

University of Iowa Medical School Interview

I was scheduled to be at the interview center at 9:00 a.m. Due to the forecasts of a snowstorm, I went down the night before so I could orient myself with the campus and be sure not to be caught in bad weather. I would highly suggest going the day before, because it will give you the chance to get a good night's sleep and not have to worry about traveling early in the morning. When I arrived, the admissions staff was very nice and showed me to the room where we would be waiting. There were only six people interviewing on my day, and we were able to talk to each other about a lot of things, like where we were applying and where we were from. There were four girls and two boys. Both of the men were wearing suits. One of the other girls was wearing a very short and not very professional skirt, which I would not suggest to other interviewees. Another girl and myself were in business suits, and the other girl was wearing a plain gray dress. I really think that it helps to dress professionally when going to an interview, because it not only lets the interviewers know that you are serious about attending their medical school, it also gets you in the right frame of mind for the day.

We listened to one of the admissions ladies tell us about the protocol for admission to the school and what our chances would be of getting in. (They figure about half of all residents who are interviewed will get in, either through rolling admissions, the final pool, or the list of alternates.) When she was done, a financial aid counselor came over and talked to us about financing a medical education. She was very quick to remind us that we would be POOR for at least a few years and to be careful with credit cards and spending money.

These presentations went a little long, so we didn't get a break before our interviews started. This was unfortunate for me, because I was the first to be taken to my interview room and didn't have time to collect my thoughts and go over the key points I wanted to make. I was interviewed by two doctors at the school, a pediatrician and an ophthalmologist. They were both very nice, and we made some small talk before the interview began. We even joked a little bit about the unbelievably musty smell of the room we were in. After we were introduced, they asked the famous five questions:

- 1) Why do you want to be a doctor?
- 2) What personal qualities do you have that you feel will make you a good physician?
- 3) Tell us about a time you showed compassion.
- 4) Tell us about a time you were struggling and needed to ask for help.
- 5) What do you do to relieve stress?

I went in with only a general idea of the points I wanted to make in my answers to these questions, because I felt that a rehearsed answer wouldn't help them get a good feel about who I am. They didn't give me any feedback or questions about things I said, but I think both of them were nodding and the pediatrician would smile at me from time to time. After these questions were done, we just talked about some general things. I asked them a few questions, and they asked me random things about topics I had spoken about, like whom my favorite author was and if there were any really positive or negative things about my time at Wartburg. We also talked about highway construction and my hometown. You'll never know what they are going to ask. I was kind of expecting a current events question about some aspect of medicine, but there wasn't one. Another girl was asked what she believed three main problems would be that she would have to face after medical school, so be prepared! The rest of the day was fun. We had a tour

and lunch from the Hungry Hobo. Because students at the college next year will have an entirely new building, our tour was limited to a few labs and then a short tour of the hospital. They didn't feel there was any point to showing us something we wouldn't be using. Even though I was kind of rushed into my room, I would suggest having an early interview time, because it makes the day easier. There is nothing to worry about after the interview, just food, conversation, and a little walking.

My advice to you is just to relax and be yourself. Don't forget about eye contact, good posture, and handshakes! All of these things can make a big first impression. The people are all very nice, and the other students are in the same boat as you!

Good luck!