

CSOM Graduates Interview Tips

Class of 2020 Interview tips (NOTE: LIVE interviews)

Internal Medicine

- Why IM? Any interest in subspecializing?
- “Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a team member (other medical student, nurse, attending, resident, etc)” - I was asked this question in regards to both the hospital setting and personal setting
- “Tell me about an interesting case”
- “Tell me about a time that you struggled to do something” - Can be personal or related to medicine
- “Why this program?” - this may be brought up at your “safety” programs
- “Do you think you’re mature enough at this age to be a doctor?” - I was personally never asked this, but it could be brought up because you are likely, on average, younger than most other applicants
- IM usually had two interviews 20-30min each. I found it rare to have 3 interviews on a given day. Some of the more prestigious programs may do panel interviews, but from talking to other applicants on the interview trail, that was rare for IM
- Be on time, dress professionally, be courteous to everyone (professionalism is one of the most important things on interviews).
- If applying IM, feel free to reach out to me (Raymond) about programs. I applied only in the NE/mid-atlantic. Dr. Saintonge has my contact info

Internal Medicine (Categorical)

- First off, congrats on getting to this very beautiful moment!!! I understand your interviews will not be in-person, however this advice would work despite where your encounter is for the day
- I could imagine finding a safe place, with good wifi, a quiet room, and a comfortable setting is being encouraged
- Logistics: Interview about 25-30 mins (am or pm), usually 2 (but I’ve had 1 and I’ve had 3), lunch, tour, resident and candidate question & answer period
- Being categorical, they definitely want to see how you fit into their program because you are here for 3 years, maybe more if you stay on as faculty or decide to go into fellowship.
- For each interview, even if the program is a safety, make sure to **stay engaged and curious about what they have to offer**, never let them feel that they are your safety.
- Something that helped me was having a **theme** for my whole IM residency interview experience. Pick about **3 characteristic traits** that no matter what question they ask you, you could connect back to these traits and provide an answer substantially, as to why you personally fit their program.
- When the program director (PD) asks if you have any questions, usually this is at the middle or end of the interview day, **always ask the PD a question**. It can be hard given so many residents in the program have already answered your questions, but try to have a prewritten question that only the PD could answer. I’ve overheard a PD say that they

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don't like when candidates don't have a question for them and say the phrase, "the residents already answered all of my questions."

- Hands down, being a categorical IM candidate, you will be asked again and again, **what are you interested in** (GI, rheum, cards, pulm/crit, hospitalist), it's definitely alright to not know now it's early, but sometimes they ask to see how you'll fit with the other interviewers on the day.
- But overall, stay calm, strong, and wonderful, you got to this moment for a reason! Please don't hesitate to contact me for any questions or concerns.
- Stormy Keppel

Neurosurgery

- Average number of interviewers in a day: 7-8 sets of interviews (most places I was interviewed with 2 interviewers at a time so in total I would be interviewed by like 16 different faculty in 1 day)
- Each interview was about 20-30 mins
- After interviews was usually lunch and the tour
- Interview day usually went from 7 am to 5 pm
- Common questions: Why neurosurgery? How do you handle stress? Greatest conflict? Greatest struggle in life? Strengths and weaknesses? Explain your research. Describe a time you made a mistake and how you handled it. Tell me something about you not on your application. Why should we choose you? What are you looking for in a program? What are you not looking for in a program? What can you contribute to the program? How do you plan to advance the world of neurosurgery? Most interesting case you've seen? Worst case you've seen? Are you prepared for the rigors of neurosurgery? What's the last book you read? What do you like about the program? How would you feel about leaving New York? Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What subspecialty of neurosurgery are you interested in?
- Know who Harvey Cushing is
- I've been asked about family and if I have a significant other (kind of weird)
- One interview I was given a case scenario and asked how I would handle the case (basically trying to assess my basic neurosurgical knowledge)
- Have questions prepared to ask the interviewer (whether it be the PD, one of the residents or a research faculty member)

Family Medicine

- ❖ "Why family medicine?" I think I was asked this at almost every single interview, so be ready to have a good answer. But don't be too rehearsed either.
- ❖ All the FM interviews I went to tended to be small groups, the smallest was 3 applicants for me, the largest was 12 applicants. There were also usually 3-5 interviews during the day. Usually at least one resident interview. (However this ranges too, I went to a program where I only had one interview)
 - I had one panel interview, and while I was intimidated at first, I took a couple of breaths and then enjoyed it. It is a special look into the dynamics of these team members, and it also saves your having to repeat the same things all day.

