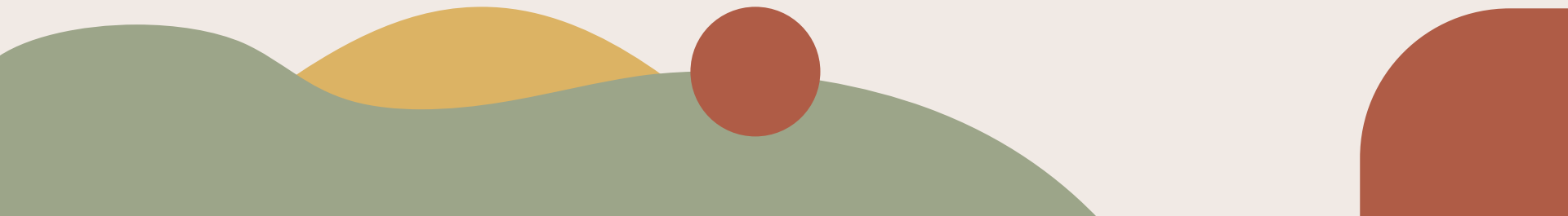


How to Ace Your Job Interview: Through the Eyes of a Clinician and Faculty

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Learning Objectives

- Discuss the factors contributing to the physician assistant employment interview being a source of stress and anxiety for PA students.
- Review and describe the numerous stages of preparation for the physician assistant interview, including pre-interview research, interview day etiquette and procedure, and post interview proceedings.
- Demonstrate competency in answering a wide range of potential interview questions via interactive role play with live feedback from the moderators.
- Develop improved confidence in interview preparation, interpersonal communication during the interview to improve your chances of nailing your dream job!

Interview Intimidation

- The formal job interview is a major source of intimidation and anxiety for the near graduation PA student or newly minted PA.
- Applying for employment and interviewing also correlates with major life events, such as studying for the PANCE, graduating PA school, moving, and more!
- The “grind” of your last semester of PA school leaves many students feeling overwhelmed and unprepared!

Lack of Experience

- By this time, you are likely an expert at answering medical questions on the fly, but have you thought about your future career? How you might contribute meaningfully to a practice?
- Do you have any idea what questions a potential employer might ask you?
- Physician assistant schools do their best to provide informational sessions about job openings and interviewing, but many times it is present on an end of rotation or call back day, where you are tired and overwhelmed!
- How many of you can relate?

From Intimidation to Confidence

- Today, we will give you all the tools you need to feel more prepared and less anxious for your PA job interviews!
- First, start by acknowledging how much you have accomplished!
- You are a highly marketable, talented provider who can care for patients at a high level!
- Remember how you sold yourself at your PA school interview?



Tips for Applying to Jobs

- One of the amazing things about being a PA is that you can work in a myriad of specialties
- However, when applying for jobs out of school you want to narrow your selection.
- You can achieve this by thinking about the following questions:
 - What did you learn about your talents and clinical preferences during your rotations?
 - List your success stories: achievements, moments of breakthrough, what made you feel joyful and effective in specific clerkships.
 - Consider valuable contacts made during your education.
 - In addition to specialty and setting, think carefully about what sort of schedule and commute you would ideally like to have to start out.

Tips for Applying to Jobs

- After carefully preparing and reviewing your resume and cover letter, read them as if they were being read by the particular employer you are trying to secure an interview with.
- How well do these documents describe my abilities, credentials, and accomplishments to date?
- Have you modified them (particularly the cover letter) to reflect the position and a skills of what the employer is desiring?
- Ask a friend or advisor you can trust for their opinion on your cover letter and resume.

EDUCATION:

June 2014 - June 2016

Master of Science – Physician Assistant Studies

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Carbondale, Illinois

Expected Graduation Date: August 6, 2016

Clinical Clerkship Rotations:

Cardiology	Prairie Cardiovascular/Memorial Medical Center
Colorectal Surgery	Springfield Clinic/Memorial Medical Center
Emergency Medicine	Memorial Medical Center
Family Medicine	Springfield Clinic
General Surgery	Springfield Clinic/Memorial Medical Center
Hematology/Oncology	SIU Healthcare/Memorial Medical Center
Internal Medicine	SIU Healthcare/Memorial Medical Center
Neurology	SIU Healthcare/Memorial Medical Center
OB/GYN	SIU Healthcare/HSHS St. John's Hospital
Orthopedic Surgery	Springfield Clinic/Memorial Medical Center
Pediatrics	Springfield Clinic
Psychiatry	HSHS St. John's Hospital/Memorial Medical Center
Pulmonology	SIU Healthcare/Memorial Medical Center
Urology	Springfield Clinic/Memorial Medical Center

