

# Possible Interview Questions

---

*Substitute your specific field for health care or health care professional (e.g. medicine, dentistry, physician assistant, physical therapy, etc.)*

## **Undergraduate Education**

How did you select your undergraduate university?

What would you change about your undergraduate experience?

If you were in charge of your university, what would you change that would impact graduate school preparation?

What undergraduate courses did you enjoy most? Least?

Why did you choose your major?

What extracurricular activities were you involved in during your undergraduate years?

What was your toughest class? Why?

What skills have you developed outside the classroom?

Describe your best college professor. What made them unique?

What has been your favorite non-science course and why?

How have you benefited from your undergraduate education?

How many hours a week did you study?

How has your undergraduate experience made you a better person?

What subjects are you now studying? Discuss.

Why did you drop, fail, or get a particular grade in a certain class?

Outline your study techniques.

Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?

We strongly recommend that you go to law school because you want to study the law—not for the potential non-traditional career positioning you may have after graduating with a law degree.

## **The School/Program**

How did you select our school and why do you want to attend?

How did you decide to apply to our school?

Why did you choose our specific program?

How are you a match for our school?

What other schools have you applied to?

Explain the poor grades on your transcript/low test scores.

Would you go to our program if I gave you an acceptance letter right now?

What is your biggest concern upon entering school?

If you are accepted to multiple schools, how will you make your decision?

Why should we offer you a place?

How did you prepare for the standardized test (e.g. MCAT, DAT, OAT)? Are you satisfied with your scores?

How will you pay for your education?

Do you think college grades and test scores are an accurate measure of your aptitude?

Do you consider yourself a competitive applicant to this school?

There are a thousand applicants as qualified as you are. Why should we choose you?

What do you have to offer our school?

What aspects of your life's experiences do you think make you a good candidate?

What do you hope to gain during your education?

What problems do you expect to arise during school?

---

### **Healthcare As a Profession**

Why do you want to be a health care professional (e.g. doctor, dentist, optometrist)?

What stimulated your interest in health care?

If you want to "help people," why not choose a career in social work, law, or teaching?

What experience crystallized your decision to become a health care professional?

Which fields are you interested in?

What kind of experiences have you had in health care?

How do you know you will make a good health care professional?

Why do you think so many people want to be health care professionals?

What steps have you taken to familiarize yourself with the daily activities of a health care professional?

How did you investigate a career in health care?

How do your parents and friends feel about your career decision? How have they influenced you in this decision? What contribution can you make?

Do you have family members who are health care professionals? What do they think of the field? How have their lives changed over the past few years with the changes in health care? Do you want to follow in their footsteps?

What are your specific goals in health care?

What do you look for when choosing a health care professional?

What are the negative aspects of health care from a professional standpoint?

What do you think are a health care professional's social responsibilities? How do you plan to personally contribute to society?

What community experiences have you had that demonstrate your commitment to health care?

What negative things have you heard about the specialty you want to go into, and how do you feel about them?

Have you ever been a patient, and if so, how did you feel?

How have your personal and volunteer experiences strengthened your goal of becoming a health care professional?

What is the nature and extent of your health-related experience?

### **"Tell Me About Yourself" (Personal Traits/Characteristics)**

What are your positive qualities and what are your shortcomings?

What is your relationship with your family?

Describe your personality.

What is the best thing that has ever happened to you? The worst?

If your best friend were asked to describe you, what would he or she say?

What are three things that you would change about yourself?

Name something you are most proud of.

Which family members have influenced your life so far and why?

Describe yourself in terms of your greatest strengths and weaknesses.

When you need counseling for personal problems, with whom do you talk?

Describe your childhood.

Talk about your hobbies and what they mean to you.

Do you plan to continue your hobbies through school?

Outside of your family, who is your biggest role model?

Do you like being alone? When you are alone, what do you think about?

Tell me about your family. How do they feel about your decision to attend medical school?

If you had one day to do anything, what would you do?

Who knows you best in this world? How would that person describe you?

Who are your heroes?

Discuss your summer work experiences.

What additional activities have you pursued during the summer?

---

### **Intellectual Curiosity**

Discuss a book that you recently read for pleasure. Why does this book interest you?  
What is your favorite novel? What is the significance of this work?  
What newspapers/journals do you read on a regular basis?  
Describe any travels you have undertaken and any exposure to other cultures you have had. What have you learned from these experiences?  
Who are your favorite authors?  
If you could invite three living persons to dinner on successive weeks, whom would you choose?  
What was the last movie you saw? What did you think of it?  
What was the last health-related book you read?  
If you were stranded on an island, what three books would you have with you and why?  
What current events were reported on last night's news?  
What person, past or present, would you most like to meet?  
If you could be any character in history, who would you be and why?  
What do you do in your spare time?  
What is your main interest outside of health care?

