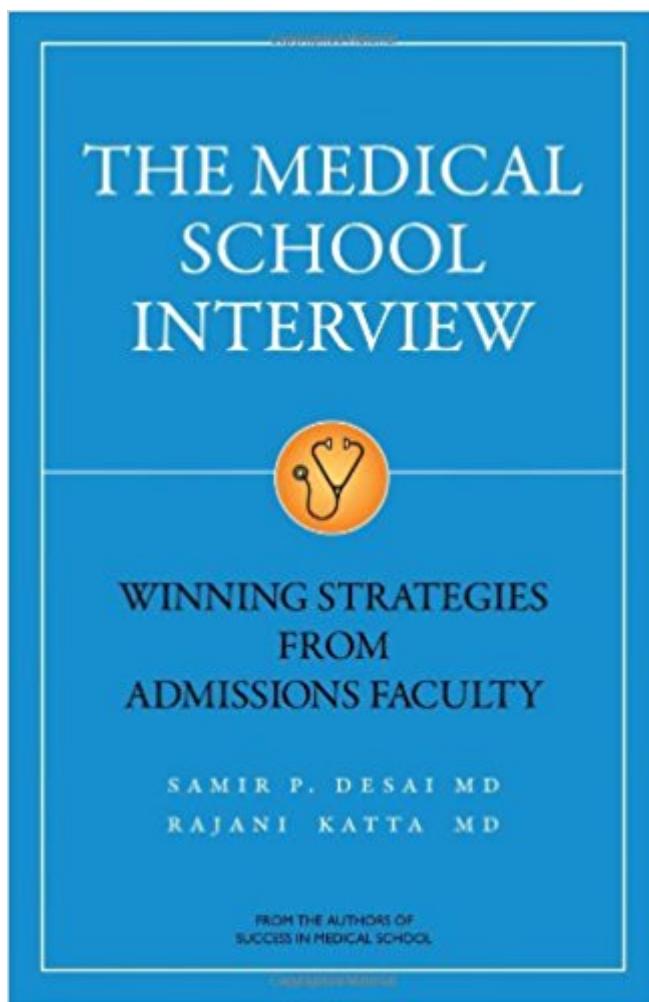


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# The Medical School Interview: Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty



## Synopsis

Did you know that the interview is the most important factor in admissions decisions? What can you do to achieve maximum success during the interview? In 2011, the AAMC published a survey that evaluated the importance of 12 variables on admissions decisions. These variables included total MCAT scores, science and math GPA, and the interview. The interview was rated the most important factor, receiving a score of 4.5 (scale of 1 [not important] to 5 [extremely important]). High GPA and MCAT scores do not guarantee admission. In the aforementioned study, approximately 8% of applicants with undergraduate GPAs and total MCAT scores of at least 3.8 and 39, respectively, failed to gain admission. As you can see, the interview is never just a formality. It can absolutely make or break your chances of acceptance. Consider the following: "The interview is an important and integral part of the selection process," writes the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "Faculty interviews with critical evaluations are the only method...for the assessment of the important nonacademic attributes..." writes the Penn State College of Medicine. "The Selection Committee places great importance on these evaluations in making decisions on admission." "High grades and/or MCAT scores alone are never enough," writes the LSU Shreveport School of Medicine. "For those interviewed, impressions from the personal interview are exceedingly important." What does it take to impress a medical school interviewer? We review the data on the decision-makers. What do these interviewers care about? We review the data on the criteria that matter to them? How can you convince them that you would be the right "fit" for their school? We provide concrete, practical recommendations based on this data. Our recommendations are based on data from a full spectrum of sources. We have scoured the research on medical school admissions and discussed the interview process with deans and admissions committee members to give you the detailed information needed to deliver compelling answers to interview questions. How can you best prepare for the MMI, group interview, panel interview, and behavioral interview? What qualities would make applicants less likely to be admitted? What personal qualities are most valued by admissions faculty? In our book, you'll find the answers to these questions and much more. Learn how to develop the optimal strategy for interview success and gain that extra edge. Note: This book provides an overview of the MMI. For applicants seeking detailed guidance for the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI), please see our book *Multiple Mini Interview: Winning Strategies From Admissions Faculty.*

