Interview Tips

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The Interview

• Final stretch
  • Third year is complete
  • Step I & II are behind you
  • Away rotations are done
  • Your personal statement is polished
  • Your ERAS application is submitted

• Now it’s time to relax...
The Interview

• Make or break your chances of matching
The Interview

• Most important part of application process
  • 2018 NRMP Program Director survey
    • Top three criteria
      • Interactions with faculty during interview and visit
      • Interpersonal skills
      • Interactions with house staff during interview and visit
Fit

• The purpose of the interview is to assess fit.
  • Are you the right fit for the program?
  • Is the program the right fit for you?
Fit

- Are you the right fit for the program?
  - Behavioral & social skills
    - Predictor of resident performance
      - Member of the team
      - Program culture
• Is the program the right fit for you?
  • Know yourself
    • Qualities and skills
    • Expectations
    • Educational goals
    • Personal & professional goals
  • Residency
    • Program Director
    • Residents
    • Support
    • Environment
    • Geography
Preparation

• Know yourself
  • Be comfortable telling your own story
  • Know your application
  • Why you chose your specialty
Preparation

- Practice your delivery
  - Pace, tone and body language
  - Mock interviews
Preparation

- Do your homework
  - Research programs
    - Program website
    - Contacts
    - Pre-interview materials provided
  - Know the history of your specialty
    - Pioneers in your field
  - Be knowledgeable of current events
Preparation

- Patient case
  - Present in less than a minute
  - Discuss the highlights
  - What did you learn?
  - How did you grow?
Preparation

• Common questions
  • “Tell me about yourself.”
  • “Why do you want to go into this specialty?”
  • “Why do you want to come to our program?”
Questions From Faculty

• How did you become interested in our program?
• What are you looking for in a program?
• Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
• Tell me about yourself.
• What are your strengths and weaknesses?
• What do you do with your spare time?
• Tell me about your research.
• Why should we take you over other candidates?
• What are you looking for in a program?
• Why did you choose medicine as a career?
Preparation

• Develop questions
  • Program assessment
  • Interviewers may defer the interview to you
• Know your audience
Questions for Students to Ask Faculty

• Where do graduates end up?
• Which geography and what types of jobs?
• What program changes have been made in recent years?
• What changes are anticipated in the near future?
• What are some major research interests within the department?
• What role do private physicians have in the residency?
• What role do fellows have in the residency?
• How percentage of time is devoted to lectures and other didactics?
• How do your graduates do on specialty board exams?
• What percent of residents go on to fellowships?
• Do residents have any difficulty obtaining fellowships?
Questions for Students to Ask Residents

- What is the best part of your residency?
- Are you happy with your decision to come here?
- Tell me about lectures, simulations, didactics, journal club.
- Other requirements: research, administrative, built in moonlighting, etc?
- What is the most frustrating part of your residency?
- Do you operate with attendings on every case?
- How is call? How much call?
- How is the cost of living?
- Electives experience? Can you do away electives?
- Inpatient versus outpatient experiences?
Scheduling the Interview

- Do not delay scheduling
- Top choice interviews
- Pace yourself
- Cost
Appearance

- Professionalism is paramount
  - Dress conservatively
  - Get a hair cut
  - Shave
  - Remove facial jewelry
  - Minimize or omit perfume
  - Short, well groomed nails
Preparation

• Do not check your luggage
• Wear or carry-on your suit
The Interview Day

- **Format**
  - Presentation by Program Director
  - Individual interviews
  - Hospital tour
  - Attend rounds
  - Lunch

- **Reception**
  - Highly recommend attending
  - Limit or abstain from alcohol, since these receptions are still part of the interview
The Interview Day

- Be prepared and organized
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Arrive early
- Silence your cell phone
Attitude

- Calm your nerves
  - Take a deep breath
  - You are a qualified applicant
Attitude

- Be cordial and respectful
  - The whole experience is an interview
The Interview Day

- Demonstrate enthusiasm
  - Show your interest
  - Remain positive and upbeat
The Interview Day

• Address weaknesses
  • Take ownership
  • Highlight strengths
    • Showcase your clinical problem solving abilities through your prepared patient cases
The Interview Day

- The illegal question
  - Match Code of Conduct
    - Age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family status
    - Names of institutions applied to
    - Rank list preferences
After the Interview

• Keeping everything straight
  • Notes of pros & cons
  • Names of who you met
    • Business cards
    • Unique conversations, topics
  • Feelings you experienced
References