

UOW 2011 GSM MMI selection interview by Sheilz

PRE interview:

I had lunch at sixtyseven with Getafix and with my partner who had so nicely taken the day off work to drive me down for the day. It was serene and relaxing, and put me in good spirits for the task ahead. We walked over to the GSM and met up with a very excited and jovial Charlemagne which made me feel even more comfortable and confident. Met the rest of the bunch, very likable, by the end of it we were laughing like old classmates. The white and purple water bottles were a nice touch ☺.

Impression of the whole experience:

Overall, I found the interviewers engaging, friendly agreeable. Most if not all said good luck. I had a varied array of interviewers of different age groups, racial and cultural backgrounds and walks of life. It was refreshing. There was also a good balance between women and men. I was lucky that I started on strong stations (personal info questions) first and that the 'ethical dilemmas' were interspersed between 'easy' questions so that i could regroup each time. There were 8 male interviewers and 6 female interviewers.

And here are the questions in the order that I sat them:

Station 7: Government spending

Interviewer: Doctor

You are advising the Prime Minister of Australia about two items to provide significant funding for the budget for the year.

Junior Delinquents

Indigenous Health

Breast Cancer Research

HIV/AIDS awareness

Motor vehicle accidents

Climate Change.

Choose two and justify your choice.

Answer: I answered the initial question very quickly. I chose Indigenous Health and Motor Vehicle accidents. Justified by current status of indigenous health and road toll of young drivers, esp around Xmas + Easter. But once he got onto the prompts, i couldn't stop talking. We went down the list and I categorically said why other things were not in my top two and why, e.g. breast cancer research and awareness has increased vastly recently, moved in a good direction, indigenous health comparatively has not. HIV has not been a big problem in Australia in a while, ditto for junior delinquents ... point, Australia is doing well comparatively to other countries in

this issue. Mentioned South Africa and drew comparisons. Also said, climate change is debatable, and hasn't been fully established as critical yet, and so significant spending is not justifiable in my eyes.

It was a good effort for the first station, i.e. turned out better than I thought after a shaky start.

Station 8: Banned Pain Medication

Interviewer: Mid 30s, Doctor.

A man is taking medication for pain. The medication he is taking has been banned by the Therapeutic ... Australia because of serious long term side effects. The man insists on taking the medication regardless. Should he be allowed to purchase and take the medication? What are the issues?

Answer

He Should be allowed to.

Issues: Patient autonomy, Health of patient, Side effects ... risk to life of patient

Are patients in pain in the right mental capacity to make decisions, to them yes. May seem not so when not in their shoes, but I would say yes, unless there was some mental issues as well.

Who should look after him if there are side effects? Me as the doctor should.

I think I nailed this one.

Station 9: Rural Clinical Placement

Two interviewers:

- Young lady, looked like a 3rd/4th year student. She was the speaker
- Silent interviewer, who did interject, by mistake, all good, didn't stop my flow.

The GSM has 40 weeks of longitudinal placement in a rural area in Phase 3 of the medicine course.

Discuss advantages and disadvantages of studying medicine in a rural area.

Answers

Disadvantages: Lack of professors/academics/Isolation/loneliness

Advantages: more hands on/ more variety + experience/ immerse yourself in community/get to know them/develop relationship with patients.

What will you get out of the experience?

Immerse yourself and get to learn people's issues and nature of treating a patient, join a sport, socialise with locals, learn the culture. Learn some autonomy.

Discuss peculiarities of practicing medicine in a rural area?

Professional isolation/ loneliess/ away from relationship/family/ shoulder community's health load/ would be hard to leave because you have many peoples health in your hands.. Popularity or community figure ... may be too well-known, so everyone's business may be yours. (Could have said lack of resources too, but ran out of time).

Aside: where did I come from? Discussed personal history as quickly as I could.

Station 10: Portfolio Station

Interviewer: Lady GP, very friendly.

Discuss an item from your portfolio that is non academic and is a great achievement. (I discussed two).

Answer

I had some things in mind that I had thought of so it was fairly easy to answer.

Netball , learned importance of being a team player.

Qantas, learned the importance of working autonomously.

How will it make you a good doctor. Will give me greater appreciation for people on my team.

Work towards a greater good. Better organiser.

Aside: what sort of practice do i want to do: GP, maybe work with the RFDS .