### **Maturity**

How do you handle stress?  
What has been your most stressful experience to date?  
Is there anything you want to brag about?  
What aspects of your life's experiences will best contribute to your ability to relate to your patients?  
Tell me about a major disappointment you have experienced in your life.  
What was the most difficult problem you faced in your life? How did you solve it? What did you learn?  
How do you think your personal background will affect your practice?  
How do you deal with stress?  
What is the biggest mistake you have ever made? What did you learn from it?  
Have you always put forth your best effort in every situation?  
Tell me about something you know a lot about.  
What do you care about?  
What accomplishments are you most proud of?  
What motivates you to do your best? How do you motivate those around you to give their best effort?

### **Leadership**

Have you taken advantage of the opportunities available to you on campus to become involved in a community or people-oriented activity?  
Have you taken a leadership role in such an activity? How involved were you? How did you help the organization?  
Describe the most outstanding leader you have ever worked with and how you are similar to this person. How are you different?  
What have you found to be the most significant obstacles in getting people to take action? How have you handled these obstacles?  
It is sometimes desirable to lead other people by setting a positive example. Describe a work situation when your example served as a model for others.  
Describe a time when you had to take a leadership role in coaching or instructing someone. What were you providing instructions on? How did you assess the learner's comprehension of the problem? What feedback did you provide?  
In your view, how does leadership fit into the role of a health care professional?  
What is your strongest leadership skill, and how will it assist you in this profession?

---

### **Interpersonal Communication Skills**

What would you do if a patient didn't like you?

What experience have you had in working with others as part of a team?

Tell me about a time when you had to communicate under difficult circumstances.

Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate person/customer/client. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?

Describe a face-to-face meeting in which you had to influence a highly emotional individual. What techniques did you use? What happened?

Sometimes it's important to disagree with others to keep a mistake from being made. Tell me about a time when you were willing to disagree with another person in order to build a positive outcome.

Give me a specific example of a time when your communication skills enabled you to influence the way others thought or acted.

Tell me what you have found to be the major obstacles to effective teamwork.

Tell me how you have attempted to build trust with your peers.

Tell me about a time when you found it necessary to tactfully but forcefully say things that others did not want to hear.

### **Values & Opinions**

What do you think about HMOs and the changes taking place in medicine?

What do you think about euthanasia?

Do you think a physician should tell a patient that he/she has eight months to live?

How would your plans differ if you knew that all health care professionals would be working in HMOs in the future?

What do you think is the most pressing issue in health care today? What are some of the possible solutions?

Would you practice in the inner city? What do you think happens to people who practice there?

If there were an accident on the highway, would you stop and help the victims, knowing that doing so might lead to a malpractice claim against you?

Name some strategies to address the problem of smoking among teens; talk about some that haven't been tried before.

How do you view abortion? Would you perform an abortion as a doctor? If so, under what conditions?

How might you deal with a terminally-ill patient?

How did you, or do you, expect to handle blood and gore?

Discuss a current issue in health care and how it affects the physician and the patient.

How would you reform health care in America?

Discuss a health care ethics issue.

If you knew a fellow student was cheating on an exam, what would you do?

If you saw a fellow student was using illegal drugs or had an alcohol problem, what would you do?

What problems do you envision in health care ten years from now?

What drives a health care professional, or anyone else, to become corrupt?

What do you think are two major ethical issues facing health care today?

Do you agree or disagree with Dr. Kavorkian and why?

Do you think that health care professionals should have to treat AIDS patients?

How would you rank the following individuals with regard for priority for a liver transplant?

- A young woman whose family cannot afford the operation
- A 45-year-old ex-sailor whose liver was damaged by alcoholism
- A 75-year-old retired executive who has indicated that he will be a very generous donor to the hospital if he gets the transplant

A 14-year-old requests birth control pills. Do you grant her request? Do you notify her parents?

How would you react to or treat a non-compliant patient?

---

Do you know any areas that are off-limits for interviewers? How would you respond to an inappropriate question?

You are an M3 on clinical rotation in a small rural hospital and are called to assist with a woman in the middle of a breach birth. The OB comes in and it is evident

that he has been drinking. He insists he can perform a cesarean. You are doubtful. What would you do?

