

Opening Statement: I am interviewing for a Physician Assistant program.

1) Why do you want to be a Physician Assistant?

I want to be a Physician Assistant because I enjoy helping people and have always been intrigued by the medical field. My interest in the science of the human body first led me to pursue a career in medicine, and after researching and observing the different possible positions, I found that a career as a physician assistant most fit my interests and goals. I value not only the challenging aspects of the job, but the daily lifestyles and tasks that a physician assistant faces each day.

2) What are four traits that you possess that you feel are critical for this profession and why do you see these four as the most important?

I see myself as empathetic, ambitious, observant, and trustworthy. I believe the ability to express empathy is greatly important for a PA to possess because it is critical to be able to connect with a patient and analyze their emotions as well as their physical ailments in order to treat them in the best way possible. Trustworthiness is needed to maintain exceptional relationships with coworkers, bosses, and patients. I have unwavering ambition, which I believe as a PA would help me treat the most challenging cases. I also am highly observant, and I notice details that others may not. I feel being observant is important in the medical world to prevent from missing critical symptoms and issues.

3) What are two traits that you possess that you feel might be detrimental for this profession and why do you see them as detrimental?

I feel that being ambitious, although one of my strengths could also be detrimental when I am faced with patients who have incurable issues, as I would have a difficult time accepting that there would be nothing I could do. In those situations, I would force myself to look at the issue realistically and accept my limits. I am also very thorough when completing projects and assignments, which can be time consuming. As a PA with many patients and not as much time with them to be as thorough as I would like, I would have to learn to focus on the important tasks rather than irrelevant details.

4) What place does conformity have in the work environment?

Although I value independence in the workplace, I understand that in order for an organization to function adequately, conformity is needed in certain aspects. I believe professional dress and behavior should be required in the work environment, as well as respect of coworkers, authorities, and patients.

5) Give me an example of work that you are proud of that you did by yourself and work that you are proud of that you did as part of a team. Which way do you feel that you are the most effective and why?

Last semester for one of my classes, I completed a research project about the causes of childhood obesity. My work was done independently and required much of my time and effort. I spent several hours a week focused on conducting research on the topic and compiling it into an organized piece of work. In terms of group work, I am part of a philanthropic organization, and we worked as a team to put together a fundraiser for the Make A Wish Foundation. The fundraiser planning required us to be patient with one another and accepting of different ideas and opinions. While I believe I am very effective working by myself, I found that working as part of a team was very fulfilling. I gained skills that allow me to be extremely successful when working with groups.

6) If the organization were to divide everyone into three categories; superstars, hard workers, or out-of-the-box thinkers, which one are you? Why and why do you think these skills are important in this profession?

I would classify myself as a hard worker, mainly because I believe that true success only comes from putting in great effort rather than just relying on skill. In the PA profession, it is important to work hard in order to diagnose patients correctly and treat them. Without hard work, there is more of a risk for mistakes being made which can be detrimental in the health care field.

7) Tell me about a time that you set your sights too high and a time you set them too low. What did you learn from these experiences?

My freshman year at UT, I made the decision to take over fifteen hours for my first semester. I soon realized that with all of the new adjustments and changes a typical freshman in college faces, it would be difficult to maintain this academic schedule. I had trouble keeping up with all of my classes as well as participating in social and philanthropic organizations. From this experience, I learned valuable time management skills as well as how important it is to be realistic with my goals.

A time I set my sights too low was when I helped my philanthropic organization organize a social event for our parent's weekend. The event was to include dinner, live music, and a fun environment for the parents to enjoy with their children in the organization. I did not expect as many parents to attend as they did, so I did not have enough food catered or have enough seating for the number of people. Due to my lack of confidence in the popularity of the event, I was faced with a disaster. The experience taught me to think on my feet and persevere in difficult situations rather than giving up. I was last minute able to expand the seating to outside areas and arranged for more food to be brought to the event. Thankfully, the event ended up being a success.

8) What would you do if you knew someone was cheating? (In class for graduate school, on expense report for work)

If I knew someone was cheating in graduate school, I would inform the professor in a private, formal meeting and allow her to deal with it as she pleases. I believe cheating is never acceptable because it is a shortcut to avoid hard work.

9) Give me an example of a time you had to comply with a policy with which you did not agree.

I have been a student volunteer at Dell Children's Medical Center for the past two years and place high value on my experiences there. When I first began volunteering there, however, I learned that I would be unable to volunteer in a clinical setting until I had completed at least 40 hours of volunteer work. I had to work in the gift shop at the hospital for a semester before I could actually be emerged in a real hospital setting and gain true healthcare experience. While I disagreed with this policy, I made sure to comply with it and cooperate by working in the gift shop. I tried to understand why the hospital made this policy rather than simply refusing to comply with it and choosing a different hospital to volunteer in.

10) How would you describe your work ethic? What would you consider your most important work ethic?

My work ethic involves respecting others, putting in 100% of my effort at all times, and placing the organization or business's well being over my own when necessary. I would consider respecting others to be my most important work ethic because I believe strong healthy relationships are the core to gaining success. Whether it be with patients, coworkers, or peers, I feel that showing respect allows people to work efficiently and with the most success.

11) What do you see as your responsibility to those that are less fortunate?

My responsibility to those less fortunate is to reach out and offer my help to them in whatever abilities I have. I believe using my strengths, such as empathy and compassion, to my advantage in helping others is very important. Even if I am not able to financially aid those less fortunate, I am able to give my time and skills to volunteering and hopefully working in the health care field.

12) Describe a time that you took on a leadership role and what you learned from the experience.

I am a part of a social organization and was elected head of our philanthropy committee. It was a time when I was extremely busy in school, but I felt it was important to take on this leadership role. The main valuable skill I learned from the experience was time management. I was forced to learn how to organize my time in the most efficient way possible by allocating times to focus solely on our philanthropy plans and others on my academic study. I also learned to be patient and listen to others ideas and opinions. While I was the head of the committee and made the ultimate decisions, the members of the committee had creative and exceptional ideas that I made sure to consider.

13) What are your expectations for grading, funding, and placement for labs, research projects, and internships and residencies?

In terms of funding, I understand that most PA programs don't offer funding, as it is a short program in which the students are being trained to become licensed PAs. I do hope that the program I attend has exceptional teachers and adequate equipment so that I can utilize these resources towards becoming an expert in the field of medicine. I also hope for the program to offer the necessary aid in finding an internship or job once the program is completed and the licensure obtained.

14) How do you deal with authority? Give me an example of when you had to confront someone in authority and how you handled the situation. What would you have done differently?

After completing an extensive research project for one of my classes that required tremendous effort throughout the entire semester, I found that I disagreed with a part of my professor's critique of my paper. The critique involved my writing style, which I felt was somewhat of a subjective topic. When confronting the professor, who I respected very much, I made sure to exhibit that respect at all times when speaking with her. I also made sure to address my argument with questions as to why she gave me those notes, rather than accusing her of being wrong. I felt I handled the situation well because she gave me positive feedback; however, I might in the future be more confident in explaining my own opinions while maintaining a respectful approach.

15) What makes you special? Why should we hire you (or admit you) over our other qualified candidates

I find humor in everything. I do value hard work and ambition, but I have always found a way to look at the bright side in situations and make light of difficult things. I believe it is critical that in hospital settings the mood not always be serious or dreary. While it is important to have the knowledge and skills to serve patients, it is also important to have a positive temperament to make the patients feel comfortable. I believe as a PA, my good humor would serve me well in maintaining the best relationship possible with coworkers and especially patients.