current developments including legislation and/or politicians who are currently impacting your profession. Get involved with professional organizations and read professional journals in your field.

4) Know What To Expect During The Interview
Talk to people who are familiar with the interview process (e.g., pre-professional advisors, friends who have already interviewed, professionals in the field, information seminars, etc.). Carefully review information found online (e.g., institution website, pre-professional forums, etc.). Be familiar with the purpose of an interview, possible interview structures (panel interviews, multiple mini interviews, etc.), and typical activities that occur during a campus visit.

5) Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
Do not waste the interviewer’s time by asking questions simply for the sake of asking. Your questions should be a natural outgrowth research you have done on the institution. Asking intelligent questions will show an interviewer that you have genuine interest in their program.

6) Practice, Practice, Practice
Practicing common interview questions prior to the interview will help you feel more confident and comfortable. Things can be done with family and friends as well during a practice interview session with your employment advisor in the WSU Career Services office (801-626-6393). It can be helpful to record practice sessions and review the video.
THE CAMPUS VISIT: WHAT TO EXPECT

The Purpose of a Campus Visit
A campus interview and visit has a dual purpose. For the admissions committee the campus visit is a chance to get to learn more about you as a candidate. Meeting you personally gives a school the opportunity to evaluate first-hand your interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, maturity, and poise under pressure. For you as a candidate the interview is an opportunity to meet the faculty and students in a program, tour the campus and decide whether the school is a good fit. Believe it or not, you are not the only one who is trying to impress someone during the interview. Though you’re not admitted yet, you will notice that professional schools themselves are trying to impress you. Once a school invites you for an interview they have already reviewed your application materials and consider you consider you to be the "right stuff" for their program. They are in competition for you with other schools. Being invited for an interview is in and of itself is an honor – take full advantage by preparing adequately (see above).

Structure
A campus visit is typically a day-long event that will include a tour of the facility, the chance to meet faculty and students, information about curriculum and financial aid, and one or more formal interviews (other activities may be included as well). People sometimes ask: "When will my interview begin?" Your evaluation as a candidate begins the moment you step off of the plane and will continue throughout the day. Make sure that you treat all people (including support staff) with courtesy and respect during your entire visit. Even if less formal attire becomes appropriate at some point during the day, make sure that your grooming and manner of dress remain neat, clean, and conservative. You can relax, be yourself, and enjoy your visit, but always act in a professional manner.

The Interview(s)
During the campus visit you may be interviewed once or multiple times. Some interviews are very formal and structured events with carefully prepared (and sometimes tough) questions designed to learn specific things about you as a candidate. Other interviews are more laid back and informal. Most interviews fall somewhere between these two styles.

- **Personal Interviews:** The duration of a personal interview will vary but usually ranges somewhere between 20 minutes to 1 hour. Most interviews are relatively brief, lasting somewhere between 30-45 minutes. You may be interviewed by a single person or by a small panel of individuals (faculty, staff, medical students, etc.). Some schools use a group interview format in which multiple candidates are interviewed at a time. When responding to a question in a group setting (or with multiple interviewers), begin and end by focusing directly on the person who asked the question and focus on the entire group during the rest of your response. Be aware that interviewers may not have reviewed your application materials prior to the interview (this is called a blind interview).]

- **Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs):** In this format an interview circuit is set up where each candidate visits multiple stations for a set period of time (usually < 8 minutes each). Each station has a structured interview or other activity designed to assess a specific quality about you (e.g., communication skills, compassion, teamwork, cultural sensitivity, ethical decision making, critical thinking, awareness of current healthcare issues, etc.). At each station you will be given a question or scenario and have a short time to prepare (e.g., 2 min) before the interviewer (and possibly actors for a role-play) enter the room. Once finished the interviewer evaluates you as you move to the next station. The entire process may last 1-2 hours. Determine beforehand if the MMI format will be used for your interview and make sure to prepare specifically for this format (simulate MMI questions/scenarios with a timer, practice role-playing, talk to students who have done MMI’s, etc.).
10 TIPS FOR THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

Your professional school interview is an opportunity to demonstrate to the interviewer(s) that you have the interpersonal qualities, motivation, experience, professional skills, and maturity to be successful in their program. The overall impression you create is as important as what is actually said during the interview.

1) Allow Extra Time
Make sure to arrive at the institution early and find the interview location with time to spare (it is essential that you be on time so anticipate flight delays, bad traffic, difficulty finding parking, problems navigating campus, etc.). Check in with the interviewer or the interviewer's secretary about 5 minutes before your scheduled appointment. If you are delayed by circumstances beyond your control, notify the interviewer immediately.

