



# **Interview Fundamentals**

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## The Interview

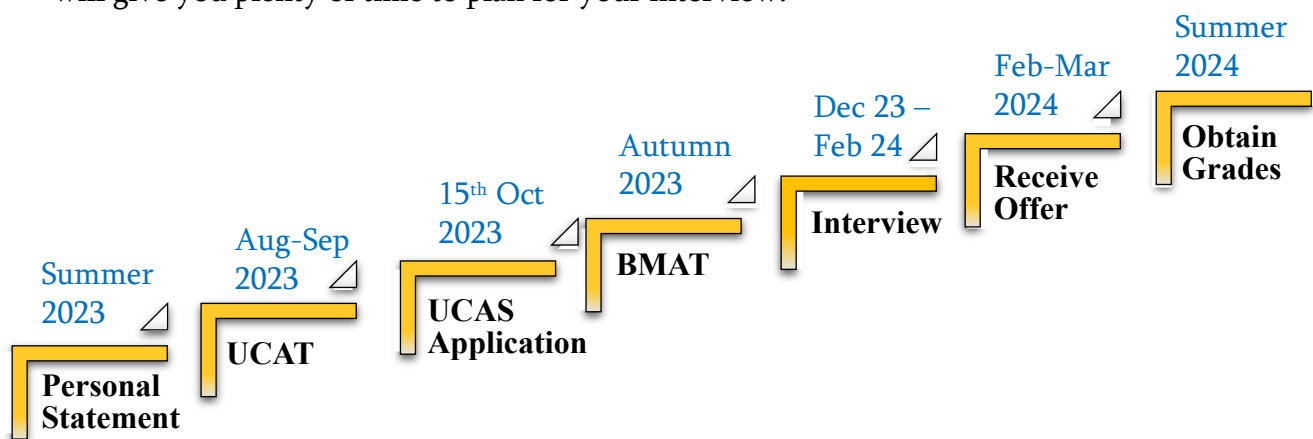
Congratulations! So, you've completed your UCAS application and are now onto the interview. The interview is your final opportunity to convince the university why you deserve an offer. A good interview can guarantee an offer, regardless of the rest of your application.

Though an interview may seem daunting at first, there is lots of valuable preparation you can do to ensure you give the best possible impression. Think of the interview as a final opportunity to present who you are and why you are going to make an excellent student and future doctor.

This Interview Course will focus on the key questions and topics that will be covered in the interview and how to prepare for them. This will include plenty of practice in answering common interview questions as well as examples of good and bad answers to give you an idea of what your interviewer is looking for and how you can improve your own answers. With all this, it will ensure that you can be confident to give it your best shot.

## Application Timeline

The interview is the last step in your application timeline. Invitations to interview are sent out from November to March and are most often sent out at least 2 weeks before the interview date. Therefore, it is important to remain patient and it is worthwhile to begin preparing around mid-October even before you receive an invitation to interview. This will give you plenty of time to plan for your interview.



After interview, offers will be sent out around February to March 2024. You will know whether you have been successful in getting an offer in the UK by April 2024. Then, with the application process complete you will be able to put all of your focus into revising for the exams and achieving your offer.

## Different types of interviews

In general, there are two different types of medical interviews you can attend: multiple mini interviews (MMI) or semi-structured/traditional interviews. Make sure to check beforehand which type of interview you have, so that you can prepare accordingly.

Despite differences in the structure of these interviews, both styles of interviews are looking for similar qualities and an overall attitude. To assess this, they will also cover similar key topics such as ethics, current affairs, personal statement, scientific knowledge and mathematical reasoning.

Most universities use MMIs and hence this interview course will focus on preparing for MMIs. However, due to the vast overlap in assessment approach, preparation for one style of interview will inevitably prepare you for the other.

The main differences between MMIs and traditional interviews are in the table below:

	Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)	Traditional interviews
Length of interview	5-6 minutes	20-30 minutes
Number of interviews	6 up to 15 depending on the university	1 or 2
Number of interviewers	Usually 1	1-3 or a panel of people
Type of questions	More role play questions	More general questions

### ***Traditional interviews***

Traditional interviews are longer than MMIs and are around 20-30 minutes. You are typically interviewed by one person or a panel of people. These may be members of the faculty, junior doctors or clinicians.

