

QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED TO ANSWER

Be prepared to respond to variations on the themes of the questions listed below. Review the questions listed in the next section "From the Program Director's Perspective" as well. There may well be standard questions for your specialty. Find out what these questions are in advance by talking to your advisor or first year residents in your chosen field of specialty. Again, be prepared.

- What are your plans after residency?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years
- What are you looking for in a training program?
- Why have you chosen this particular specialty?
- What future do you see for this specialty; how do you see your role?
- Why should I choose you over one of your classmates?
- What aspects of this program or specialty are particularly attractive?
- What books have you read recently?
- Do you prefer any specific geographic locations, and why?
- Discuss the future of medicine and the effect on your career plans
- What would you do if you did not obtain a residency position for next year?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your major strengths? Weaknesses?
- What questions do you have for us about this residency training program?
- What are your hobbies or interests outside of medicine

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Sample Interview Questions for Program Directors

<http://www.aamc.org/members/osr/residencyquestions.pdf>

- What is the status of the program's accreditation?
- If there were any citations at the last review, what has been done to correct them?
- When is the next Residency Review scheduled?
- What percent of graduates pass the specialty boards on their first attempt?
- Where do the graduates go (e.g. fellowship, academics, private practice)?
- Greatest strengths and weaknesses of this program; what would they change
- Major research interests within the department
- Volume of patients in inpatient and outpatient services
- Number of services through which you can expect to rotate
- How work is distributed; logistics such as hours; size of teams
- Level of contact with attending staff; opportunities for direct instruction

- Non-clinical responsibilities: research, administration, writing

THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

- Is there a formal didactic curriculum, and what is its structure?
- What programs exist for resident education (e.g. lectures, grand rounds, board review courses.)?
- What are the required rotations for the first year? Subsequent years? Where do they take place?
- Is there a formal mentoring program for new residents, and do faculty serve as mentors?
- Are research opportunities provided to residents? Is this a required experience?
- Is there "protected" time for research?
- What type of structure for supervision is in place?
- How does the resident's autonomy change as he/she progresses through the program?
- What changes are anticipated in the program over the next 5 years
- What changes are anticipated in the curriculum
- Staffing changes anticipated.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Is there funding for continuing medical education course and conferences
- What elective opportunities are available
- Is there a teaching curriculum in medical ethics

CULTURE

- What is unique about the institution
- What is the level of camaraderie and esprit de corps
- What level of independence is there in management of patients
- Do students get help in finding jobs
- Is training influenced by religious values
- How is feedback and evaluation given

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CURRENT RESIDENTS

- Attrition rate for residents: what does the program expect and what is the reality
- Performance on most current licensure /board-certifying examinations
- What Medical schools do current residents represent
- Where are past graduates now

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RESIDENTS

- Would they choose this program again
- Level of contact with clinical faculty
- Type of clinical experiences and opportunities
- How receptive faculty are
- Is support staff adequate
- Time for lectures and other didactic learning
- Call schedules, patient population, other details of daily life

THE PROCESS FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTORS PERSPECTIVE

Program Directors are as concerned about the interview process as you are. Listed below are a list of skills and sample questions to evaluate these skills edited from a Handbook for Interviewing Surgery Resident Applicants by Janine Edwards (1991) which illustrates how you will be scrutinized from the other side of the interview process.

Communication Skills

Eye contact, pronunciation, facial gestures, hand and body movements, nervous habits, flow of sentences.

Sample Questions:

Describe for me some work experiences in which you have had to work closely with other people. What difficulties did you have while working with these people? How did you resolve those difficulties? What are some of the most difficult decisions you have ever had to make? What are some issues presently confronting the medical profession? Elaborate on one of those issues. Describe your relationship with your friends. What do you do together? How would they describe you? What types of jobs have you had that involved interaction with people? What types of criticism upset you? Explain a problem situation in which you've needed assistance. How have you gone about finding and utilizing this assistance?

Reliability

Check letters of recommendation and call for reference. A close examination of the applicant's senior year electives can clue you into the individual's level of conscientiousness.

Sample Questions.

Tell me about your on-call experiences. Ask the applicant to go into some detail. (How many days were you on call? Whom did you report to?) Let's talk about your patient care responsibility on the Internal Medicine clerkship. How many patients were assigned to you? Did you develop treatment plans? How often were you on call? Did you have a hard time keeping up with all of your patients?

Organization Skills

As a medical student, how did you organize your patients on your various clinical rotations? What do you consider the most important things to be taken care of each day? How should work be divided among the house staff? Do you ever make "Things to Do" lists? What things do you put on your list?

Compassion

Sample Questions We work in an inner-city hospital dealing with a large number of minorities, indigent patients, and trauma victims of crimes. How do you feel about that? Are there any types of patients you don't like to take care of? If so, why? Would you share with me a situation where you identified with someone who was ill or hurting? Have you ever had an experience with a physician who did not demonstrate sensitivity. How did you feel? What in your experience do feel has helped you relate to individuals who needed help?

Integrity

Check letters of recommendation and call for references. Develop a question for two interviewers to ask the same applicant. Make a slight variation in the question so that it sounds slightly different, yet should yield the same answer. Notice to see if there is any discrepancy between the two answers given by the applicant to the interviewers.

Sample Questions

How would you deal with a fellow student who was cheating? Present a variety of medical scenarios for comment.

Motivation

Sample Questions Why Surgery? What other areas have you explored? What personal experiences have you had to clarify this decision? What was your most rewarding clerkship? Why?

Emotional Control

Observe carefully. You can infer indirectly an applicant's level of emotional control by sensing his/her unrest with the interviewing procedure, i.e., waiting to be interviewed, being served a cold lunch... and the like.

Sample Questions What types of criticism upset you? Describe a situation in which you feel you were misjudged. Describe a crisis situation in your life. How did you deal with it and how did it affect you?

Knowledge

Before the interview, examine the application carefully. Look at NBME scores, GPA, Alpha Omega Alpha membership, etc. Prepare to probe briefly in the interview and conflicting or discrepant information.

Sample Questions What skills or subject have you learned outside a formal classroom setting? How did you proceed in this learning process? Have you conducted any research projects? Have you published any of your work? What is the most interesting intellectual task you have ever been involved in? What subjects did you like best and least in medical school? How (by which methods) do you like to learn? (reading, lecture, clinical experience, computer programs, talking with faculty, small group interaction.) Tell me about one of the most interesting articles or studies you have read or heard about.

Clinical Performance

Case studies regarding: a) prioritizing problems; b) clinical judgment; c) definition of problems; d) treatment planning.

Behavioral Interview Questions

STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Result)

1. Tell me about a time you disagreed with a supervisor or an attending and how you handled it.
2. Have you ever cared for a patient who doesn't speak the same language-if so, what did you do?
3. Tell me about a patient or family that meant a lot to you
4. Have you ever had to break bad news to someone?

Looking to see how you rate on the following:

- Patient Care
- Professionalism
- Problem-Based Learning

Red Flags Include:

- Unethical behaviors
- Unable to answer despite prompting

The difference between Behavioral Interviewing vs. the Traditional Interview

Questions are standardized

Your are rated for your response to each question

Decisions are made based on total interview score (the interview counts for 40-50% of the decision)

Why are programs using this?

To decrease incidence of professionalism issues with residents

To find the "right" team members