Be Prepared: Practice the MMI interviewing style and become used to considering both sides of a dilemma

Be Transparent: Get comfortable verbalizing your thought processes. You may think of additional way to answer the prompts as you are speaking.

Be Yourself: Be honest with your responses! The MMI is particularly good at helping interviewers gauge your personality and thinking style. Bring in any experiences that you may have from shadowing, volunteering, or even any personal experiences that are not directly health related that are relevant to the prompt. You can even pull from things that you have read in articles, books, magazines or seen on television or in the movies.

If you want to practice your interview techniques schedule a mock interview with a Pre-Health Professions Coach online or by calling 512-471-3172. We wish you the best of luck! Let us know how your interview goes.

Multiple Mini Interview (MMI)

A how-to guide to doing the best in your interview

What is the Multiple Mini Interview?

The Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) is an interview style used by certain university programs as part of their admissions process. It is a particularly prominent style that health profession schools use to assess or measure certain non-cognitive qualities and skills that the school has deemed important in an applicant. These qualities include cultural sensitivity, maturity, teamwork, empathy, reliability, and communication skills.

The MMI consists of a series of short, structured interview stations. Applicants will move from one station to another over a span of about two hour period. At each station, applicants will be presented with a scenario, question, or a task. Situational questions in the MMI usually touch on ethical decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, current healthcare and societal issues. At the end of each mini interview, the interviewer evaluates the applicant’s performance as the applicant moves on to the next station.

MMI Format

- Typically involves 8 to 10 stations
- You will be presented with various scenarios, usually posted on the door
- You will be given 2 minutes to read each scenario and formulate your answer
- You may or may not be able to take notes (dependent on the school)
- You’ll then be prompted to enter the room, where you will be given about 7 to 8 minutes to respond to the scenario or task
- There are sometimes 1 to 2 interviewers per station

Summary of Interview Advice

- Be Prepared: Practice the MMI interviewing style and become used to considering both sides of a dilemma
- Be Transparent: Get comfortable verbalizing your thought processes. You may think of additional way to answer the prompts as you are speaking.
- Be Yourself: Be honest with your responses! The MMI is particularly good at helping interviewers gauge your personality and thinking style. Bring in any experiences that you may have from shadowing, volunteering, or even any personal experiences that are not directly health related that are relevant to the prompt. You can even pull from things that you have read in articles, books, magazines or seen on television or in the movies.

Adopted & Adapted from: Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty by Samir P. Desai MD and https://multimininterview.net

Health Professions Office: cns.utexas.edu/health-professions
Studies of the traditional interview process have found that interview ratings are significantly influenced by the biases, expectations, and perspectives of individual interviewers. Furthermore, traditional interview formats have been criticized for not accurately predicting performance in professional school. Patient complaints regarding the performance of a physician or other health professionals are often related to non-cognitive skills, such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, and ethical/moral judgment. These limitations led researchers at McMaster University to develop a new interview technique.

Researchers were also driven to develop a new style of interviewing in order to ensure desirable candidates were not being turned away due to a bad interview. With the MMI, applicants are essentially allowed 8-10 opportunities to make a first impression. There is an opportunity to recover from a bad mini interview. One bad review can be neutralized by multiple good reviews. Interviewers also do not have access to GPA or MCAT scores, allowing for a more objective evaluation of traits and behaviors that the school has deemed important.

**Preparation for the Interview**

Just like the traditional interview process, it is of utmost importance to prepare for the MMI. When given a limited time to prepare an answer, many candidates have difficulty forming logical, cohesive, polished answers. The most effective strategy to prepare for the MMI is to anticipate the types of questions/scenarios that you will face and to practice your answers.