As these interviews are longer there are less role play questions and often more general questions to gain a sense of who you are. For example:

- When did you show leadership skills?
- Why do you want to study medicine?
- Why do you want to come to this university?
- Tell me what you learnt from the work experience mentioned in your personal statement?

However, anything present in MMIs can still come up in traditional interviews and you may be asked to analyse a graph during your interview or expected to discuss a short passage on an ethical scenario which you have read beforehand.

In recent years traditional interviews are declining in popularity. Currently there are 4 universities which conduct traditional interviews: University of Glasgow, University of Southampton, University of College London (UCL) and Queen Mary University of London but many of these are switching to the MMI format.

### ***Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)***

MMIs consist of between 6 to 15 smaller interviews which are usually conducted one after the other. Each interview will usually be around 5-6 minutes long, although the timing and number of interviews varies across different universities. So, it is important to check with the university beforehand.

Each interview will focus on one topic or task to test a particular skill or quality. You will rotate around the stations with a break at some point during this procedure. Each station can vary hugely and can include:

- interacting with an actor
- discussing how you would handle given scenarios
- analysing a graph
- describing an image
- talking about your personal statement or current affairs

In some cases, you will be given time to read a small passage beforehand and then expected to discuss it. Some stations may not even have an interviewer but instead you will work on a given problem by yourself. The structure of MMIs will be discussed in more detail below.

As MMIs are shorter they require you to think more on your feet and can feel more stressful. However, each station provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate different qualities and skills, giving the university a more rounded impression of you. Also, it enables you to make multiple first impressions and hence it is more forgiving if one particular interview does not go well.

### ***Oxbridge interviews***

Oxbridge interviews have the same structure as traditional interviews and so are longer around 20 minutes, and you may be interviewed by one person or a panel of people.

However, compared with traditional interviews, they have a heavier focus on ideas and the way you think rather than the content you know. Therefore, don't be scared by the notion that you need advanced medical knowledge to secure an offer. In fact, often the interviewer will purposefully choose a topic new to you to test how logically and calmly you approach a new problem. In general, they will present you with a science-based problem and then delve deeper into this with more questions.

In these interviews it is most important to think out loud when you answer questions and explain your thought process. Therefore, don't be afraid to ask the interviewer if you don't understand something they have mentioned or if you haven't covered a topic they are talking about. These interviews will also cover ethics, personal statement, current affairs and general questions just as the other two types of interview, so it is important not to neglect this during preparation.

Though this course will not specifically address Oxbridge interviews, it will prepare you for answering questions on the topics listed above and hence any preparation covered will be applicable to these interviews.

## The structure of Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)

The main subjects covered in MMIs can be broken up into 4 topics outlined below. Preparation for each of these topics will be covered in detail in subsequent lessons.

### *Personal statement questions*

- These questions are testing that you've thought carefully about the work experiences, volunteering, books and hobbies you've mentioned in your personal statement and in some cases that you've actually done them!
- These may be direct questions about your personal statement e.g.  
*What did you learn from your work experience?*  
*What was your favourite part of the book you read?*
- Or indirect questions in which case you can bring in new experiences or those mentioned in your personal statement e.g.  
*When have you shown leadership skills?*  
*Describe a time you had to resolve conflict in a team?*



### *Basic common questions*

- There are many examples of basic questions. These are often used to find out who you are as a person and whether you are passionate about applying for a medicine degree e.g.  
*What are your biggest strengths or weaknesses?*  
*Why do you want to be a doctor?*  
*Why did you to apply to this medical school?*

### ***Medical Ethics and Communication***

- Medical ethics will often be tested with a discussion of an ethical scenario, or a role play with an actor.
- This station will be looking for considered ethical reasoning using the 4 main pillars of medical ethics, as well as an awareness of your role as a doctor and demonstration of awareness about ethical issues in medicine. e.g:

