



For more on-demand resources to assist with your professional school interview preparation, visit [preprofessional.okstate.edu](http://preprofessional.okstate.edu)

## **Mock/Practice Interview Question Categories:**

- Personal Background/Questions About You: Basic & Advanced Level Questions
  - Educational Background & Academic Experiences: Basic & Advanced Level Questions
  - Personal Motivation & Profession Commitment: Basic & Advanced Level Questions
  - Community Engagement & Personal Experiences
  - Exposure to Healthcare & Current Events
  - Situational Judgement & Behavior-Based Questions
  - Research-Specific Questions: If Applicable
  - Closing Professional School Interview Questions:
  - Questions to Consider Asking Your Professional School Interviewers (If provided the opportunity)
- 

## **Personal Background/Questions About You:**

### **Basic**

#### **Introductions**

##### **(Background, Strengths & Weaknesses)**

- Tell me about yourself.
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- What do you consider to be your greatest asset?
- What is your most pleasant memory?
- What is your most painful memory?
- What do you consider to be your strengths and your shortcomings?
- What are your two best points? Two weakest points?
- Tell me about a time when you had a terrible day.
- What was the best day or experience you've ever had?
- Tell me about a disappointment you have experienced.
- Tell me about a mistake you've made. Please explain what happened and what you learned from this experience.
- What would you like to improve about yourself?

#### **Personal Background & Influences**

##### **(Attributes: Geography, Family Status, Environmental Influences, Mentors)**

- Tell me about your family life.
- Tell me about your family. Any healthcare professionals in your family?

- Have you ever travelled?
- Have you ever lived in a large city (or rural community) before?
- What exposure to other cultures have you had?
- Have you ever had to overcome any hardships?
- Discuss a challenge or obstacle you have faced in life.
- What was your largest challenge in college?
- Who are your role models?
- Have you ever had a mentor in your life and in what ways did they mentor you?
- What is a helpful piece of advice you've been given?

### **Personal Interests / Hobbies**

#### **(Attributes: Fields of Interest, Physical/Mental Capacities)**

- What are your hobbies?
- How do you spend your free time?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- How do you relax or relieve stress?
- Do you play a musical instrument or are you involved in any sports/physical activities?
- What have you read recently?
- What are your favorite books? Movies?

### **Know Thyself – In General**

#### **(Attributes: Perspectives, Values & Beliefs: Fictional Scenario)**

- If I asked your peers to describe you, what would they say?
- Are you a friendly person?
- What life experiences have made you a better person?
- If you could have lunch with any fictional character, who would it be?
- If you could be a superhero, what kind of superhero would you be?
- If you could have dinner with anyone, who would you have dinner with?

## **Advanced**

### **Introductions**

#### **(Background, Strengths & Weaknesses)**

- Tell me something about you that I cannot learn from your application materials.
- Describe your personal philosophy of living.
- What is something about you that most people would find surprising?
- How do you think your unique background helped you get to this point?
- What has been your most remarkable accomplishment thus far?
- What was your biggest blunder in life? What did you learn from the experience?
- Give me an example that illustrates your greatest strength? And why? What is your greatest weakness?
- What would you list as your three greatest strengths? Why, give examples of them, and how you capitalize on them.

- What would you list as your three greatest weaknesses? Why, give examples of them, and how you live with them.
- Tell us about a time that you broke a rule and why?
- What are three things you want to change about yourself?

### **Personal Background & Influences**

#### **(Attributes: Geography, Family Status, Environmental Influences, Mentors)**

- What do your parents/guardians do?
- Do you think your parent(s)/guardian(s) did well raising you? How? Could they have done something differently?
- Does your family/guardian support your decision to become a healthcare professional? Why/why not?
- What is the farthest you have traveled?
- Discuss the impacts that other cultures have had on you.
- Tell me about a time you had to overcome a challenge. What did you learn from the experience?
- What challenges did you have on your path to professional school? How did you overcome them?
- Tell me about a time in your life when things didn't work out the way you wanted them to. How did you manage?
- Discuss the biggest obstacle you have overcome in your life.
- Who or what are your top three influences, and why?
- Of your mentors, who was the most influential and what is the best advice they have given to you?

### **Personal Interests / Hobbies**

#### **(Attributes: Fields of Interest, Physical/Mental Capacities)**

- Discuss what activities you were involved in high school versus college. What activities or hobbies are you involved with now?
- What interests you outside of \_\_\_\_\_ (your specific health care profession) and getting into professional school?
- Imagine that you suddenly had two weeks of free time. Discuss how you would spend it.
- Describe what you do to balance life and work. How do you cope with stressful situations?
- Discuss the last three books you read?
- What is your favorite book and why?
- What specific book had the greatest impact on you recently?