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- ❖ Be prepared with questions: if you really care about getting into a specific program, consider looking into the bios of potential interviewers at that program and try to ask questions you think would be best geared toward them (eg asking questions about research at the program to the faculty member who handles the research projects, or asking the head of the clinic about the clinic population)
- ❖ Interviews were typically 15-30 min.
- ❖ In FM I found that I was often interviewed by interdisciplinary staff, say by the clinic social worker or the clinic psychologist. So be prepared for questions for them and for questions from them, but also don't be intimidated: they are not psychologically assessing you....too much.
- ❖ Other common questions: "Tell me about a conflict when working with a group of people/A time you made a mistake/a challenging work situation..." Basically be prepared with some sort of example of group work, a challenge within group work, and how you resolved it.
- ❖ Also, be prepared to explain the transition of SDSBE-->CSOM, cause while I am sure many of my class explained it to many places, I'm sure they need to be told again and again for years to come. (If you are interviewing out of tristate, they likely will have no idea about any of it so do not worry too much.)
- ❖ Best of luck--you got this!!!

Class of 2021 Interview Tips (Note: Virtual Interviews)

General tips

- Have a nice background. It really sets the mood.
- Have a preset list of questions for when they ask “Do you have any questions for us?” → always have at least one question to ask even if you’ve asked it before to someone else
- Don’t be afraid to ask the hard/difficult/uncomfortable questions to programs
- If you have connections to the program (ex: a contact), bring it up
- You will get more honest answers when you talk to residents by themselves
- know your research and be able to talk about it in detail
- Be prepared to talk about anything that is on your CV/ERAS application
- some people asked about what you did during the covid break so prepare an answer
- Some programs are familiar with Sophie so be prepared to explain why you applied to Sophie
- it’s really hard to keep track of all the virtual interviews so after each interview write down all your feelings about the program, how the people you spoke made you feel, any concerns you had etc. it really helps when it comes time to rank
- good lighting! Get a ring light if you have to
- some people like to ask “tell me something about you that’s not on your CV” so have something ready
- speak loud and clear because zoom/webex can be annoying and they may miss something you said > consider investing in Bluetooth headphones
- Have some strengths ready but don’t sound arrogant or cocky. Good examples: team player, problem solver, adaptable
- also have weaknesses ready but don’t say things that don’t make you sound like a poor candidate; a good example is “I have limited experience in ... but I plan to resolve that by ...” or something to that effect
- think of some memorable patient interactions, write them down. I got some questions about the best/ worst patient interactions and why
- along the same lines write down some memorable moments from different clerkships; did the team work well together? Did they not work well? Why?
- some programs asked “teach me something” so be sure to think of something fun and memorable
- Ideally plan your fourth-year light around the Nov-Feb months as best you can.
- Schedule your interviews as early as possible in the season.
- Be prepared to explain gaps/red flags in your application in depth.
- Always have a future plan even if you don’t know what to do, i.e. I want to work urban vs rural or I am interested in research/teaching/private practice. It’s okay if your plans change as you go on the trail.
- for people who had to take a year off due to any academic related reason (step, prescription year etc.), be prepared to talk about what happened and how you have grown from that experience. be thoughtful about ways in which you’ve improved. talk about skills you have learned and how you will carry that into residency in order to be successful. no one wants to hear you just had a bad day or that something just happened they might think you lack personal

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insight. prepare what you are going to say and practice so you don't get emotional and it's easy when you do have to talk about it.

Anesthesiology

- Be yourself because there is a lot of down time in anesthesia and faculty wants to know if you can hold a conversation during those down times.
- Have "nonclassical" interview questions ready for reason above.
- May be outdated but they may ask you how you spent covid lockdown. It's okay to be normal and say Netflix too lol

Emergency Medicine

- Be yourself and be honest

Family Medicine

- Be friendly, a lot of the other interviewees are very approachable and genuine.
- Be up to date on current events and social issues
- Be prepared for clinical scenarios
Be prepared for behavioral medicine questions

Orthopedics

- Please reach out to me at: kmathew795@gmail.com (Kevin Mathew). We can try to arrange a time to talk over the phone.
- Some general tips:
 - When you are answering certain questions (such as is diversity important, why you are unique etc.) try to utilize a scenario or past experiences to shape your answer. Try to refrain from using generic statements.
 - I would recommend using the STAR technique when answering questions.
<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/whatisthestarinterviewresponsetechnique2061629>
 - Seek out the common interview questions and write out some bullet points on how you would answer them. Practice as much as you can so that when it is game time, you don't find yourself thinking too much about your answers.

Pediatrics

- Be prepared for ethics scenario questions (Cultural differences, anti vax, etc.)
- Pediatricians are extremely nice so relax, you'll be fine
- Think about why you're choosing peds vs adult medicine
- They want to know you can be a person outside of the hospital, so have a hobby you can talk about that you enjoy doing for fun

Psychiatry

- Be prepared for behavioral questions (ex. Tell me a time where you faced conflict and what did you get out of this situation? Tell me a time where you faced an ethical dilemma?)