2) Be Prepared
Come prepared with such items as a notebook and pen (professional looking), comb, watch (especially for multiple mini interviews), umbrella, cash (for snacks), map of the campus, etc. Turn off your cell phone prior to the start of the interview.

3) Dress Appropriately
Be well groomed and dress in neat and clean business attire. Appropriate dress for men is typically a professional business suit (navy and dark gray are good choices), dress shirt with collar (not button down), an "updated" tie (stay away from theme ties), high fitting dark socks, and business-style leather shoes (avoid tassels). Appropriate dress for women is typically a professional skirt suit or pantsuit (skirts should be just below the knee in length), conservative blouse, skin-colored hosiery, and closed-toe low to medium heel leather shoes. Long hair should be pulled back in a neat, simple style and makeup should be understated. Both men and women should wear minimal jewelry (remove piercings with the exception of one pair of simple earrings for women). Avoid cologne/perfume or use very sparingly. Straighten your hair and use a breath mint before greeting the interviewer. If you are unsure about what constitutes appropriate dress, err on the conservative side - assume that interviewer will be older and more conservative than you.

4) Know the Name and Title of the Interviewer
Greet the interviewer(s) by their last and title (e.g. "Dr.") in a friendly but professional manner (don't call the interviewer by their first name unless specially asked to do so). If you do not know who will be conducting the interview, listen carefully to their names and try to remember them when introductions are made (you can write them down in your notebook after the interview).

5) Relax and Be Yourself
It is natural to be nervous, especially at the beginning of an interview (every other candidate is feeling the same thing). Accept any anxiety as a normal part of the interview process and know that you can experience these physical sensations and still have a great interview. Be confident in who you are, your level of preparation, and what you have to offer as a candidate. View the interview as an opportunity rather than a threat. Just relax, be yourself (your best, professional self), and try to enjoy the experience.

6) Establish a Friendly Rapport
Greet the interviewer in a confident manner and create a friendly, conversational atmosphere (don't forget to smile). Sit up straight, keep both feet on the floor, and place your hands comfortably on your lap. Maintain good eye contact and listen attentively. Focus on the interviewer and don't be overly preoccupied with your own presentation. A little humor from time to time is OK as long as it is appropriate and professional.
7) Keep Your Answers Straightforward, Relevant, and Concise
An interview should be a dialogue, not a monologue. Sharing relevant examples from your personal life is encouraged but you should generally limit your answers to about 2 minutes in length. It is okay to pause briefly before answering important questions. Be straightforward and honest in your responses. Avoid unnecessary verbal and nonverbal distractions such as filler words (“you know,” “like,” “umm,” etc.), bouncing knee, fidgety hands, repetitive gestures, etc.). Work on eliminating distracting habits during practice sessions before the interview so that you are able to give the interviewer your full attention.

8) Be positive and Enthusiastic
Be enthusiastic about your chosen field and the interview opportunity. Present an attitude and appearance that will allow the interviewer to be proud to present you to fellow colleagues. Never speak negatively of past associates or experiences. Avoid controversial subjects unless asked specifically to share your opinion on them. If you are asked tough questions, do not take them personally. Never contradict or argue with your interviewer.

9) Personalize
Set yourself apart from other candidates by being a proof-giver, not just a claimer (Richard Bolles, What Color Is Your Parachute). Avoid speaking in generalities and instead share specific examples that illustrate your strengths and abilities. The interviewer(s) are not looking for “right” answers to questions (this is not a quiz) - they are wanting to learn more about your background and who you are as a person.

10) Follow Up with a Thank-You
A thank-you email or note should be a genuine expression of gratitude and enthusiasm, not a restating of your qualifications or a rehash of something from the interview. Keep in brief and polite. It is best to send the thank-you email within 24 hours of your interview experience.

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SAMPLE PRE-PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal
• Tell me about yourself.
• What do you like to do in your spare time?
• Tell me about your family.
• How do you cope with grief?
• What are your strongest characteristics?
• What do you have to offer that other candidates don’t have?
• What are your weaknesses and what role will they play in medicine?
• What is the biggest thing you have overcome in your life?
• Have you ever lived in a large city before?
• (Questions about personal relationships, religious beliefs, etc. are not generally legal but could be asked anyway so you may want to be prepared)

Motivation/Commitment
• Why did you choose to apply to medical (dental, vet, etc.) school?
• Why did you choose to apply to a D.O. program? (if applicable)
• Have you ever thought of medical school? If so, why did you choose (dental, PA, chiropractic) school?
• What life accomplishment are you most proud of?
• What have you done that shows initiative? What did you learn from that experience?
• Have you been accepted to other schools yet?
• What did you dislike most about undergraduate school?
I heard you were only going into medicine for the money. Please explain.