### **Know Thyself – In General**

#### **(Attributes: Perspectives, Values & Beliefs: Fictional Scenario)**

- What have you learned about yourself throughout your life?
- How would a good friend describe you versus how your parent/guardian would describe you?
- What one word would your friends use to describe you and why?

- If you could bring one person back from the dead and have them over for dinner...discuss who it would be, why you selected them, and what would you serve them?
  - If you could be an animal/plant/flower/musical instrument, what would you be and why?
  - If you could choose, what time period would you like to live in and why?
  - You are the editor of Time Magazine, and it is December. Who's going to be your person of the year on the cover of Time Magazine? Why that person?
- 

## **Educational Background & Academic Experiences:**

### **Basic**

#### **Major**

- Why did you attend Oklahoma State University? Did you enjoy your experience?
- Why did you decide to be a \_\_\_\_\_ major?
- How did you choose your major area of study?
- How did your major prepare you for a future in your chosen career?
- If you could do anything different in your education, what would you do?

#### **Courses**

- What was your favorite subject in school and why?
- Which of your college courses interested you the most?
- Tell me about your experiences in science.
- What class did you struggle with most during school? Why?
- Discuss your least favorite class in college and why.

#### **Academic Blemishes**

- Do you have any blemishes in your academic record? If so, what are they and why did they occur?
- If you performed poorly in undergrad, explain why. Why will you do better in professional school?
- Why do you believe you have the ability to undertake the study and work involved in your chosen professional school?
- *(If applicable)* We noticed you dropped a class. Why?

#### **Academic Preparation / Resiliency**

- Tell me about your study habits.
- How do you study/prepare for exams?
- Tell me about a time when you made an academic mistake. What did you do and how did you correct it?
- What is your preferred way of learning and how do you learn best?
- How would you rate the strength of your academic background?

- What do you believe is evidence of learning? How do you know you've learned it?

### **Open / Adding Anything Else**

- If you could change anything in your academic career, what would you do differently? Why?

## **Advanced**

### **Major**

- Why did you choose your major? How has it prepared you for a career in \_\_\_\_\_ (your profession: physician, PA, athletic trainer, veterinarian, etc.)?
- Discuss your personal process that led to your selection to attend Oklahoma State University. If you could, would you do anything differently?
- Discuss your personal process that led to your major selection. What did you learn from the experience?
- Would you change your choice of major if you started over? If so, why?
- How do you feel your overall undergraduate education prepared you for your chosen career?
- How does a liberal/general education including coursework in the arts, humanities, literature, & social sciences prepare you for this specific healthcare field?

### **Courses**

- Discuss your favorite class in college. What do you remember most from the experience?
- What was your favorite science class? Why?
- What science class did you dislike the most? Why?
- Tell us about your favorite non-science course you enjoyed the most? Why?
- What course do you wish you could have taken, and why?
- What course was most academically challenging for you? Why?
- How many college-level academic credits do you usually take? Discuss any circumstances which may relate to why.
- What was your most valuable course in college?

### **Academic Blemishes**

- Did you want to discuss any academic hurdles you have had in your past?
- (*If applicable*) We noticed you withdrew from several classes (or the semester) in college. Discuss any circumstances which may relate to why. What did you learn from the experience?
- (*If applicable*) If you performed poorly in undergrad, explain why. Why will you do better in professional school?
- (*If applicable*) Tell me about your grades and/or your MCAT/DAT/PCAT/GRE scores. Your grade/score dropped the second time you took the test. Is there a reason?

### **Academic Preparation / Resiliency**

- Tell me about a time when you struggled academically. What did you do to overcome this?
- Discuss a time when you successfully collaborated on an academic project. Why was it successful?
- Discuss a time when you did not successfully collaborate on an academic project. What went wrong? What did you learn?
- Tell me about a time when you received negative feedback on your academic performance. How did you handle the situation?
- Discuss how you will handle the curriculum stress of your chosen professional school.
- Do your grades accurately reflect your abilities? Why / why not?
- What type of learning environment do you thrive in?
- Discuss your specific method(s) of learning. How does this fit with our professional school program's culture?