- Become knowledgeable about current events, ethical issues, and social policies.
- Be ready for questions about health policy and politics!
- Gather MMI questions and scenarios from the internet, and practice delivering timed presentations to a friend
- Buy MMI Interview books; which could include *Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) Winning Strategies from Admissions Faculty* by Dr. Samir P. Desai
- Pay close attention to the news and practice debating issues with family and friends
- Encourage others to present to you a topic, and then deliver impromptu discussion
- View videos of MMI encounters developed

**History of the MMI**

There will be three main types of MMI stations you will encounter as an interviewee. These station types are described below.

**Question/Discussion Station**

When you enter the room, you will likely find yourself with one interviewer. After your response, the interviewer may ask you follow-up questions. These follow-up questions will differ from one applicant to another, depending upon the content of the applicant’s initial response. Question stations are designed to assess communication skills, thought processes, and professionalism.

**Scenario/Acting Station**

Before entering the room, you will be given a scenario to read. Inside the room, you’ll find two people—rater and actor. The actor has been trained to engage in the scenario with you. The rater will observe your interactions with the actor. Scenario stations often provide information about compassion, social interaction, and problem solving.

**Different Formats**

**EXAMPLE:** Dr. Cheung recommends homeopathic medicines to his patients. There is no scientific evidence or widely accepted theory to suggest that the homeopathic medicines work, and Dr. Cheung does not believe them to. He recommends homeopathic medicine to people with mild and nonspecific 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. Cheung’s behavior might pose. Discuss these issues with the interviewer.

- Taken from pg. 34, *Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty*

**EXAMPLE:** 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, a BMW, 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 he is calling ahead to the car owner, Tim. The garage attendant tells you that Tim is expecting your visit. Enter Tim’s office.

- Taken from pg. 35, *Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty*
Task/Collaboration Station
You will be asked to complete a task, often with another applicant. One applicant may be asked to perform a complex test (such as assembling or repairing a model) with another applicant giving directions for dealing with or assembling the model. When you enter the room, there will be two raters, one of whom will be responsible for observing and rating your performance. The second rater will be asked with evaluating the other applicant. Task stations are used to learn more about an applicant’s teamwork, problem solving, and communication skills.

Different Formats (continued)

How to Answer MMI Style Questions
Schools are looking to see whether you can think through an issue thoroughly, considering all aspects and dimensions of an issue. Make sure you present all of the different aspects of the issue when answering, and do not get too hung up on your own perspective. Make sure that you convey that you have really thought about the prompt critically. If you have a personal experience that ties well with the scenario, by all means, connect that experience with the scenario, even if it is just something that you have read about. Feel free to restate the issue in your own words as an introduction and to ensure you are following the prompt correctly. You can also branch into other hypothetical situations that may arise from the specific prompt and explore what you would do in those cases. Remember that there is not a singular right answer for the questions, but be able to defend your opinions and arguments by communicating effectively and demonstrating an understanding of the situation.

EXAMPLE: Origami (Deliver): When you enter the room, there will be a sheet of paper that illustrates how to complete an origami (paper folding) project. On the other side of the room, there is a candidate who can’t look at you, but who has a blank piece of paper. Verbally guide your colleague to completion of origami project.

Origami (Receive): When you enter the room, there will be a blank sheet of paper in front of you. On the other side of the room, there is another candidate who will provide you with instructions regarding how to turn this page into an origami (paper folding) project. Do not look at the other candidate until told to do so.

-Suggested Structure for Answering
- Lead with a compelling introduction
- Select an appropriate approach for the body of your discussion
- Discuss 3-4 important points that come to mind about the topic
- Discuss the pros and cons of an issue, or talk about two sides of the issue
- State your point of view and give the reason that you feel this way, providing support for your views. Show that you’ve considered other points of view.
- Think of the past, present, and future. There was a time when...but now we find that...in the future I expect
- Ask yourself who, what, when, where, and how and focus on the response to those questions in your discussion
- Discuss how the topic affects you personally or how it affects the world in general
- End with a strong conclusion

On the surface, tackling the MMI may seem more challenging for an introvert than an extrovert. An introvert may want to think through their answer thoroughly, formulating it articulately in their heads before delivering the answer. Where as an extrovert may be more comfortable vocalizing their thoughts as they think out loud.

