

THE INTERVIEW

TRUST THE PROCESS!

You've submitted your online applications, the letters of recommendations have been received, and you've completed all your secondaries in a timely manner. Now it's up to the school. Interviews are usually scheduled during the fall and winter after you submit your application.

There is no way to diminish the importance of the interview.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

SCHEDUELING

Once you receive your notice for an interview, reply as soon as possible. Some interviews might have a long lead time, others may not.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Some schools will offer interview dates during the high holidays in the fall. Most schools are very accommodating regarding this. When you receive the interview offer, reply ASAP and reschedule for the first practical date following the holidays. This delay of a few days or even a week will NOT jeopardize your application in any way.

RESEARCH YOUR SCHOOLS!

If medical or dental schools take the time to offer you an interview, they expect due diligence on your part. You need to research the school thoroughly to discuss why that particular school (not just ANY school) would be a good fit for you. Visit the school's Communications or PR website to see what they're excited about. Match it to your interests so you will be able to discuss your enthusiasm for a new pediatric clinic or a working on a certain professor's research staff.

Always make notes and have 3-4 exit questions for the end of the interview. When the interviewer asks, "Is there anything else you want to know," you should show your interest with more questions.

MOCK INTERVIEWS

It's strongly suggested that you schedule at least one "mock interview" with the YU Career Center after you submit your application and before you start receiving offers from the schools (early in the Fall semester). Career Center is familiar with the specifics of a medical or dental school interview and can even videotape the interview. Since confidence is a key to any interview, a student can schedule several interviews with Career Center to increase their comfort level.

Obviously, business attire (suit and tie) is suggested for ALL interviews.

BIG INTERVIEW

This is a very effective service provided by YU Career Center. With Big Interview, you can practice with your webcam and access sample interview questions and answers and tips on how to do your best.

To access Big Interview, visit

[https://www.yu.edu/sites/default/files/legacy//uploadedFiles/Student Life/Resources and Services/Career Development Center/Students/Tips and Resources/big-interview-instructions-assignment.pdf](https://www.yu.edu/sites/default/files/legacy//uploadedFiles/Student%20Life/Resources%20and%20Services/Career%20Development%20Center/Students/Tips%20and%20Resources/big-interview-instructions-assignment.pdf)

DAY BEFORE INTERVIEW

Be familiar with the route to the interview. Plan to be well-rested and alert. Arrange your schedule so that you can arrive with plenty of time to spare.

UPDATE THE PRE-PROFESIONAL OFFICE

Notify the Pre-Health Office as soon as you are granted an interview. Often other students have had interviews at the same school and can share insights.

THE INTERVIEW

THE INTERVIEWER'S JOB

At this point in the process, the Admissions Committee knows all the facts about you. They like what they know so far. They want to put a face on the application.

Some interviewers will have read your entire application and will discuss your experiences and background in detail. Others will be "blind" interviews where the interviewer knows nothing about you. In this case the Admissions Committee is looking for an objective appraisal of you as an individual. Neither style is "positive" or "negative" on your application. It's a simple matter of the school's preference.

In the bigger picture, the school is also assembling a class of divergent personalities. One of the interviewer's job is to appraise you in relation to the class as a whole. They are looking for what you will add to the flavor of the class and what unique characteristics you will bring to it.

The interviewer should then become your advocate when the Admissions Committee meets to evaluate your application. He or she should be able to speak positively about your

accomplishments, but more importantly, your attitude, personality, outlook and other intangible factors.

WHAT INTERVIEWERS TAKE NOTE OF DURING AN INTERVIEW

Physical Appearance: Grooming, bearing and a self-confident but not cocky manner,
Personality: Friendliness, ability to establish rapport, charm and an appropriate sense of humor.

Communication skills: Ability to express ideas clearly with fluency and in an intelligent manner.

Motivation: Soundness of career choice, conviction of interests.

Maturity: Ability to undertake responsibility a career entails.

Interests: Educational, social and cultural interests you have.

Level of Concern: Demonstrate a genuine interest in people, their problems, and helping them

solve them. You are empathetic,

Emotional Stability: Composure under pressure.

Intellectual Potential: You have truly demonstrated superior intellectual abilities.

THE INTERVIEWEE'S JOB

UNDER A MICROSCOPE! Be aware that you're under scrutiny from the minute you arrive on campus for the interview until you leave. The Admissions Committee will want to know how you relate to support staff such as staff assistants and receptionists. Most interviews include a meal (breakfast and/or lunch, so they are looking to see how you relate to your table-mates (i.e., hogging the conversation or making comments when appropriate.) Again, the Admissions Committee is looking to see how you will treat your potential classmates and faculty.