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Either way, this is an extremely thorough handbook, covering the questions applicants are likely to be asked and the appropriate and inappropriate answers...likely to be found indispensable by readers embarking on the arduous process of applying to medical school."- Kirkus Reviews

**Q & A with Dr. Samir Desai**  
Why did you write this book? Having served on the medical school admissions committee for years, I've been amazed at the quality of today's applicants. I'm not alone in the way that I feel. At conferences and meetings, I often interact with admissions officials all across the country. When we get together, many of us wonder if we would get into medical school today. "I can't believe how much she's done," is something I hear time and time again from my colleagues. The sad reality, though, is that sometimes stars on paper are less than impressive in person. The medical school interview is a high stakes situation, and the pressure of the situation can easily make talented applicants appear lacking in one or more ways. It's always been upsetting to me to see worthy applicants who have so much to offer our profession denied that chance because of a poor interview performance. That's what led me to write this book - to give you insider information that you can use to elevate your interview performance, and leave the interviewer with a powerful impression. An impression that makes the interviewer return to the admissions committee to say, "I interviewed 5 applicants today but Applicant X was by and far the best. I would love to see her at our school." I want you to be Applicant X. That's why I have created this incredibly detailed book chock full of powerful strategies. What else is important to know about this book? I didn't want this book just to

be the opinion of one or two authors. That's why I exhaustively researched the field to provide you with the evidence that supports our recommendations. Of course, not every aspect of the medical school interview has been researched. When research was lacking, I reached out to admissions directors, deans, and interviewers to share with you their perspectives. Inside this book, you will find 182 quotes and comments from admissions officials. How can this book specifically help me deliver a compelling interview performance? Inside, you will: Learn about the goals of the interviewer, and how you can meet them. Discover the qualities interviewers are seeking, and how can demonstrate them. Avoid demonstrating qualities that may harm your chances of admission, some of which are surprisingly easy to make. Find ways to show your motivation for a career in medicine, an important part of your overall interview score. Avoid common pitfalls and traps in answering the question "Why do you want to be a doctor?" Be able to discuss your commitment to service in a way that resonates with the interviewer. Learn how to present yourself as a "good fit" for the school. See how to demonstrate personal maturity through your answers. Benefit from our list of common ethical dilemmas asked of medical school applicants, and an approach to answering these questions. Learn how to properly research a medical school and use the information to elevate your performance. Discover how to stand out in different interview formats, including the traditional, group, panel, behavioral, and multiple mini interview (MMI). Note that this book provides an overview of the MMI. See our companion book "Multiple Mini Interview: Winning Strategies from Admissions Faculty" for detailed strategies for success. Identify ways to address red flags in your application (low grades, low MCAT scores, leave of absence, issues with professionalism, institutional action, significant time gaps). Determine how to shine at the beginning, during the body, and at the end of the interview. Know what to do if you don't know the answer to a question. Avoid asking the "wrong" questions. Discover ways to answer illegal or inappropriate questions. Know what to do after the interview to maximize your chances of an offer. See how to increase your chances of securing a position from the waitlist. Find tips and strategies for the osteopathic interview. And much more! Are there any samples answers to commonly asked interview questions? We devote an entire chapter on how to answer interview questions. This chapter includes case studies of medical school applicants. A sample answer is offered and this is followed by a discussion of how the applicant could have answered the question better. Then we utilize these discussion points to show you the better answer.  What other interview resources do you offer? In our "Success in Medicine" podcast (co-hosted by Dr. Samir Desai and Dr. Rajani Katta), we offer very specific medical school tips and strategies for different medical schools. You can access the free podcast at iTunes and Google Play. Recent podcasts have included approaches to

answering and sample answers for the following medical school interview questions:What discovery do you think has had the greatest impact on medicine? (See June 18 Podcast - UT Houston Medical School Interview Tips)Ethical scenarios involving Jehovah's Witness patient needing blood transfusion (See June 8 Podcast - UT San Antonio Medical School Interview Tips)Avoiding common pitfalls in answering the question, "What do you like to do for fun?" (See June 11 Podcast - UT Southwestern Medical School Interview Tips)With more episodes on interview questions being added every few days!Â In closing, I would like to wish you the best of luck in your medical school interviews. Feel free to contact me with any questions.Â Â