Proficient in:

Airway management, endotracheal intubation, NG/OG tube placement, intraosseous infusion, suturing, wound care, local and region anesthesia, central line placement, chest tube placement, needle decompression, splinting and casting, joint injections of knee and shoulder, IV placement, lumbar puncture, cryotherapy, skin biopsy, abscess incision and drainage, nail removal, eye examination including Fluorescein stain and Wood's lamp, pelvic examination, spinal immobilization, and interpretation of EKGs

August 2011 - May 2013

Bachelor of Science – Biomedical Science*Magna Cum Laude, Dean's List All 4 Semesters*

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois

June 2009 - May 2011

Associate of Science – Biological Sciences*Summa Cum Laude, President's List All 4 Semesters*

Wabash Valley College, Mt. Carmel, Illinois

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE – PAST EMPLOYMENT:

May 2013 - May 2014

Histology Technician – Heartland Regional Medical Center - Marion, Illinois

- Performed in assistance of grossing tissue samples
- Laboratory techniques of embedding, slicing, mounting, and staining tissue specimens

August 2011 - May 2014

Standardized Patient – Southern Illinois University School of Medicine – Carbondale, Illinois

- Worked with the first year medical and physician assistant students as an individual the students tested and applied their clinical examination skills on during professional school examinations

August 2011 – May 2013

Undergraduate Researcher - Southern Illinois University School of Medicine - Carbondale, Illinois

- Laboratory research to elucidate mechanisms underlying the rapid resolution of diabetes following obesity surgery
- Skilled in glucose titer testing, RNA isolation, cDNA synthesis, polymerase chain reaction, and ileal interposition surgery on rodent surgical models

June 2009 – July 2011

Biological Sciences Laboratory Assistant – Wabash Valley College – Mt. Carmel, Illinois

- Laboratory techniques of making agar plates, tubes, slants, and various broth cultures
- Laboratory techniques of creating various bacterial cultures aseptically
- Responsibilities of preparing and setting up the microbiology department's laboratory experiments
- Performed full human cadaver dissection and the set-up of practicum for human anatomy students

ACTIVITIES & LEADERSHIP:

2016

Healthcare Volunteer

- Performed free sports physicals for high school and grade school students in Springfield, Illinois

2016

Peer Mentoring

- Actively served as a mentor to first-year Physician Assistant Students
- Mentored / Instructed future health professionals in the Health Professions Class at Carbondale High School

2015

College Committee on Admissions Student Representative

- Screened Applications for Admission to Physician Assistant Program
- Performed question and answer sessions with applicants before interviews

2015

Cobden Migrant Camp

- Hosted a Food and Supply Drive for Cobden Migrant Camp

2015

Good Samaritan House of Carbondale

- Hosted Food and Supply Drive
- Performed Blood Pressure Examinations for Residents

2015

Head Start Program

- Hosted Doll Clinic for children with local Head Start Program in Carbondale, Illinois (health education for pre-school aged children)

2015

Memorial Hospital of Carbondale

- Held fundraising and supply drive for the creation of the Pediatric Department of Memorial Hospital of Carbondale

Cover Letter

I was delighted to learn of the opportunity available Radiology Partners. I have always had ambition to be a physician assistant in a specialty field such as interventional radiology. I originally started in family medicine due to my rural hometown community's need. I have now been practicing in Family Medicine as well as Urgent Care for over 2 years in Mount Carmel, Illinois. My wife recently matched in residency at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in OB/GYN and I am looking to move to Chicago and continue my career in medicine.

In my capacity as a PA, I am responsible for the acute and chronic care of a multitude of complex medical conditions in a rural area without prompt access to specialty care. As an urgent care practitioner, I am in charge of the daily operations of the urgent care and treating patient's acute conditions independently. I have always gravitated toward hands on procedures and cases in my practice and have aspired to further my learning and expertise in the field of interventional radiology.

Lastly, I have a passion for teaching, educating, and aiding in the development of future healthcare providers. In addition to mentoring health profession students, I work as an online educator, content innovator, and author for Medgeeks, Ltd. I educate students and clinicians on medical topic reviews, medical cases, board preparation, and created a course to aid new and current healthcare providers transition into practice or a new specialty.

I appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing my application. If you have any questions, please feel free contact me at [redacted]. I am available after 5:00 pm CST on weekdays and all day on weekends. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Online Application Tips

- Many institutions utilize online applications which require the candidate to upload/complete information.
- May take additional steps, but important to assure information is consistent with what is present on your CV.
- Follow up with the contact person or recruiter in a week or so to assure they have your application and are reviewing.