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING! CONFIDENCE VS. COCKINESS. You are entirely right to have confidence in your accomplishments thus far. You have spent the last several years working hard to create a competitive application. But realize you are on the bottom rung of a very tall ladder! To put it bluntly, you don't know everything! The interviewer will generally ask your opinion on a certain matter, (i.e., health care reform.) It's fine to state what you think from your first-hand experience in a practitioner's office and/or research, but you need to add that you're still new to the process and look forward to learning more about the subject. A little humility goes a long way!

MMI VS. REGULAR INTERVIEW

Over the past few years a change has taken place regarding the interview process at many medical and dental schools. Instead of one-on-one or panel interviews, students are given situational episodes either alone or in pairs called MMI or Mini-Medical Interviews. YU Career Center is completely up to date on this new method and can provide mock interviews as the time approaches. As you prepare for your interview, know which type the school offers.

We have posted an excellent PP presentation by YU alumni **Aitan Magence** and **Sivan Shahar Potash, M.D. Candidates, New York Medical College, Class of 2022** with important information. This includes an up-to-date list of allopathic, osteopathic and dental schools who currently use MMI interviews. <https://www.yu.edu/academic-advising/undergraduate-men/medical-dental>

GENERAL ADVICE:

- ✓ Arrive for the interview early, so that you can locate the interview site with time to spare,
- ✓ Be polite and friendly to the secretaries and to any other staff you encounter,
- ✓ Be well rested, alert, and honest.
- ✓ Do not exaggerate your scholastic achievements or extracurricular activities.
- ✓ If you have worked on a research (or other) project, be prepared to discuss it fluently, accurately, and concisely.
- ✓ If you have had exposure to medicine (or dentistry) by working at a hospital, be prepared to discuss it if asked, or work it into the conversation in an appropriate manner.
- ✓ Be prepared to ask questions about the school and its programs that are not available on the website. DO NOT ASK FOR INFORMATION YOU COULD FIND ELSEWHERE. RESEARCH THE SCHOOL THOROUGHLY BEFORE THE INTERVIEW.
- ✓ Be prepared to show that you are familiar with special features that the school may offer. Study the school's website.
- ✓ Talk to a classmate who has had an interview at the school. Get his impressions of the school and interview. Remember that it is unlikely that you will get the same interviewer, but it is possible.

Check out the interview thread on studentdoctor.net

- ✓ If the school is of special interest to you, you may wish to contact a YU alumnus in attendance or a recent graduate, The Pre-health office can usually provide the needed information to locate him.
- ✓ Remember, the interviewer is trying to get a sense of you as a person- to see what motivates you to understand why you want to enter the health sciences, and to become convinced that you are a worthy, potential colleague,

SPECIFIC ADVICE:

- ✓ Think about BUT DO NOT MEMORIZE answers to the typical questions that may be asked at an interview (see attached list). You can tape record your responses and hear how you sound.
- ✓ If you are asked a question that throws you or you find yourself unable to answer, do not hesitate to stop a moment and say, "that's a tough question" or "that's a really good question," or "could I please have a moment as I haven't thought that completely through" and then build an answer, Don't answer off the top of your head.

- ✓ If you are asked a question you truly cannot answer, say "I don't know" and proceed to refer back to something you do know. For example, a popular question in '06 was how many Americans do not have health insurance. If you don't know the answer, don't make up a number, just say, "I don't know exactly, but it's a lot of people, definitely in the millions."
- ✓ Try to establish a rapport with the interviewer from the very outset. Walk in with a greeting, a smile on your face and a firm handshake. On leaving, express your appreciation for the time the interviewer gave you,
- ✓ Try to avoid where possible, "yes" or "no" answers. Rather, give the pros and cons to the issue and your views in a brief and concise manner,
- ✓ If you don't understand the question, ask the interviewer to clarify it.
- ✓ Look directly at your interviewer. Act relaxed and avoid squirming in your seat; if you "flub" a question, forget it, go on, rather than become upset and ruin the remainder of your interview.
- ✓ Don't discuss politics or religion. If asked, don't be defensive. Interviewers seek a sense of confidence and are looking for non-confrontational reactions from you, even on controversial issues.
- ✓ Avoid disparaging your school or specific instructors or students. It will not make you look better. DON'T GO NEGATIVE!
- ✓ Be prepared to answer open-ended questions, such as those listed below. Most interviewers will not query you much, and sometimes not at all, about your research (unless you are MD/ PhD) but will ask you what you think about the lead story in *The New York Times* that day, the name of your favorite movie, or the title of the last novel you read.
- ✓ Be mindful that the goal is to have a very interesting conversation. Make sure you stop talking long enough for the interviewer to speak. Answer the questions briefly and then stop. Do not ramble filling a void of silence, because then the conversation won't happen.
- ✓ Be prepared to answer questions about any "soft" spots on your preparation, whether academic or extracurricular. Raise these with us in the Pre-health office to develop strategies to cope with answering them effectively. And don't bring up that one low grade if the interviewer doesn't.