### Open / Adding Anything Else

- Is there anything further you wanted to personally discuss regarding your academic journey? (Example: grade(s), semester(s), other circumstances, etc.)
- 

## Personal Motivation & Profession Commitment

### Basic

#### Understanding Your Profession Motivation

- Tell us why you want to become a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*).
- Tell us how you came to be interested in \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*).
- Tell me why you're interested in \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*).
- What inspired this interest and what have you done to investigate the field/confirm your decision.
- Are you pursuing a career in \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) for the money? Prestige?
- What excites you about \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)/healthcare field in general?
- If you could not be a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*), what career would you choose?
- If you do not get into \_\_\_\_\_ (*your professional school*), what will you do?
- Why did you decide to choose the pursuit of healthcare and not some other field where you can help others?
- What area of \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) in the field most appeals to you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What event has made the biggest impact on your life?
- Why do you believe you have the ability to undertake the study and work involved in \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school?
- If you couldn't be a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*), what career would you choose?
- Why did you decide to choose medicine and not some other field where you can help others?

- What experiences have most motivated you to pursue \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)?
- Do you have any plans after graduation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ (*your specific professional*) school requires a lot of self-motivation. Is that a problem for you?
- If you could not be a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*), what career would you choose?

### **Leadership & Public Service Commitments**

- What leadership positions have you held in school?
- Have you held any leadership positions/roles outside of school? If so, doing what?
- Describe your leadership qualities.
- Tell me about your volunteer experience(s).
- Describe a situation or event that inspired you to pursue this field.
- Tell me about your leadership experience(s).
- What have you done that shows initiative? What did you learn from that experience?

## **Advanced**

### **Understanding Your Profession Motivation**

- Why did you specifically choose \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)? Why not pursue a job in your major or other career industry?
- What intrigues you the most about being a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)?
- (*Physician-specific*) Why pursue the role of a physician in medicine and not another field that has similar authority like an APRN (Advanced Practitioner Registered Nurse) or PA (Physician Assistant)?
- Tell us about your initial and continued interest in \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*).
- Why did you decide to choose this field and not some other field where you can help others, such as teaching, psychology, education, social work, or other healthcare pathways?
- What experiences have most motivated you to pursue \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)?
- What is your current choice of specialty and why?
- What will you be doing in \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) 10 years from now?
- What do you hope to accomplish in life by becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)?
- What will you do with life if you do not become a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*)?
- If you could sign a contract for your dream job for the next 20 years starting tomorrow, what would it be?
- How do you plan to support yourself through \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school?
- Admission into our program is highly competitive. What do you plan to do if you are not accepted at this time?
- What would you do if you could not go to \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school?

### **Leadership & Public Service Commitments**

- How would you define a leader, and which of those qualities do you possess?
- Tell me about a situation in which you displayed leadership abilities.
- In a group, what kind of role do you play? (dominant, observant, etc.)

- Describe a situation in which you were compelled to take the lead even though you were not designated as the project/event/work, etc. leader. What did you learn from the experience?
  - What extracurricular activities did you participate in and how did they help you to grow throughout your college journey?
  - Share an experience where you decided to give up and explain your current philosophy on when/under which circumstances one should give up.
  - When you're in a leadership position, what responsibilities do you take and how do you lead?
  - Tell me about a difficult situation you have had in a leadership position and how you handled it.
  - What aspects of your life experiences do you think makes you a good candidate for \_\_\_\_\_ (your specific profession) school?
- 

## Community Engagement & Personal Experiences

### Basic

- What extracurricular activity in the community have you found most rewarding?
- Who has most influenced your life so far and why?
- What were the last three books you read?

### Advanced

- What are the social responsibilities of a \_\_\_\_\_ (your profession)?
  - How might you best meet the needs of a multiethnic, multicultural patient population?
  - What have you done that shows initiative? What did you gain from that experience? How were you most/least satisfied with that endeavor?
  - Discuss a book that you've recently read for pleasure. Why did this book interest you?
  - What are some things that bother you in a work setting?
- 

## Exposure to Healthcare & Current Events

### Basic

- What experiences have you had in a medical/healthcare or clinical setting?
- What do you know about the current trends in our nation's healthcare system?
- What do you think is the most pressing issue in healthcare today and why?
- What is the difference between Medicare and Medicaid?



## **Advanced**

- From what you understand about \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) what do you think will be the biggest challenge for you?
  - What hesitations or reservations do you have about joining the \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) profession?
  - (*Physician Specific*) How do you think the U.S. should address the physician shortage problem, particularly in primary care and a lack of physicians serving in rural areas?
  - (*Physician Specific*) Would your plans to become a physician change if the U.S. moved to a universal healthcare system, similar to Canada?
- 

## **Situational Judgement & Behavior-Based Questions**

### **Resilience & Adaptability:**

- Tell me about a time you worked effectively under pressure.
- Describe a time you had to use empathy or compassion with a difficult person/situation.
- Tell me about a time that you failed. What did you learn from the experience?
- Tell me about a time your performance was criticized.
- Tell us about a situation in which you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a process or policy with which you did not agree. What was the situation and how did you ensure compliance?