What makes a good physician (dentist, PA, vet, etc.)?

Are any of your relatives physicians (dentists, etc)? If so, where did they go to school?

**Work Ethic/Style**

- Describe a situation where your work was criticized. What was your immediate reaction? Reflecting back now, what do you make of it now?
- How do you deal with adversity?
- What is the most stressful situation you have had to handle?
- Tell me about the last time you felt anger on the job.
- What are some things that bother you in a work setting?
- How will you deal with the stress of school and this profession?
- Most difficult person you have had to work with? How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about your study habits.
- How do you learn best?

**Education**

- How has your experience at Weber State prepared you to be a physician (dentist, PA, etc).
- What was your favorite subject in school? Why?
- Why did you choose your major? Are you satisfied with that choice?
- What was your favorite science class? Why?
- What science class did you dislike the most?
- What classes did you struggle with during school?
- Be prepared to discuss weaknesses in your academic transcripts, MCAT scores, etc. (if asked.)
- What leadership positions have you held in school?
- Tell me about your student research?

**Experience**

- What experiences have you had with the medical (dental, etc.) profession?
- Have you had any practical experiences in medicine (dentistry, etc.).
- What kinds of direct patient care experience do you have?
- Tell me about your shadowing experiences. What did you learn?
- What types of volunteer work have you had?
- What does a PA (chiropractor, podiatrist, etc) do?
- What experiences have you had working with people?
- Be prepared for specific questions regarding your application materials. Know the weaknesses in your

**Program Fit**

- What do you know about our school?
- Why did you choose to apply to (our program)
- What makes (the program you are applying to) unique?
- Are you a good fit for our program? Explain.
- Have you applied to other schools? (questionable legality but does get asked)

**Goals/Plans/Realistic Outlook**

- How do you plan to pay for medical (dental, PA, etc.) school and living expenses?
- What is your choice of specialty? Why?
- Where do you plan to practice after you graduate? Rural or inner city areas?
- What do you think you will struggle with during medical school?
Exposure to Your Field/Current Events

• What politicians are currently impacting medicine? Do you agree with the decisions they are making?
• What are some current controversial areas in medicine? Select one then give your opinion on it and defend that opinion.
• What is your opinion of the Affordable Care Act?
• Do you see any negatives in the (medical) profession?
• What do you think about (patient rights, medical costs, HMO's, euthanasia, confidentiality, etc)?
• Pick and discuss one issue that you feel is of primary concern in healthcare.
• Give me a list of three political issues that you feel are of great importance in the healthcare field right now.
• Given a specific patient scenario: How would you handle the situation?
• What sorts of ethical problems can you see coming up in the medical (dental, veterinary, etc.) profession?
• Why is medicine such an important field?

Breadth/Diversity

• What experience do you have working with diverse populations? What did you learn from those experiences?
• Considering that you come from a fairly homogeneous community, how do you plan on dealing effectively with the more diverse populations here?
• Tell me about your religious mission. (if applicable)
• Tell me three good things about others interviewing in your group.

Behavior-Based

• Say you were a doctor and your patient is terminal. The patient looks at you with hope and asks if he will make it. What do you tell him?
• How might you calm a nervous patient?
• What if you had a patient that did not pay?
• What would you do if a doctor gave you orders that you know will harm the patient?
• Pretend that you’re the doctor. You see a patient who gives you some grief and complaints. At the end of treatment he asks you if he was a good patient. What do you say?
• Your supervising physician comes into work drunk. How would you handle the situation?
• Imagine you are a physician (PA, dentist, etc). You are working with a patient who is refusing a treatment that you believe is necessary. What would you do? Imagine you are a physician (PA, dentist, etc.). How would you handle the following situation ...
• How would you deal with a patient who was treating you badly (assume other patients in the office can overhear)?

Other

• On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your ability with your hands? Why? (dental interviews).
• A few schools have skill/coordination tests (e.g. chalk-carving or clay modeling for dental schools). They may tell you about them and how to practice ahead of time.
• Tell me about your letters of recommendation.
• (Be prepared to and unusual questions or difficult ones for which you do not know the answer)