

The Campus Visit and Interview: What To Expect

Knowing what to expect will help you relax and be more focused on the day of the interview.

The Purpose of a Campus Visit and Interview

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 personally with candidates gives a school the opportunity to evaluate first-hand their 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 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 medical schools themselves are trying to impress you. Once medical schools invite you for an interview they consider that you're "the right material" for medical school and that they are in competition for you with other schools.

(Source: <http://bestpremed.com/intviews.htm>).

Remember that being invited for an interview is in and of itself is an honor. Be sure to take full advantage of this opportunity by adequately preparing (see "[How To Prepare For An Interview](#)").

The Campus Visit

A campus visit is usually 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 Structure of a Interview

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 resemble friendly conversation. Both types of interview are equally important and most interviews fall somewhere between these two styles.

The duration of an 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 a small group of people. Most interviews are one-on-one but 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 group as whole during the rest of your response.

You will most likely be interviewed by one or more faculty, staff, or medical students. These people may or may not have reviewed your application materials prior to the interview. Remember that all interviews are important and the opinion of every interviewer will be considered (even if they not formally on the admissions committee).

There are three basic types of interview questions. *Open-ended questions* are broad in nature and allow you significant flexibility in how you respond (e.g. "Tell me about yourself"). *Directive questions* are designed to give the interviewer(s) specific information and therefore they require a more direct response (e.g. "What are your three weakest characteristics?"). *Behavior-based questions* are designed to assess your skills by asking how you would handle specific situations (e.g. "Pretend you're the doctor. How would you handle the following . . .").

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