It is good for both introverts and extroverts to take the full two minutes to process and formulate their answer in their head first. Both introverts and extroverts can ace the MMI style interview.

The best thing an introvert can do to prepare for the MMI is to practice, practice, practice. There are many sample problems on the internet. Get accustomed to the format of the MMI and thinking in the way it wants you to. Practice being able to identify the various aspects of a case quickly and being comfortable thinking through processes out loud, even when you may not have fully formulated your answer yet. This interview format is about being able to think on your feet. Consider all possible options and solutions. Don’t be scared to brainstorm out loud.

For both it is helpful to keep a mental checklist in mind: present both sides of the case, delve into issues on both sides, and try to connect with a personal experience. Keep in mind that if you do not perform as well as you would have liked on one question, you have still more chances to make up for it at the other stations!
**General Interview Strategies**

- After reviewing the questions, try to identify why you are being asked this question. What do you think the interviewer is trying to evaluate?
- Empathy and compassion are important to all schools. If there is an opportunity to demonstrate these qualities, do so!
- Feel free to summarize or rephrase the question before responding
- Structure your response so that the interviewer has an idea of what you will be discussing
- Pace yourself—it is often preferable to end your answer a few minutes before the encounter ends to allow time for Interviewer to ask follow up questions if they choose to
- Articulate your thinking process as it is helpful for the interviewer to hear how you arrived at your conclusion (talk through your thought process)
- Connect your response to professional codes of conduct when appropriate
- Relate your response to your personal/professional experiences when appropriate
- Conclude by summarizing and highlighting your main points
- Practice, practice, practice.

**Practice Scenarios**

**EXAMPLE:** Because of federal and provincial subsidy policies and return-of-service agreements, international medical graduates (IMGs) now make up an increasingly large proportion of rural doctors. As a consequence, the shortage of doctors in rural areas has prompted many family medicine residencies to increase their quotas for IMGs in their programs. Effectively, this development is leading to a relative reduction in spots available for Canadian medical graduates. Please discuss the pros and cons of such a development.

-Taken from multipleminiinterview.com

**EXAMPLE:** You are a family physician seeing Jane, a 67 year old woman with a recent history of multiple fragility fractures. You diagnose her with osteoporosis and prescribe some bisphosphonate drugs and other pharmacological treatments. Jane tells you that she has heard some good things over the internet about alternative medicine treatments such as Chinese medicine, and she is adamant on trying these as well. You are concerned about the use of these alternative medicine treatments and the possible negative effects they could have on Jane’s health. How would you handle the situation and what would you recommend Jane do? Discuss any ethical considerations that are present.

-Taken from multipleminiinterview.net

**EXAMPLE:** Near the end of a 24-hour shift, you realize that your fellow intern is in a state of distress. During round, the supervising physician asked her to begin a blood pressure medication on Mr. Smith. Several hours after writing the medication order, she realized that she wrote the order in the wrong patient chart. By the time she caught her mistake, the nursing staff had already administered the medication to Mr. Jones. After receiving the blood pressure medication, his blood pressure fell and IV fluids had to be given to normalize the blood pressure. After she tells you what happened, she urges you not to share this information with the supervising physician. Discuss how you would handle this situation.

-Taken from pg. 113, Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty By: Samir P. Desai MD

**EXAMPLE:** As the manager of an electronics superstore, you are in charge of 10 employees. One of your employees, Larry, has been receiving and sending texts regularly during work hours. He has even done so while providing service to customers. Today, you noticed that a customer became visibly upset when Larry pulled out his cellphone in the middle of their conversation. You are puzzled by Larry’s behavior because up until this started two weeks ago, he had been one of your best employees. You have decided to discuss the situation with Larry. Larry is waiting for you in your office.