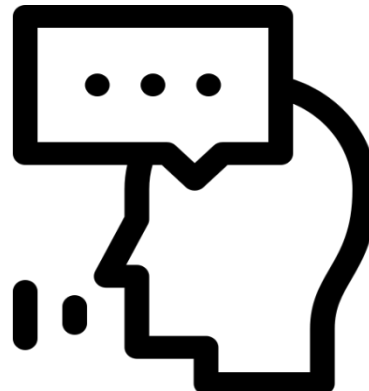
*Should euthanasia be legalised in the UK?*

*What relevance does the Hippocratic Oath have in modern-day medicine?*

- As well as ethical scenarios you can also be given communication scenarios looking at how you would interact with someone in certain situations. These stations are primarily looking at skills such as empathy, communication and honesty. E.g.

*How would you support a friend who is having difficulty at medical school?*

*A patient's blood sample has been lost and results are needed urgently. Therefore, it is crucial the patient takes another blood test. How would you tell a patient this?*



### ***Data analysis, science, and current affairs***

- At some stations you will be presented with scientific or mathematical problems to test your logical reasoning and proficiency in these subjects under pressure.
- Questions on current affairs provide you with an opportunity to express your extracurricular interest in medicine as well as your awareness of the healthcare system in the UK. E.g.

*What are the biggest problems with the NHS?*

*Talk me through what this graph is showing?*

*Can you tell me about a significant recent advance in medicine or science? Why has this interested you?*

## What the rest of the course entails

This course takes the mystery out of performing well at interview by providing a comprehensive but also manageable roadmap to ensure you can go into the interview prepared and confident. It includes 10 mini-booklets which you can download and annotate and 10 accompanying video lessons. These are written and presented by students at the University of Cambridge who have gone through the process themselves and so know first-hand what the experience is like and how best to prepare.

This course is not meant to be completed in one day and instead should be done over the course of a couple weeks. Lessons 2-5 introduce the most common topics in MMIs and show you how to collect information in advance of drafting your answers. Lessons 6-9 will then focus on teaching you how to take the information you have prepared and convert this into structured and convincing verbal responses. We will also practice specific questions that come up in these topics and give you examples of good and bad answers. The final lesson will include a mock interview and mark scheme so you can gauge how well you are doing and what you can improve in.

Alongside this course remember to be proactive and get as much practice as possible. Ask friends, family, teachers at school or students in the year above to test you or even give you a mock interview. This is important for getting used to talking in an interview setting and giving you confidence.

Lesson	What it entails
<b>2. Adapting your personal statement for interview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Learn what qualities universities are looking for at interview</li><li>- How to use your personal statement to demonstrate those qualities, using an example personal statement</li><li>- How to prepare your personal statement for direct questions, using an example personal statement</li></ul>
<b>3. Preparing for common questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Basic template to answering common questions</li><li>- How to answer 6 common questions with advice and example answers</li></ul>

<b>4. Medical Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn the duties of a doctor</li> <li>- The 4 pillars of medical ethics</li> <li>- Understanding consent and confidentiality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some key ethical topics</li> </ul> </li> <li>- How to answer medical questions</li> <li>- How to answer communication questions</li> </ul>
<b>5. Scientific knowledge, data interpretation and current affairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Answering scientific questions</li> <li>- Data analysis and interpretation</li> <li>- How to answer the photo station</li> <li>- Current affairs and scientific articles</li> </ul>
<b>6. Common questions, practice and example answers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interview basics</li> <li>- How to structure your answers to common questions</li> <li>- Analysing different example questions and answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft your own verbal responses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>7. Personal statement grill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to structure your answers to personal statement questions</li> <li>- Analysing different example questions and answers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft your own verbal responses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>8. Medical ethics questions, practice and example answers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to structure your answers to ethics questions</li> <li>- How to structure your answers to communication questions</li> <li>- Analysing different example questions and answers</li> </ul>
<b>9. Data analysis, science and current affairs questions, practice and example answers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to structure your answers to data analysis questions</li> <li>- How to structure your answers to picture questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to prepare a scientific article</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Analysing different example questions and answers</li> </ul>
<b>10. Mock Interview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some final tips</li> <li>- Summary of learning points</li> <li>- Mock interview questions</li> <li>- Mock interview mark scheme</li> </ul>

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