### **Collaboration, Teamwork, or Group Dynamics:**

- Tell me about an experience you've had working on a team. What role do you tend to play when working on a team?
- What has been the most rewarding experience working with others?
- Tell me about a time that you had a conflict with a team member and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time you had to build a relationship with someone you didn't like.
- Tell me about a time when you were upset with the behavior of a team member or supervisor and how you dealt with it.

### **Health Care Ethics & Societal Issues:**

- Describe a time where you encountered any moral or ethical dilemmas to date. What happened and how was it resolved?
- What makes health care so expensive?
- How should society deal with the problem of child abuse?
- What do you feel are the social responsibilities of a healthcare provider?
- How do you feel prepared to meet the diverse needs of a multiethnic, multicultural patient population?

- To what extent do you owe a debt to those less fortunate than yourself? Please explain.
  - You are taking a test and notice the person sitting next to you is copying answers from your paper. What do you do? Why?
  - A patient brings you a very expensive present. What would you do? Why?
  - Do you think that health care funds should be more focused on the expensive development of new technologies, or on providing adequate care for the masses who aren't insured?
  - Do frozen embryos have rights?
  - There is a new treatment that could greatly benefit many of your patients. However, it is extremely expensive to provide, and you can only offer it to one person. How do you decide which of your patients gets the treatment? What logic did you use to arrive at your decision?
  - If you could resolve one societal ill, what would it be and why?
- 

## Program-Specific Questions

### **Basic**

- What do you know about our school / professional school?
- Tell us why you applied to this particular professional school program?
- What is it about our professional school which makes you think it would be a good fit for you?
- Are you interested in this region as a place to settle/practice?
- What makes this school unique?
- Tell us how you are a good fit for our professional school's program.

### **Advanced**

- Tell us what you are looking for in a professional school?
  - What qualities in a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school are you looking for?
  - What other professional schools did you apply to? Why?
  - Are there any specific features of our professional school that interest you? If so, why?
  - How would you characterize the school's philosophy in relation to our program's mission?
  - What makes you special in comparison to all the other applicants?
  - How do you think you would contribute to our professional school's student body?
  - If you were accepted to another professional school program (in your home state, etc.) would you still want to come here? Why?
  - Tell us why you are a strong candidate for our specific program? Why?
-

## ***If Applicable: Research-Specific Questions***

### **Basic**

- Have you completed any research projects or are you interested in research?
- Have you ever been involved in research? Tell me about your experiences.
- Explain your research experience.
- Explain your role in a collaborative research opportunity.
- Have you done any research? If so, tell me about it.

### **Advanced**

- What kind of specific research did you do/conduct?
  - Why do you want to go into research?
  - If you conducted multiple semesters of research, please discuss what was most meaningful and why?
  - What did you learn most about yourself in your research opportunity?
  - If your research mentor was here today, what do you think they would share with us regarding your experience together?
  - What was your specific role in your research? Do you see research playing a significant role in your later professional career?
- 

## **Closing Professional School Interview Questions:**

- What last bit of information would you like me to know about you?
- How do you want me to remember you?
- Why do you think you are a good candidate for \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school?
- What aspects of your life and experiences do you think make you a good candidate for \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school?
- What makes you unique or different as a \_\_\_\_\_ (*your profession*) school candidate?
- What is the one thing you want me to convey to the admissions committee?
- What type of impression do you feel you've left on me in this interview?
- What do you have to offer that other candidates do not have?
- I must convince the rest of the admissions committee that we should accept you over other applicants. What would you tell them to convince them? Why should we accept you?
- There are 1,000 applicants as qualified as you. Why should we select you for our class?
- (*If a group/panel interview format*) Look at the person on your left. If there is one spot left open in this program, why should they get this spot?
- Why did you choose to apply to \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of program they are interviewing with*)?
- Have you been accepted to other schools yet?

- Where else are you applying? Where is your first choice?
  - If there was only one spot left, why should we choose you?
  - If you were accepted to your top two schools, how would you decide on which school to attend?
  - Do you have any questions for me?
  - How did you prepare for this interview?
- 

## Questions to *Consider* Asking Your Professional School Interviewers

*(If provided the opportunity and not provided on their official admissions website/application materials.)*

To demonstrate your level of interest in pursuing professional education, you should be fully prepared to ask the interviewer(s) questions. While doing this, avoid asking questions on material already covered in the professional healthcare school websites or brochures. Intelligent and insightful questions will help demonstrate your most “professional self.”