A patient who has been in an accident needs a blood transfusion. She states that her religion does not allow them. You are the physician in charge. What will you

do? Will you override her strong objection? Why or why not?

If you have the choice of giving a transplant to a successful elderly member of the community or a 20-year-old drug addict, how do you choose?

Discuss national health insurance and how it would affect the physician and the patient.

Do you feel that students receiving federal loans should spend time practicing in rural areas to give society something in return?

What do you think about HMOs?

What is the solution to terrorism?

What do you think about the American primary health care delivery?

How would you tell your patient he has cancer?

What do you think of affirmative action?

If an AIDS patient was bleeding profusely from a laceration, what would you do? What if you do not have gloves?

What if you have an open sore on your hand?

What do you think of alternative/herbal medicine? Should people choose them over traditional medicine?

What would you do if a family member decided to solely depend on alternative medicine for his or her treatment of a significant illness?

How would you improve our preventative care settings?

How would you improve access to care in this country?

Do you feel that the government should be involved with insurance?

How would you control the cost of health care?

Do you think health professionals are being paid too much?

What do you think should be done with regard to the high cost of prescription drugs?

What do you think of the health professional shortage/oversupply in different areas? How would you improve this situation?

Why do you think the number of applicants have been growing every year despite the problems we face in medicine?

What do you think about house-staff unionization?

How would you redesign the health care system?

How will you deal with the possibility of being sued?

Should illegal aliens receive free emergency health care?

What should be done about the need for doctors in rural and underserved areas?

What do you think about high-tech infertility treatments that led to septuplet and octuplet births recently?

- Should it be covered by health insurance?

- What should a physician do if he or she prescribes fertility drugs and learns that the patient runs a big risk for high-order multiple birth?

What have you read recently in the press about health care?

How would you express your concern for a child needing an amputation?

What is your opinion of the role of minorities in health care? What should schools do in this area?

How far do you feel a health professional's responsibility to his or her patients goes?

Would you be willing to be on call 24 hours a day?

How do you feel about the malpractice crisis? How would you solve it?

What do you feel have been the biggest changes in health care over the past 20 years?

---

If you were an insurance company and could spend several thousand dollars on either a heart transplant for a man or immunizations for 100 children, which would you choose to do?

Give an example of an ethical dilemma you faced and explain how you resolved it.

Do you agree with the requirement that physicians perform a certain number of operations/procedures each year in order to stay certified?

What do you think of gay rights?

What do you consider to be the most important scientific advancement since 1950? Why?

What do you think should be done about smoking in America?

Do you think there should be mandatory HIV testing for couples wanting to get married?

Would you prefer to provide less effective medicine to more people or more effective medicine to fewer people?

How can we minimize health care costs when people are willing to pay more to be healthier?

What do you think are the advantages/disadvantages to managed health care?

Would you share your religious beliefs with your patients?

How do you help people who don't want to be helped?

In what field do you think the next major advancement in medicine will come?

What do you think of the priority system for organ recipients?

Why are some health care professionals unhappy in their practice?

What is one of the most important developments in the world in the last 25 years?

How do you think your role as a health care professional fits in with your role as a member of the community?

### **Goal Orientation/Motivation**

What are your specific goals in health care?

What do you see yourself doing in health care 10–15 years from now?

Do you have an alternative career plan? If the health care field didn't exist, what would you do with your life?

Tell me about an important goal you set for yourself and your success in reaching it.

Getting the job done may necessitate unusual persistence or dedication to results, especially when faced with obstacles or distractions. Tell me about a time in which you were very persistent in order to reach a goal.

Give an example of a time that you did more than what was expected of you. Why did you do this?

Tell me about a time when you had difficult goals associated with your work. Were you satisfied with those goals and their outcome?

Can you describe a time when your work was criticized? How did you handle the situation?

Tell me about a time that best illustrates your ability to stick things out in a tough situation.

How would you define success for a health care professional?

What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next ten years?

What is your energy level like? Describe a typical day.

Can you provide me with an example of a time when you were most satisfied with your work?

What is the greatest obstacle you have had to overcome?

### **Wrap-Up Questions**

What will you do if you are not accepted to school this year?

What is success?

What inspires you?

What is your "cause"?

What contributes to health?

How can you tell if someone is truly compassionate?

Why study health care when you have so many other talents?

---

If someone fifteen years from now were to write a book about you, what would you want to have included in that book? What are you passionate about?  
What else should I know about you?