So You Received an Interview..

- Similar to the feeling you had when applying to PA schools, this is an exciting but anxiety provoking time! Recognize and acknowledge your accomplishments!
- Be polite, cordial and respond quickly and appropriately to recruiting staff and administration!
- Confirm your interest and provide the recruiter with a few times you are available for an interview.
- Clarify what the interview process is, timeline and whether it is **virtual or in person!**

Doing Your Research

- The key foundation to success is to be prepared!
- Research the practice/institution, be aware of mission statement, goals, and any recent news or advancements.
- Trade your white coat for your professional dress!



Preparation is Not Medical Knowledge!

- When your interview has been scheduled, you may receive an agenda for the interview day.
- This could include the supervising physician, practice manager, or even the hospital CEO! It is best to be prepared for the **type and scope of the sessions**.
- EX: A supervising physician may want to ask questions about how you work as a team, while the hospital CEO may ask you more administrative questions.
- *Always respond to the interview coordinator/recruiter with a thank you and confirmation you've received what they have sent you!

Prior To The Interview

- Be sure you are aware of the location, parking and logistics of the day. Consider driving to the location to assure there are no unanticipated issues.
- Assure your wardrobe is sufficient, purchase a new suit if needed! Consider any financial needs an **investment in your future career.**
- Consider asking your loved ones and family members to sit in for you as “mock interviewers” or have them ask you questions spontaneously in the days prior to the interview.
- Practice responding politely, professionally and succinctly to a variety of different questions (more on this soon....)

Interview Day!

- Be sure to get a good night's sleep, eat a healthy breakfast and manage your stress!
- They chose you for a reason and are interested in hiring you!
- Arrive to the interview 15-20 minutes early to assure no difficulties.
- Take a deep breathe!



Virtual Interview Logistics

- Assure you have the link and password available.
- Assure good internet connection, quiet room, professional background.
- Test your video a few minutes prior for good lighting, distractions, angle.
- Wardrobe is still professional!
- Know how you will enter the room (video on, muted etc.).



The Interview

- Greet everyone with a smile, a hand shake and a thank you! They are taking time out of their busy schedule, or rescheduling patients to speak with you.
- Assure you have an understanding of who everyone in the room is and clarify at the introduction if you do not!
- Begin with a warm welcome and indicate your excitement for the opportunity!



Completing the Interview

- Try to quickly identify the interview style: is it mostly one on one questioning or more of a group based conversation?
- As you are responding to questions, make good eye contact, smile and engage the person you are speaking with!
- Try to relate your response to a prior experience or an example that **shows your values align with the institution's mission.**
- Chemistry and comfortability in a future team based organization is just as important as your credentials, procedure skills, or license.

Reflective Statements

- It is almost inevitable you will be asked a question you have not considered prior.
- Consider using reflective statements to buy some time while you think through the response.
- “Thank you for the question, that is quite thoughtful...”



Do you have any questions...?

- You may have an opportunity to ask questions during the formal interview, or later during a provider lunch or while touring the clinic.
- You should always have a few questions prepared to demonstrate your ongoing interest in the values of the institution.
- Remember, you are interviewing the practice just as much as they are interviewing you!
- Not having any questions implies a lack of interest or engagement.

Closing the Interview

- Depending on the day, you may be given an opportunity to come back and shadow the supervising physician or spend more time in the clinic. This is always a good idea!
- If the interview is wrapping up, assure that you are able to thank everyone involved and demonstrate your appreciation of their time.
- If possible, try to identify what the next steps are. When will the committee meet? When are candidates being notified of the decision? Are there possibly additional rounds of interviewing?
- Leave the office/hospital and maintain your professionalism all the way out!

Following Up

- Consider emailing the recruiter or practice manager in the next 24-48 hours to thank them and document your continued interest.
- If applicable, mention something poignant from the interview.
- Reflect on the interview: what went well? What was awkward? How can you improve for next time?



Some Additional Tools!

- **PA Portfolio**
 - An online storage and sharing tool that allows users to store all of the documents related to a PA career including multiple resumes and cover letters.
- **PA Job Source**
 - National job board with PA jobs
- **Salary Report**
 - Not sure what you should negotiate your salary to?
 - The salary report can give you an idea of a PA's salary with similar years experience, in your specific field, and relative location

The Moment Has Come...

- The remainder of this session will be focused on live question and answer with us as your moderators!
- We will ask you a commonly considered interview question and take volunteers on stage to respond!
- We will then offer constructive feedback!

