

Common Residency Interview Questions

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Homework – before you answer questions...

- A. Review your application and CV
- B. List your strengths, accomplishments, abilities
 - a. Be prepared to address any red flags on your application (*failed steps, low grades, bad dean's letter.*)
- C. Identify 5 key things that you want every program to know by the time you leave your interview.

Common Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself. How would your friends describe you?
2. Why did you become a doctor?
3. Why did you choose to apply to this specialty? Why did you choose to apply to our program?
4. List three abilities that you have that will make you valuable as a resident in (*specialty*).
5. What do you feel you could add to our program?
6. Tell me something that you have learned about yourself during medical school.
7. Where else did you apply? (*you don't have to answer this with names*)
8. What are your interests outside of medicine? If you couldn't be a doctor, what else what you do?
9. What do you do to cope with stress? What do you do for fun?
10. What did you do before medicine? (*if you are older*)
11. Do you see any problems managing a personal and a professional life?
12. How well do you handle criticism?
13. What would you say are your major strengths? Weaknesses? (*what you say, is not as important as HOW you say it... the interviewer wants to know how well you know yourself, give a CONCRETE example of each*)
14. Why did you choose this specialty? Why are you so sure (*specialty*) is right for you?
15. Do you have any publications or active areas of research? Are you interested in research?
16. What was the most interesting case that you have been involved in?
17. What was your favorite course in medical school?
18. Present a case that you handled in medical school. (*have a case... know it, keep it simple, don't give yourself no credit or all credit...*)
19. What are your long-term goals? Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?
20. Do you plan to do a fellowship?
21. What are you looking for in a training program?
22. What will you do if you don't match in (*specialty*)?
23. What is your visa status? (*if applicable*)
24. Describe a difficult time in your life and how you dealt with it.
25. Have you held any leadership roles?
26. What is your class rank?

27. What would you like to know about our program?
28. What factors would lead you to rank a program very highly?
29. What factors would lead you to lower your ranking of a program?
30. What challenges do you foresee that will potentially affect this specialty in the next five to ten years?
31. Are you interested in academic or clinical medicine?
32. Describe the best and worst attendings that you have ever worked with.
33. What is the greatest sacrifice that you have made to get to where you are?
34. What is the one event you are proudest of in your life?

Tough Questions:

1. We have many good applicants. Why should we choose you?
2. Tell me about your experience with the USMLE exam(s)? *(if you have so-so score(s) or failed attempts)*
3. Describe the most difficult decision you have ever had to make. How did you go about it?
4. Describe the worst or most disappointing clinical experience you've had so far.
5. Do you have any beliefs or convictions that might interfere with your willingness to deal with the kind of clinical situations you are likely to be presented with in residency training? *(Usually asked if program director fears religious beliefs may prevent applicant from performing abortions, birth control, etc.)*
6. What kind of patient do you find it most difficult to relate to? What tactics would you use to establish optimal rapport with such a patient?
7. What kind of personality traits do you find most difficult to deal with in co-workers? *(everyone has a personality type that annoys them, but we have to learn how to manage our prejudices and always maintain professionalism.)*
8. What questions do you have for me? *(you must have a question, NOT salary, benefits, vacation, etc. You will want to ask, find the information another way.)*

Illegal questions:

The interviewer is not typically malicious, usually just ignorant. Keep that in mind, and try not to be too aggressive if asked any of these questions, most likely you won't be...

Anything about your sexuality, race, ethnicity.

Anything about a disability or medical problem not entered by you in your application *(if you put your fight with cancer in your PS, then it is open for comment)*.

Desire to have a family, getting pregnant, are you pregnant. *(If you are obviously pregnant then you might want to discuss it, otherwise cover with clothes and jackets.)*

What other programs you are applying to.

Questions to ask the Residents:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
2. Would you consider the same program if applying again?

3. Is there an appropriate balance between service obligations and the educational program?
4. Is there enough ancillary support to minimize "scut?"
5. What has changed since you came to the program?
6. Is the program responsive to suggestions for change?
7. How accessible is the faculty?
8. Is the relationship with faculty collegial?
9. Do the residents get along with one another?
10. How do your residents get along with residents in other programs?
11. In what activities are you involved outside of the program?
12. How does your spouse/significant other like the city/area?

Bibliography:

www.kaptest.com

<http://www.ama-assn.org>

<http://www.med.upenn.edu/student/documents/PSOMGuidetoResidencyClassof2014.pdf>

AAMC's Organization of Resident Representatives