**Interviews**

The multiple mini interview: what to expect and how to prepare

Advice from an admissions tutor

* **By**: Karen N Foster

The Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) is one of the ways medical schools assess the suitability of applicants for a career in medicine. This type of interview is usually new to prospective students, who may not have experienced an interview format like it before. In this article I will explain what to expect and how to prepare for an MMI.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

What happens in an MMI?

In an MMI, you rotate around several different question stations. Each station tends to last between five and 10 minutes, with a one to two minute gap between each station. There can be anywhere between five and 10 stations at an MMI and timings are normally indicated by a bell or a buzzer. MMIs can take place in one large room or over several rooms, with two to three stations in each room. Either way, other candidates will be going around the circuit at the same time as you, and members of staff will be on hand to direct you to the correct station.

At each station you are given instructions before you begin to prepare for the task ahead. MMI stations test the aptitudes of applicants in different scenarios, such as questions about a specific topic, communicating with an actor, undertaking a task, or solving a problem.

There is usually only one interviewer at each station and you are scored against pre-determined criteria. There is a marking schedule and often an outline of what constitutes a “good” answer. As well as assessment of the specific questions or tasks in each station, the interviewer may score your communication and interpersonal skills. Candidates are not necessarily asked the same questions, but each medical school will have the same categories of questions that are used for each MMI.

Interviewers are not always doctors. A range of people can be involved including members of the public, actors and simulated patients, senior medical school administrative staff, senior NHS managers, as well as doctors from both hospital and community settings.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

Preparing for the MMI

Find out as much as you can about the MMI you are attending because different schools run their MMIs differently. Look at the medical school’s website because most schools give some details about what they will test you on. Some will have example video clips to help you to prepare. If you have specific requirements, such as accessibility or reading provision, let the medical school know well in advance so that appropriate arrangements are made for you.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

What types of questions can you expect?

Some areas you are likely to be tested on are:

* Discuss your preparation for entry to medicine, for example Research into undergraduate curricula and postgraduate training Research into and understanding of the implications of a medical career Experience of caring or other environments.
* Consider a new situation and discuss your thoughts or suggest a solution to solve a problem.
* Outline any learning points from previous experiences.
* Reflect on your own and others’ skills and abilities.
* Consider your potential contribution to the care of others.

Some questions do not have a “correct” answer, but what is really being assessed is your ability to reflect on and discuss aspects of a topic or problem. If you are invited for interview this means you have met the entry requirements for the medical school, which means that the interview is not normally intended to test your academic knowledge and will not usually include questions directly related to the academic curriculum.

The more research you undertake into a career in medicine and the medical school you are being interviewed for, the better prepared you will be to answer questions confidently. Below are some areas of background reading you should carry out before your interview:

* Medical schools are likely to base some of their questions on documents such as the General Medical Council’s*Tomorrow’s Doctors* [[1]](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#ref1) and *Good Medical Practice*,[[2]](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#ref2) which set out the professional competencies required of all doctors practising in the United Kingdom. For further background reading you should also look at the NHS Medical Careers, the BMA, and the Medical Schools Council (MSC) websites
* Take the time to find out about the curriculum of the medical school you are being interviewed at. Telling an interviewer at a medical school with a traditional course that you are looking forward to their problem based learning course is not going to impress him or her.
* Keep up to date with current medical and ethical topics; read the *Student BMJ* and other health and science journals.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

How the stations are assessed and scored

Generally speaking you will be scored in the following areas:

* Your ability to express ideas freely and coherently.
* How well you use your existing knowledge to formulate answers to new or unknown topics.
* Your ability to follow a reasoned argument and to formulate an opinion.
* The degree to which you are prepared for questions.
* Your ability to discuss different aspects (advantages and disadvantages) of a problem or situation.
* The degree of motivation, commitment, reflection, and sensitivity that you demonstrate.
* Your communication and interpersonal skills.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

Importance of interview practice

Practising with different “interviewers” will help build confidence in your ability to perform in unfamiliar circumstances, as will frequently practising your answers to different interview questions. Also try practising your answers in front of a mirror. This will highlight any mannerisms you have that you might want to avoid, such as playing with your hair, touching your ear, or covering your mouth when you talk.

Many questions covered in MMI stations are available in the public domain, although the exact wording will vary. It is useful to be familiar with the type of questions, but base your responses on your own thoughts and experiences, rather than quoting existing text and the opinion of others. It is important that you don’t learn and then “recite” your answers because interviewers do not score highly those candidates whose answers sound overly rehearsed.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

On the day of the MMI

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Know where you are going and how to get there, and leave plenty of time for travel

Being late is the worst start to an interview. The medical school may not be able to reschedule your interview. Find out exactly where the interviews are being held. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to park or catch public transport to the venue of your interview. Also, if the weather is likely to be bad, and you have an early morning interview, consider staying close to the location of the interview the night before.

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Bring all the paperwork you require

Re-read the invitation letter and make sure you have all the paperwork you require, especially your identification.

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Look professional

This interview is to see whether you are suitable to join the medical profession and you will be expected to appear professional. Appearances matter. Your clothing should be clean, smart, and formal. Your hair should be clean and tidy. Be aware of body odour, bad breath, and dirty finger nails.

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Listen to the pre-MMI briefing

At most MMIs there is a briefing session for candidates before they go into the MMI. Listen carefully to the content of the briefing and ask any questions you have at this point.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

Rescheduling

In the days before the interview if you have any problems, such as illness or bereavement, let the medical school know. They will try to give you another date if possible.

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

Dos and don’ts during the MMI

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Do

* Carefully read the instructions before each station and think about your answer before you start
* Introduce yourself to your interviewer
* Smile, be enthusiastic, and be confident. This is your opportunity to sell yourself and tell us why you really want a place at medical school
* Make eye contact with the interviewer
* Ask for clarification if you are unsure what the interviewer is asking
* Have a couple of questions ready about the scenario or station should the interviewer ask for them

[Top](http://student.bmj.com/student/view-article.html?id=sbmj.h3356#article)

Don’t

* Panic if you think you have made a mess of one station. In most MMIs it is the overall score that counts, so try to use the time between stations to put a poor station behind you and prepare for the next.
* Over-think the station. Most questions are straightforward and interviewers do not tend to use trick questions. Interviewers want to give you every opportunity to do your best
* Try to use humour because this very rarely works well during an interview
* Argue with the examiner
* Swear or use any offensive language during the MMI
* Be critical of any other medical school or a patient

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