

Virtual Interview Primer
Lessons from University of Utah CT Surgery Program

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Definitions

✧ A virtual interview, also known as digital or video interview, allows people to conduct an interview with digital technology.

- Types

- One-Way: Employer sends a list of questions to the candidate. The candidate then uses video software to record answers to the questions, and sends back to the employer for their assessment.
- Two-Way: Live interview of the candidate is conducted online in real-time using video conferencing software (eg. Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, ezTalks Cloud Meeting, etc)

Benefits

- Time and Cost Saving (cutting the cost of travel)
- Access of talent across the globe

DRAWBACKS

- Change to MedEd Culture of interviews
- Applicant's limitation on socializing with staff, other trainees

One-Way Interview

- AAMC has a guide for conducting one-way interviews

**Using AAMC Standardized
Video Interview Scores in
Residency Selection: A
Resource Guide**



The AAMC Standardized Video Interview is an innovative tool designed to assess *Knowledge of Professional Behaviors (Professionalism)* and *Interpersonal and Communication Skills*, two of the six core Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) competencies that have been identified as required for success as a resident and in future practice.

The purpose of the AAMC Standardized Video Interview is to provide objective, standardized information about applicants' proficiency levels on two critical competencies that will help programs:

- identify and consider relevant nonacademic information about applicants that may not be easily retrieved elsewhere in the ERAS application
- widen the pool of applicants invited to interview in person, including those who might not have otherwise been considered for an in-person interview
- finalize the selection of applicants

Interview Format

The Standardized Video Interview is an online, unidirectional interview. Questions are presented in text prompts, and applicants record an audio/video response; there is no human interviewer. Applicants can complete the interview using any internet-enabled computer, tablet, or smartphone.

The interview consists of six questions and is a combination of:

- *behavioral* questions, in which applicants are asked to draw on or describe previous experiences to demonstrate their level of knowledge and skills in the competencies assessed
- *hypothetical* questions, in which applicants are asked to describe what they would do or believe they should do in response to different hypothetical situations

Applicants have up to 30 seconds to read and reflect on each written question and up to three minutes to record a response.

Applicants can complete an unlimited number of practice questions before starting the video interview.

Applicants can complete the interview in a location and time most convenient for them.

Interview Content

While every applicant's video interview assesses the same two competencies—*Interpersonal and Communication Skills* and *Knowledge of Professional Behaviors*—the specific questions asked may differ.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills	
Definition	<p>Being able to demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals.</p> <p>This includes the following subcompetencies¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral Communication• Emotional Intelligence• Teamwork and Leadership
Example questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have you handled dealing with some of your more challenging patients? What specific actions did you take? What was the outcome?• Give an example of a time when you were successful in communicating a difficult message. What was the message? How did you communicate it? What was the outcome?

Knowledge of Professional Behaviors (Professionalism)	
Definition	<p>Being able to demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles.</p> <p>This includes the following subcompetencies¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy and Altruism• Ethics• Cultural Competence• Conscientiousness
Example questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of your patients refuses treatment because it is incompatible with the patient's religious beliefs. How would you handle the situation?• Describe a time when you noticed a mistake or an error that had been made. How did you identify this mistake or error, and what action did you take?

Part 2: AAMC Standardized Video Interview Scores

Rating Scale

Applicants' responses to each of the six questions are rated on a 5-point rating scale. Two ratings scales – one for each competency – were created. As shown in the figure below, the rating scale ranges from a low of 1 to a high of 5. Each point (or proficiency level) on the rating scale is anchored by example behaviors (not shown) that were vetted by emergency medicine faculty and define each point on the rating scale.

1 = Rudimentary*	2 = Basic**	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Exemplary
Is not likely to be successful in tasks that require this competency	Applies the competency in simple or limited number of situations	Applies the competency in common situations	Demonstrates proficiency in difficult situations	Demonstrates proficiency in considerably difficult situations

**Ratings of “1” may also indicate that the applicant did not answer the question.*

Standardized Video Interview Total Score

Applicants receive a total score from the AAMC Standardized Video Interview. Ratings from each question are combined to create a total score that ranges from 6 to 30.