*Overall, anticipate that some professional schools might provide you with time to ask them questions. If they ask, consider some various questions below to customize for your top professional schools. If an admissions committee member asks you for this prompt, please be prepared.*

### “Do you have any questions for us?”

#### Questions for Professional Schools: *Audience – Program Faculty & Administrators* Professional Curriculum & Academic Environment:

- Are there any special programs for which this program is noted for?
- What would a typical 1st year academic workload look like?
- Please tell me more about the integrated curriculum.
- What modalities are used for student lectures?
- What are the opportunities for research? What are the policies for taking time off for research opportunities?
- Does your professional school award letter grades or is it a pass/fail grading culture?
- Are there opportunities for students to design, conduct, and publish their own research?
- How do students get assistance if an academic need arises?
- Is there flexibility in the coursework (the number of electives) and the timing of the courses (accelerating, decelerating, and time off) during the pre-clinical and clinical years?
- Has this (specific) professional school, or any of its clinical departments, been on probation or had its accreditation revoked in the past?

- How do students from this medical school perform on the National Board Examinations? How does the school assist students who do not pass?

**Questions for Professional Schools: Audience – Program Faculty & Administrators  
Professional Community, Services & Learning Environment:**

- Do you offer an orientation/mentoring program for 1st year professional school students?
- How would you describe the campus atmosphere?
- How would you describe a typical entering class?
- What kind of support system could I expect to find if I were to attend this institution?
- How responsive is the school administration to student feedback? Can you give me an example?
- Would you characterize your classes as more competitive or cooperative?
- How would you characterize the school's philosophy?
- What types of counseling and student support does your program offer?
- What kind of academic, personal, financial, and career counseling is available to students? Are these services also offered to their spouses and dependents/children?
- How diverse is the student body? Are there support services or organizations specifically for ethnic/cultural minorities, LGBTQIA students, and women?
- Tell me about the library and extracurricular facilities (i.e., housing, dining, recreational/athletic facilities, etc.). Is designated study space available?
- What type of clinical sites—ambulatory, private preceptors, private hospitals, rural settings, international—are available or required for clerkships? Does this school allow students to do rotations at other institutions or internationally?
- What medical school committees (e.g., curriculum committee) have student representation?
- Are students involved in (required or voluntary) community service?
- How active is the student council/government? Are there other active student organizations affiliated with your professional school?
- Is there a mentor/advisor system? Who are the advisors—faculty members, other students, or both?
- What kind of academic, personal, financial, and career counseling is available to students? Are these services also offered to their spouses?
- Does this school provide vaccinations against Hepatitis B or prophylactic AZT treatment in case of a needle-stick or accident?
- In your view, what is the greatest strength of your program?
- What do you feel makes this institution unique?

**Questions for Professional Schools: Audience – Program Faculty & Administrators  
Evaluations, Board Pass Rates, Accreditation, Residency / Fieldwork Experiences:**

- How are students evaluated academically? How are clinical evaluations performed?
- Is there a formal mechanism in place for students to evaluate their professors and attending physicians? What changes have been made recently because of this feedback?

- How do students from this medical school perform on the National Board Examinations? How does the school assist students who do not pass?
- Has this medical school, or any of its clinical departments, been on probation or had its accreditation revoked?
- What type of clinical sites — ambulatory, private preceptors, private hospitals, rural settings — are available or required? Does this school allow students to do rotations at other institutions or internationally?
- What are typical residency programs to which recent graduates were accepted?
- What kind of assistance will be available to me in identifying sites for residencies?
- What type of clinical exposure may I expect here?

**Questions for Professional Schools: *Audience – Program Financial Aid/Scholarship Officers***

**Financial Planning, Aid & Scholarships:**

- What are the current tuition and fees? Is this expected to increase yearly? If so, at what rate is anticipated?
- Are there students who have an "unmet need" factor in their budget? If so, how do these students come up with the extra funds?
- Are there stable levels of federal financial aid and substantial amounts of university/medical school endowment aid available to students?
- Are spouses and dependents/children covered in a student's budget?
- Are there services/staff available to assist students with budgeting and financial planning?
- Does this school provide guidance to its students and to its graduates/alumni, on debt management?
- Is a car necessary? Is parking a problem to access campus or other professional school facilities?
- Is there budgeting & financial planning assistance?