I am a health communication professor and I work closely with the university's premed program. I sometimes do trainings prepping the students for their med school interviews and many of my students have been successfully admitted to med school. I have found this book, along withÂ Multiple Mini Interview (MMI): Winning Strategies from Admissions FacultyÂ to be the 2 essential books of prepping for med school. The best thing you can do for yourself is buying these 2 books, reading them thoroughly, and practicing more than once. Start with the general one, and spend some serious time on it. Don't skip the 'why do you want to be a doctor' and 'what is professionalism' sections, they are gold! Then if you are informed that you will have an MMI, go ahead and read the other one. If you won't have an MMI, I would still consider browsing through it because it gives you interesting ethical questions to think on, which should get your medical communication juices flowing and ready for an interview!As someone who helps train prospective med school students, I want to emphasize that whatever book you buy, you need to practice. Practice out loud and hopefully to another person who is listening to you and providing feedback.

I HIGHLY recommend this book for all medical school applicants. It is well researched and very comprehensive. I found it to be much more helpful than any of the other books or websites that I studied in preparation for my interviews. The authors obviously put a lot of work into the book-I was amazed at the depth and breadth of the author's research. The authors almost continuously cite medical school admissions committees as their source of information. The Medical School Interview covers everything you need to do after being invited to interview, from interview preparation to interview day and beyond. It includes common interview questions and also discusses the different types of interview formats. Most importantly, there is an emphasis on making your answers unique; there are a lot of highly qualified applicants out there, so making your answers distinct and memorable is critical.The book serves as a companion to several other medical school preparation

services provided by the authors. After I read the book, I decided to sign up for a mock interview session with one of the authors, Dr. Desai. Dr. Desai came to the session much more prepared than I expected, he had researched the schools I was preparing to interview at and had studied my application material. I felt much more confident going into my interviews after my prep session with Dr. Desai. In short, definitely purchase the book before you begin interviewing for medical schools. And, seriously consider utilizing the other services and books the authors offer. More information about the book, the authors, and other services can be found at

<http://www.thesuccessfulmatch.com/> \*\*UPDATE\*\* I was just accepted to a Top 5 medical school program! I believe that I was qualified for the medical schools I interviewed at, but not fully prepared to convey my qualifications. Studying The Medical School Interview and utilizing the coaching services offered helped me best present my qualifications to the admissions committee, with amazing results I might add :). Considering the results, this might be the best 20 bucks I have ever spent. **BUY THE BOOK**

This book and Dr. Desai gave me the confidence and clarity I needed going into my medical school interview. I had 2 MMI and one classical style interview. I can almost honestly say that I would not have gotten in without the advice. Plain and simple the guy knows what he is talking about from years of experience one being on an admissions committee, two speaking personally with other admissions committee members at numerous schools and getting the inside scoop on what they are looking for and what makes them tick, and third speaking and working with so many other applicants just like you, polishing their interview styles and seeing what succeeds and what does not first hand. Plain and simple it would be unwise to go into your interview without tapping into this book or contacting Dr. Desai himself. Thank you Dr. Desai.

This book is a **MUST** read before any traditional interview. I just finished a couple of interviews - I can say definitively that the advice in this book transformed the way in which I present myself. I learned how to frame my responses to set myself apart from the hundreds of other interviewees under consideration (after all, we are much more alike than we are different!). The book presents very helpful tips on the full scope of the interview - what to wear, mannerisms, how to handle small talk, how to present yourself and your experiences, common pitfalls to avoid, and much more. It also shares the perspectives of admissions faculty, which trained me to imagine how the interviewer would respond to my answers. I highly recommend this book!

This book was essential to my success in medical school interviews. I've recently completed multiple interviews and the knowledge and information in this book helped me feel prepared and confident walking into the interview room. The book is well organized, has insightful tips from multiple admissions experts, and provides you with the knowledge to polish your responses and craft specific and insightful answers to almost every interview question you might ever be asked. I have recommended this book to all of my peers who are going through interviews now and would recommend it to anyone else who wants to ensure that they don't sound like every other applicant.

I was recently accepted to my dream medical school and was informed by the dean that I scored nearly perfect on the interview. I can 100% thank this book, and the MMI version by Dr. Desai. Quick read, super thought-provoking, and incredibly helpful. 10/10 would recommend to anyone preparing for the medical school interview!

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