

Advanced Interviewing Strategies for Residency



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Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest:

I get no money for giving this presentation.

These are my personal opinions, perspectives, and experiences.

Personal bias: I want all of you to match!!





Outline

- Interview day structure
- Setting an agenda for interview day
- Executing your interview agenda
- Discussing difficult subjects
- Q&A
- Important reminders



Interview Schedule

- ⦿ Day before:

- Social event the night before – just as important

- ⦿ Day of:

- 8:00 breakfast
- 8:30 presentation about the program & meet leadership
- 9:00 interviews
- 11:00 campus/hospital tour
- 12:00 lunch
- 1:00 wrap up

1

**Walk in to every
interview with an
agenda**



What might that include?



What do you want to highlight?

- Awards
- Accomplishments
- Leadership
- Additional Degrees
- Unusual or Passionate Interests
- Goals
- Skills
- Research
- Mission Trips
- Hobbies/Physical Activities
- Previous career accomplishments

2

**Ask focused questions
as a framework for
your agenda**

While on a mission trip to Haiti, I discovered my passion for emergency medicine while watching an ER doc attend to critical and non-critical patients simultaneously. How often do residents take advantage of the global health opportunities at your program and what kind of financial support is available to help offset the cost of international travel?



“

Before medical school I spent 8 years managing a network of community health centers with a 2 million dollar budget. What kind of leadership positions do residents hold within the hospital and the residency program?



“

I played Division-1 softball in college, and organized monthly team sports games in medical school. This is where my passion for PM&R started. Are there any opportunities to work with local sports teams through your program?



“

*I did a lot of research on *** during medical school, and co-authored 2 papers on the topic that were published in ***.
What kind of support does your program and hospital offer for residents working on research?*



“

2

Focused questions:

⦿ Key elements:

- Choose topics that you are passionate about
- Highlight past experiences
- Highlight your interest in continuing to go above and beyond
- Ask a question that hasn't already been answered by the "welcome to our residency" talk



And remember...

- Become an informed consumer of their “product”

I saw on your website that you have a Life Flight program. I was a paramedic for 3 years and am passionate about pre-hospital care of patients. How many residents participate in this program on a yearly basis, and what has their experience been?



“

While on a medical outreach trip to rural Thailand, I discovered my passion for caring for underserved populations. Your China outreach program caught my particular attention. Can you tell me more about this opportunity?



“

I am very passionate about bedside ultrasound, and I have considered pursuing an ultrasound fellowship after residency. I read on the program's website that you have done research on cardiac ultrasound in the past. Do you have any other ultrasound related research projects that I could participate in if I match here?





3



**Have questions ready
for every interviewer**

⦿ Yes, it's ok to repeat some questions, but...

4

**Know the name and
face of the program
director.**



An unfortunately true story...

5

**Email the program
coordinator.**

6

**Have an answer to
the question:**

“Why this specialty?”

7

Have an answer:

“Tell me about yourself”

INTERVIEWING

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"Excellent"
- Forbes

THEA KELLEY

8

**Address the elephant in
the room.**

I didn't pass COMLEX 1 on my first try. It was a devastating moment for me, but it led to an important learning experience. With the help of my test prep counselors, I realized that I have test-taking anxiety. After extensive coaching and practice managing this condition, I got a 590 on my second try. I am stronger for this experience, and better prepared for all future exams. What additional questions can I answer for you about this experience?



“

As you likely already know from my application, it took me 5 years to graduate medical school instead of 4. I had a difficult time coping after my mother unexpectedly died. My grades slipped, and my advisors recommended taking some time off. I used the extra time to focus on my health and well-being, and I took an A&P class at a local college. When I restarted school I was well prepared to meet the challenges. What other questions do you have for me about this experience?



“

9

**End confidently; open
the dialogue.**

10

**Simplify with a 30
second story.**



Q&A



Q&A

- ⦿ Thinking about fellowship?
- ⦿ It's to highlight your interests in the interview, but be prepared for questions



Q&A

- ◎ It's ok to contact residents after the interview with follow-up questions.



Q&A

- ◎ It's ok to show interest in a program – as long as it's sincere.



Q&A

- ⦿ No questions are off limits.



Q&A

- ⦿ How to tell if a program is “malignant” and “putting on a good face”



Q&A

- ◎ COMLEX vs USMLE
- COMLEX is required for DO students – it is a licensing exam
- USMLE is optional for DO students, and should be considered on a case-by-case basis



Q&A

- Send a thank-you note



Q&A

- ◎ I'm interviewing with my back-up specialty. They want to know if this is my specialty of choice. What do I say?



Q&A

- ◎ I'm interviewing with a program that is out-of state and I have no ties to the area.



Style Points



General comments & reminders

- ⦿ Consider (and schedule) a second look visit.



General comments & reminders

- ⦿ Don't be afraid to redirect the conversation to your agenda using a focused question.



General comments & reminders

- ◎ Be humble
- ◎ Say thank you & be kind to everyone
- ◎ E.V.E.R.Y.O.N.E.



General comments & reminders

- ⦿ If it's cold, dress for it.



General comments & reminders

- ⦿ Bring a binder or folder with your interview questions and 2 pens.
- ⦿ Bring your printed application – both styles.



General comments & reminders

- ⦿ Don't go to interviews to “practice”.



In summary:





Thank you!

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References

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Credits

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Q&A

- ⦿ What questions should I ask during my interview?