

Experience # 5 - Des Moines Physician Assistant Program Interview

Name: ---

Itinerary:

Des Moines P.A. program: First, we sat in on a class, went to lunch, had a brief tour, then had 2 sets of interviews

Interviewers:

We had 2 sets of interviews. The first was me and two other faculty P.As and the second was me and three other faculty P.As. Both were laid back, but still professional. Occasionally they would nod their heads or say good/excellent/very impressive.

Questions:

How would two professionals settle a dispute?

What will you do if you don't make it into our program?

What is the difference between a P.A. and a physician?

What would you do to handle a difficult patient?

Why do you want to become a P.A.?

Why did you take A.C.L.S (I took this class and they were shocked that I had passed it)

Why should Des Moines accept you?

What do you have to offer our P.A. program?

What person has motivated you the most?

What has been your experience with shadowing P.As

Name 3 things you want to change about yourself?

Why should we accept you to Des Moines University?

What would you tell a patient what your job is?

What would you do if you caught a student cheating?

Describe a significant life experience.

Prepare:

I wore a pant suit. I prepared by going to their web site and reading through all the information behind their program. I also found a couple of websites that gave sample interview questions and answers (searched under google by "sample interview questions for Physician assistant school)

Impression:

Very Well. At the end of the interview one of the faculty members said that they were very impressed.

Changes:

I presented myself well. I was well prepared, background about the program, about P.As in general, I was relaxed and tried to show some humor.

Tips:

If you have a finished manuscript from BI 456, bring it! I brought a copy of my project for them to keep and they were very impressed by that. I also took Advanced Cardiac Life Support class this past summer, which most doctors are required to take, but most nurses are not. It is a very difficult class, but if you get the materials (you can request a book) and study before you take the class you should be fine.

Additional Comments:

Relax, be yourself. It doesn't do you any good to get nervous because that will make you mess up. Try to show some humor, brag about yourself. Bring your BI 456 project and brag about that, but remember the "B.S" (bull-shit) factor. Most interviewers can tell the "too good to be true" people. Take anything else that you can show them, other research projects, varification of CPR or ACLS. Most importantly, have fun with it. They are trying to sell their college to you just as much as you are trying to sell yourself to them.

Experience # 6 - Interview at Nebraska Medical School

Name: ---

Itinerary:

Nebraska -- Show up around 9am. Brief introduction, then hang out with med students and then have an interview with one faculty member. Then a very nice lunch and a financial aid presentation. About 40 people were there.

Iowa -- Show up at 8:30. General introduction and history about Iowa and all their programs. Then a SHORT interview. It helped because you knew who your interviewers were going to be in advance. Then, lunch (sack lunch) and a tour of campus with an ambassador. Only about 8 people there at once. Very nice and laid back.

Interviewers:

Nebraska -- one interviewer. Most were extremely outgoing and fun. Mine, though was a stereotypical researcher with his office way away from anywhere social. He was introverted and asked some questions that were hard to interpret.

Iowa -- 2 interviewers. Very laid back. The standard five I knew going in. Then very informal. My interviewers were a stereotypical older man pediatrician and a young female ophthalmologist. Very nice and genuine.

Questions:

Nebraska -- all about "who you are" -- didn't want my resume. Just WHO I was and how I became interested in medicine. Three strengths and three weaknesses. "Are you independent" (What? Financially? Emotionally? Self-Motivated?)

Iowa --

- 1.) Why Medicine?
- 2.) A time when you needed to ask for help.
- 3.) What would you do if you knew someone in your class was suffering from a drug or alcohol problem?
- 4.) A time when you demonstrated compassion.
- 5.) How do you deal with stress?

They were first-time interviewers so they weren't at all harsh. They were probably more responsive than they should have been.

Prepare:

Black business suit. Be professional. I researched EVERYTHING about each place I interviewed. Asked questions about the school and program, which demonstrated by interest and that I'd done my homework. Did mock interviews with my mom and stopped in to see Derek Solheim. Really know your stuff. Know WHY for each school. Then just be yourself and talk.

Impression:

Very well. I felt good about all the interviews. It was kind of hard, then, because everything was out of my hands afterward and the waiting game began.

Changes:

Nothing.

Tips:

SLOW DOWN. When people get nervous they say things that might not sound quite the way they would have wanted them to. Relax and think about your answers before the interview and once the question has been asked. THINK before you SPEAK.

Additional Comments:

Be yourself. Be confident -- you've done everything you'll need to.

Make sure you've been adequately involved and that you have fulfilled all the requirements as well as the "suggestions" to make yourself well-rounded.