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Review the sample questions which are compiled from former YD pre-health students from actual interviews. You don't have to memorize answers to each but be prepared to discuss the topics included.

- ✓ Why did you attend Yeshiva College?
- ✓ What are your extracurricular activities?
- ✓ Why do you want to become a dentist?
What newspapers do you read?
- ✓ What's your favorite novel?
- ✓ What's your favorite movie?

- ✓ What's the last book you read and when did you read it?
What's the last movie you saw?
- ✓ Do you play sports?
- ✓ What did you do over the summer?
- ✓ How will you finance your education?
- ✓ What other schools have you applied to?
- ✓ Why did you apply to this medical school?
- ✓ What do you plan to specialize in?
- ✓ Why did you get a poor grade in _____?
- ✓ Which medical or dental school is your first choice? What kind of social life do you have? Describe your schedule at Yeshiva. What were your favorite courses taken?
- ✓ Did you do any special science project?
- ✓ Will your religious convictions interfere in your studies or practice?
Would you come to class on a Saturday?
- ✓ Would you take a test on a Saturday?
- ✓ Do you expect preferential treatment because of your religious convictions?
- ✓ Do you feel you should have gone to a different college?
- ✓ What do you do in your spare time?
- ✓ Tell me about yourself and your family.
- ✓ What are your long-term objectives?
- ✓ What are your hobbies?
- ✓ What experience led you to your career choice?
- ✓ What are your plans for marriage and a family?
- ✓ Why isn't (name of school) your first choice?
- ✓ Since you are a health science major, wouldn't you be better off having gone to a school where liberal arts and sciences were stressed rather than Hebrew studies?
- ✓ Don't you think learning about western civilization and society is more important than Hebraic studies?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of a good physician (or a dentist)?
- ✓ Why do you think you are better suited for admission than other applicants?
- ✓ What has been your most significant accomplishment to date?
- ✓ What would you like to change about yourself?
What are the characteristics of a mature person?
- ✓ What can be determined about an applicant at an interview?
What books have you recently read?
- ✓ What do you think about the dual program at your school?
- ✓ What is your opinion on _____ (major current event issues)?
- ✓ How do you cope with frustrating situations?
What will you do if you are not accepted?
- ✓ How do you justify the dietary laws in this day and age?
- ✓ How do you think you rank among the pre-professional students at your school?
- ✓ Have you ever worked with people, and if so, in what capacity?
- ✓ Who has had the greatest influence on your life?
- ✓ How do you spend your spare time?
- ✓ What do you do for fun?
- ✓ If you had a weekend to do anything you wanted, what would you do and why?

- ✓ If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?
- ✓ Tell me what you did last Saturday afternoon (Say, well last Sunday afternoon)?
- ✓ Do you have any questions?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

CONCERNS

Not often, but sometimes during an interview an interviewer will ask what you might think is inappropriate or strange question, (i.e., personal matters, religion, politics, etc.) Stay calm and answer the question simply. If you feel the question was unfair and may have a negative effect on your application, please contact the Pre-Health Office the day of your interview. The Pre-Health Advisor will take the appropriate response, including a second interview if called for.

THANK YOU NOTES

Always get contact information for your interviewer and all other who helped with the logistics of the interview. A thank you note (via email) should be sent within 24-48 hours directly to the interviewer with a special mention of anyone who assisted with the interview.

You should make special mention of specific points in the discussion to jog the intern/ewer's memory (i.e., I enjoyed discussing the new children's clinic at your school, etc.)

THE WAITING GAME

Please know that once you've had your interview, it could take MONTHS for you to hear from them. This is usually one of the most frustrating times for the applicants. Know that ALL APPLICANTS are in the same position,

ACCEPTANCES/REJECTIONS

From the minute you submit your application, it is a very unscientific process. Applicants are granted interviews, then accepted and rejected for a wide range of reasons, both tangible and intangible. It is impossible to predict the outcome. Please do not take any rejections personally. It is generally not a reflection of you or your accomplishments.

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