Total Score Categories	On average, applicants in this score range:
6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not apply the competencies• Are not likely to be effective in situations that require these competencies
12-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply the competencies in a limited number of situations• Are aware but not able to act independently• Are likely to be somewhat effective in situations that require these competencies
18-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply the competencies in common or difficult situations• Take (effective) action independently• Are likely to be effective in situations that require these competencies
24-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply the competency in complex situations• Take action and consider long-term or systems implications independently• Are likely to be very effective in situations that require these competencies

Interpret Scores in Context

Standardized Video Interview scores are only one piece of information and should be interpreted in the context of the complete application. Think about how video interview scores compare to information that is relevant to *Interpersonal and Communication Skills* and *Knowledge of Professionalism* from the Standard Letter of Evaluation (SLOE), Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), ERAS application, and eventually the in-person interview. Triangulating information about the applicant will give you a more complete picture of his/her level of proficiency on the competencies.

Do Not Over-Interpret Small Total Score Differences

As with scores from other assessments, Standardized Video Interview scores are not perfectly precise. Therefore it is important to avoid the temptation to over-interpret small total score differences between applicants.

Create a Standardized and Fair Process

Create a standardized process to ensure that applicants are treated fairly.

- Do not rescore the videos as that undermines the purpose of the video interview score
- If you choose to watch videos, a fair process would involve watching them at the same point in the process and for all applicants

TWO-WAY INTERVIEWS

Two-Way Interview

- Live interview of the candidate is conducted online in real-time using video conferencing software (Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, etc)

Prior to Interview Day

- Best Practices:
 - Implicit Bias Training for Faculty
 - Consider use of Standardized questions
 - A priori selection of questions and standardized answer key
 - Make sure all Faculty and Staff are familiar with Software to be used on Interview Day

Agenda

- Program Director Presentation
 - Brief History of Program
 - ACGME Accreditation status
 - Graduate track record (Academics vs Community job; Board pass rates)
 - Case Numbers (Program, Trainee)
 - Unique aspects of the program (rotation sites, etc)
 - City/Town Highlights
- Structured Interview Questions
 - Consider use of Standardized questions for all applicants

Structured Interview

- A structured interview is a process established by Faculty in which all candidates are asked the same predetermined questions in the same order. Your team will rate each candidate using a standardized scoring system.
 - Note: This should not be the only criteria used for candidate selection. It should ideally be used as one component of a holistic review
- ✓ Holistic Review
 - Refers to mission-aligned selection process that considers a broad range of factors - experiences, attributes, and academic metrics – when reviewing applicants
 - An integrated holistic process helps to ensure that your selection process is mission- and evidence-based, promotes diversity, and uses a balance of experiences, attributes and academic metrics.

Standardized Questions References

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Acad Med. 2019 Oct;94(10):1489-1497. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000002705.

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Bird SB¹, Hern HG, Blomkalns A, Deiorio NM, Haywood Y, Hiller KM, Dunleavy D, Dowd K.

Am J Surg. 2016 Feb;211(2):476-481.e3. doi: 10.1016/j.amjsurg.2015.10.003. Epub 2015 Nov 11.

General surgery residency interviews: are we following best practices?

Kim RH¹, Gilbert T², Suh S³, Miller JK⁴, Eggerstedt JM².

Standardized Questions (U of Utah Method)

- Pick 6 areas of importance to your faculty
 - 3 Paired Faculty ask questions
 - 2 questions per Faculty pair (6 total questions)
 - Faculty will ask all candidates the standardized questions; if time permits, then can expand and ask any other questions they wish to ask
- Design questions where there is not just one correct answer
- Identify ahead of time how your faculty will score the answers to the questions (Answer Key with Scoring Guide)

Standardized Questions

Situational Stress Tolerance

Definition: To Think clearly and take effective action in stressful or emergency situations; to take control of a stressful situation and calm others; to tolerate stressful circumstances

Tell us about a bad complication you had during general surgery residency and what you did about it. (After allowing them to describe the situation/details, ask follow-up questions).

How did you interact with the family on this scenario?
How does your conversation change as a resident vs. an Attending?

Interpersonal Stress Tolerance

Definition: to maintain self-control, diplomacy and tact when others are belligerent, confrontational or violent

Describe to us an example of working with a difficult person you had to deal with at work, and tell us how you handled your interactions with that person. (After allowing them to describe the details, ask follow-up question).

