

31 Questions I Wish I Had Asked

Medical schools, like individuals, are very different—in their philosophies, faculties, curricula, and the type of students they attract. Consequently, selecting the "best" medical school for you can be very challenging. The following set of questions was compiled by medical students from across the country to assist you in evaluating the schools you will visit. This list is by no means complete; it was designed to serve as a base for your own questions. Keep in mind that the interview represents a wonderful time for **you** to learn, so don't be shy about asking **anyone** your questions. Congratulations on your career choice and good luck with interviews!

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1. Are there any special programs for which this medical school is noted?

Curriculum

2. Describe this school's curriculum in the pre-clinical and clinical years. Are there any innovations, like Problem-Based Learning?
3. Are there opportunities for students to design, conduct, and publish their own research?
4. Is there a note-taking service? If so, is it University-run or student-run?
5. Is there flexibility in the coursework (the number of electives) and the timing of the courses (accelerating, decelerating, and time off) during the pre-clinical and clinical years?
6. Has this medical school, or any of its clinical departments, been on probation or had its accreditation revoked?
7. How do students from this medical school perform on the National Board Examinations? How does the school assist students who do not pass?

Evaluations

8. How are students evaluated academically? How are clinical evaluations performed?
9. Is there a formal mechanism in place for students to evaluate their professors and attending physicians? What changes have been made recently as a result of this feedback?

Counseling/Student Support

10. What kind of academic, personal, financial, and career counseling is available to students? Are these services also offered to their spouses and dependents/children?
11. Is there a mentor/advisor system? Who are the advisors—faculty members, other students, or both?
12. How diverse is the student body? Are there support services or organizations for ethnic minorities and women?

Facilities

13. Tell me about the library and extracurricular facilities (i.e., housing and athletic/recreational facilities).

14. Are there computer facilities available to students? Are they integrated into the curriculum/learning?
15. What type of clinical sites—ambulatory, private preceptors, private hospitals, rural settings— are available or required for clerkships? Does this school allow for students to do rotations at other institutions or internationally?
16. Is a car necessary for clinical rotations? Is parking a problem?

Financial Aid

17. What is the current tuition and fees? Is this expected to increase yearly? If so, at what rate?
18. Are there stable levels of federal financial aid and substantial amounts of university/medical school endowment aid available to students?
19. Are there students who have an "unmet need" factor in their budget? If so, where do these students come up with the extra funds?
20. Are spouses and dependents/children covered in a student's budget?
21. Is someone available to assist students with budgeting and financial planning?
22. Does this school provide guidance to its students, and to its graduates/alumni, on debt management?

Student Involvement

23. What medical school committees (e.g., curriculum committee) have student representation?
24. Are students involved in (required or voluntary) community service?
25. How active is the Student Council/Government? Are there other student organizations?

Policies

26. Is there an established protocol for dealing with student exposure to infectious diseases? Is disability insurance provided to cover this exposure?
27. Does this school provide, or does the student pay for, vaccinations against Hepatitis B or prophylactic AZT treatment in case of a needle-stick or accident?
28. Is there a school Honor Code? Is there a grievance process/procedure? Are the students involved?

Residency

29. May I see a list of residency programs to which this school's recent graduates were accepted?

Questions to Ask Yourself

30. Does this school have strengths in the type of medicine (primary versus specialized care, urban versus rural practice environment, academic medicine versus private practice) that I will want to practice?
31. Would I be happy at this school (for at least the next four years)?