



Practice Questions for PA School Interviews

The following list contains interview questions some of our applicants from the past have encountered. Questions can come up in any interview format (for example: one-on-one or multiple mini interview style).

Things to Keep in Mind:

- Interviewers may or may not have read your file. The interview may be very casual or semi-structured/scripted. In many cases you will have one interviewer but it's also possible that there will be multiple interviewers.
- Interviews can be with faculty, administrators, students, or outside constituents. Not all interviewers are on the admission committee.
- Be prepared to talk about anything from your transcript, work/activities list, and application essays. It's all fair game for interview questions.

Questions (most common questions are noted with an asterisk*):

Traits, Personal Qualities, Competencies, Strengths

- Tell me about yourself.*
- What has led you to this point?
- What is an accomplishment you are most proud of?
- If you had to send a friend here to interview and advocate on your behalf, who would you send, why, and what would they say about you?
- What is a question you would want us to ask, and what would be your answer?
- What's one misconception people may have of you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?*
- What makes you a competitive candidate?
- Tell me about a time when you surprised yourself?
- What is your greatest strength?

The PA Profession and/or your Professional Goals

- How does your experience prepare you to be a PA?*
- Why do you want to be a PA?*
- How did you get here?
- Explain your pathway to the PA profession.
- Why PA and not MD, PT, etc.?*
- Where do you see yourself in 5 (or 10, or 20) years as a PA?*
- What specialty do you see yourself leaning toward?
- If you didn't choose the PA profession, what career would you have chosen?*
- If you could choose any other career outside of healthcare, what would it be?

Knowledge of the PA Profession

- What is the most important tool in a PA's toolkit?
- What are some current issues impacting the PA profession?
- Where do you see the PA profession being in 5 years?
- What do you think are some of the challenges that healthcare workers will face in the coming years?
- Explain a typical day and the life of a practicing PA.
- What is your favorite thing about working in healthcare?
- What do you not like about healthcare?
- How can we ensure that patients feel comfortable with their providers?
- Do you think PA's should practice individually?
- Should PA school graduates be required to complete a residency? Why or why not?
- Why this school, this Mission, Etc.?
- What makes you interested in our program?*
- Why did you choose to apply to this program?
- Why this program in particular?
- why ___ program, why PA, etc.
- What aspects of our program's mission and values is most interesting to you?

Teamwork and Conflict

- Explain an instance where you had to deal with conflict or a misunderstanding (e.g., with a professor, boss, coworker, etc.)
- Do you recall a time when you did not agree with a professor? How did you handle the situation?
- Talk about a time where you had a disagreement with someone that you would now like to take back.
- Resilience, Adaptability, and Learning from Mistakes or Failures
- Have you experienced a setback or failure (personal, academic, financial)? How did you overcome it and what did you learn from it?*
- Discuss a time you were wrong/made a mistake and how you handled it.
- What do you think your biggest challenge will be in PA school?
- Tell me about a stressful time in your life?
- How do you handle criticism?

Your Academic Program

- What was your favorite non-science class in college and why?
- If you have been involved in research:
- Tell me more about your research.
- How has your research prepared you for a medical career?
- Can you name three key findings of your honors (or other) research project?
- Tell me why you chose the major(s) and/or minor(s) you did?
- Given that science and medicine are continually evolving, how are you prepared to be a life-long learner?

If applicable to your situation:

- Please explain the C you received in X class.
- Support, Managing Stress, What you do to Relax, Etc.
- Do you have a strong support system?
- Are you involved in any hobbies or sports? If so, what are they?
- How do you handle/manage stress?*
- Beyond school and/or work, what do you like to do for fun?

Dilemmas and Situational Judgement

- How would you handle a moral dilemma?
- You are working with an physician who is prescribing medication to a patient that has not been authorized by the FDA. Would you go along with the physician's judgement, or would you try to intervene in some way? Explain the reasons for your choices.
- What would you do if you did not agree with something the physician ordered?
- Tell us about a time you had a disagreement with a colleague in a work situation and how you handled it.
- How should medical practices and/or hospitals deal with patients who complain about a bad experience with a physician? What if you witnessed such a situation yourself—what would you do?

Diversity and Equity

- What can you bring to the table? What qualities do you have that will make you unique to our next entering class?
- Tell us what you will add to our program.
- What is a bias that you have? How have you become aware of this bias?

Interview Day

If you are accepted for an interview, many programs complete all-day interviews. Here's what you might expect: Interview day for a Physician Assistant (PA) program can be a rigorous and structured experience. Here's a breakdown of what students can typically expect:

Pre-Interview Logistics

- **Arrival & Check-In:** Programs may require students to arrive at least 15 minutes early for registration, ID verification, and a brief orientation.
- **Dress Code:** Business professional attire is expected.
- **Tech Check (for Virtual Interviews):** If the interview is online, applicants should test their camera, microphone, and internet connection in advance.

Common Interview Formats

PA programs use different interview styles. Here are the most common:

Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)

- Applicants rotate through different stations (usually 6–10), each with a new prompt or scenario (ethical dilemma, teamwork, patient interaction, etc.).
- Timed responses (typically 5–8 minutes per station).
- Assess critical thinking, communication, and ethical reasoning rather than memorized answers.

Traditional Panel or One-on-One Interview

- A panel (faculty, current PA students, practicing PAs) asks applicants a series of behavioral, ethical, and situational questions.
- Questions may focus on personal motivation, problem-solving, healthcare challenges, and experiences.

Group Interview

- Candidates discuss topics or case studies together while being observed by interviewers.
- Tests teamwork, leadership, and communication skills.

Components of Interview Day

Welcome Presentation – Overview of the PA program, faculty introductions, and expectations.

Campus Tour (if in-person) – Opportunity to see facilities, classrooms, and simulation labs.

Meet Current PA Students – Q&A session with current students about their experiences.

Scenario-Based Exercise – Writing sample or ethical case analysis.

Tips for a Successful Interview Day

- **Be prepared but not scripted** – Practice, but focus on answering naturally.
- **Stay professional and engaged** – Every interaction (even casual ones) is part of the evaluation.
- **Use the STAR method** – Answer behavioral questions with a structured response (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Use our [Interview Module](#) to learn more about the STAR method and prepare for interviews.
- **Ask thoughtful questions** – Have 2–3 questions ready for interviewers (e.g., “How does your program support students in clinical rotations?”).
- **Follow up** – Send a thank-you email within 24 hours to express appreciation and reiterate interest.