Reflecting on this experience, what would you say best describes your leadership style?

Standardized Questions

Objectivity

Definition: To be open minded about alternatives and others points of view; to be free of bias; to treat every person fairly and impartially without letting personal feelings interfere; to work effectively with a diverse group of people.

Who is your hero? Why do you admire him/her so much? (Allow them to describe who it is and the ideal traits).

That's interesting, but most people would disagree with you. What do you tell people who think poorly of this person?

(assess how they respond when you don't agree with their choice; assess whether they can remain objective)

Compassion

Definition: To understand others' needs and feelings; to treat others with courtesy and respect to demonstrate concern for others to have a genuine interest in people and their welfare.

What accomplishment are you most proud of so far in your career? Was this accomplishment made possible by others?

Did the achievement rub anyone the wrong way, and how did you deal with that?

Standardized Questions

Discretion

Definition: To respect confidentiality of information; to discuss sensitive subjects with tact and diplomacy

Hypothetically, if a friend of yours is an anesthesia resident in the same program and you found out that she was taking drugs, how would you confront the situation?

Would you report her to her Program Director? What if your actions led to the loss of your friendship?

Dutifulness and Integrity

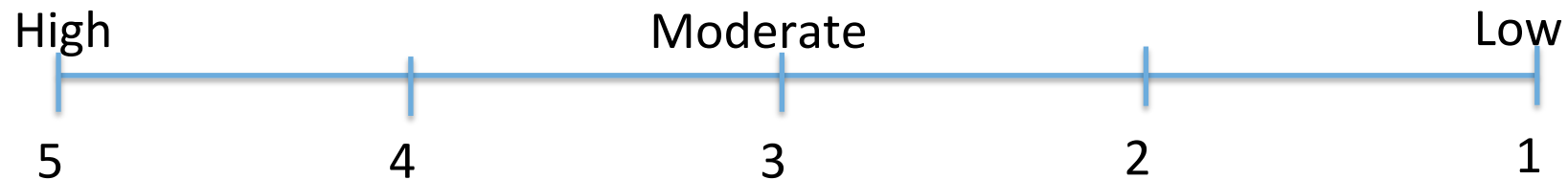
Definition: Dutifulness - To accept authority and follow orders; to obey laws both on and off duty; to be trustworthy

Integrity – to be honest and do what is right and ethical

You are in the operating room with a junior Attending performing a CABG. You have worked the past month with the Division Chief who performs anastomoses in a set method with lots of success. You see the Junior Attending struggling with both teaching and performing his method of technique. How do you respond to this situation?

During the subsequent M&M discussion, there is a heated exchange between the Division Chief and Junior Attending about technique. The Division Chief turns to you for an opinion. What do you say?

Scoring Key



Dimension 1 – Composure/ Frustration

Remained calm throughout, even during difficult interactions

May have become frustrated, but regained composure

Became frustrated with little or no provocation during interaction; copped an attitude that this line of questioning was beneath them

Score:

Dimension 2 – Pace

Quickly worked through the scenario; logical thinking

Took a little time to get through scenario, but was overall not too bad in dealing with the situation

Was not able to answer the question; or candidate says that this has never happened to him/her (avoiding)

Dimension 3 – Perspective

Balanced perspective; was able to outline rationale of thought; detailed answers

Able to get through scenario with some prompting; some level of details given

Abrupt answer; Single point of view

Additional Comments:

Total Score:

Virtual Interview Tips

1. Test your technology ahead of time
2. Set the scene & minimize distractions
3. Sit down prepared
4. Monitor your body language
5. Dress the part
6. Make the effort to make a connection
7. Be yourself
8. Immediately follow up



**Harvard Business
School Online**

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**9 TIPS FOR MASTERING YOUR NEXT VIRTUAL
INTERVIEW**

Lauren Landry |  Staff

 Career Development

<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/virtual-interview-tips>

Additional Tips

- Have applicant's cell phone number handy in case of any Technology issues
 - Consider having IT help on interview day (i.e. do not just rely on Faculty members)
- After conclusion of interviews, offer opportunities for follow-up conversations with Program Director, Select Faculty, or with trainees

Thank You!

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