Think I nailed this one, but maybe came off a little too excited

Station 1: Preferential selection for non-smokers

Interviewer: Doctor/academic

Preferential selection for medical school of students who commit to abstain from smoking.

Discuss issues. Do you agree with it.

Answer

Talked about other selection criteria. What about selection based on gender.

Didn't agree, may be excluding possibly good candidates. Discussed characteristics that interviewers look for in applicants.

He gave E.g. about ANU where one year it was like 75% girls , 25% boys. Engaged and argued til the end.

Aside: wished me good luck.

Although the interviewer was good at some banter and probing, despite it being my most difficult station, i kind of enjoyed it.

Station 2: Gifts given in the workplace

Interviewer: Two ladies, one in her 40s, other in her 60s. Very friendly, although one was meant to be silent, they were both nodding and smiling and interacting with me and each other.

What sorts of gifts are acceptable from a pharmaceutical company, e.g. pen, notepad, holiday, car? Sometimes patents in long term therapeutic care give Christmas presents to their physician. How about gifts from patients?

Answer

Seen that one before, in fact i taught it to a class once. Pretty straightforward.

Small gifts that can be given to anyone are acceptable. Cars / holidays not acceptable

Could be bribes, want advertising rights, stake in company/hospital, ulterior motive.
Cultural differences, mentioned China + their culture and how business deals go down with gifts being given and not so in Australia.

Nailed it 😊

Aside: wished me good luck.

Station 3: Leadership

Interviewer: a middle aged man, very kind-hearted, helpful and empathetic.

Julia Gillard, Tony Abbot, Kevin Rudd, all leaders of parties in Australia. What characteristics should a good PM have? Who do you think is a good leader? Do they possess these characteristics?

Answer

I had prepared for leadership to some extent, by reading the Mission + Objectives of the GSM.

Characteristics: Team player, Communicator, People Person, Manager

Who: Nelson Mandela

Why: Unified South Africa after years of Apartheid. Helped country organise a successful 1995 rugby world cup.

Proof of good leadership: South Africa is still doing well with decreasing unemployment, strong economy esp in mining and was able to hold the 2010 FIFA world cup ... Nelson's rainbow nation was successful

Aside: Chatted about his granddaughter and netball. Wished me good luck

Nailed it 😊

Station 4: Two Campuses

Interviewers: One student (Talker), One academic type/mentor

Split campuses (Shoalhaven and Wollongong campus) vs unified campus (e.g. Usyd).

Advantages + disadvantages of this system. Opinion on resources + technology of both campuses.

Answer

GSM strives to provide equal opportunities e.g pc labs, resource centre, books to both campuses and have seen both and both looked well equipped

Adv: smaller class size. Access to lecturers, better opportunities to try things during pracs.

Shaven has better beaches for surfing, can go hiking, engage with community etc.

Camaraderie between groups e.g. shoalies and woollies ... no one gets left behind, closely monitor attendance, if you need help ,you can get some from colleague.

– i had prepared for something related (why uow) so I had an arsenal for reasons for advantages as well as reading posts by toast on choosing Shoalie/Woolie. I must say that if one did not read up on the two campuses and see the presentation from info day, one would struggle with this

station. And many on my day actually did. Only think I could have possibly added was the availability of a 24 hr computer lab on the Shoalie campus.

From a research point of view, academic performance can be monitored. And can gauge what is a critical number for students to be able to function and do well academically.

Disadv: Anatomy labs ... Shoalies need to travel for that. Need to watch lectures via Video Conferencing. Lesser social life in Shaven ... but studying medicine, so not too necessary.

Aside: The Silent interviewer asked me at the last second if i was into surfing, said bodyboarding. Think I did really well.

Station 5: Patients seeking same-gender physicians.

Do patients have the right to seek physicians of the same gender? What about race?

Should be able to. Some people may have a cultural, religious or past experience that affects the choice of which physician to see.

Answer

e.g.s woman who was raped abused. Shy people for either pap smear or prostate exam ... more comfortable to see same gender. Women in Saudi Arabia to see gynaecologist – might need.

Race: if its not discrimination based on personal issues and rather on prejudices, not right. Said would rather get them to sit down, talk and eliminate prejudices before you make the decision.

Said conversations might lead to discussions on bad experiences with people of other races which may have lead them to form their opinion and thus make such choices.

Aside: wished me good luck. Think I did well.

Station 6: Virus Pandemic

A virus pandemic has affected major cities around the world. The government has ordered that a vaccine be provided for everyone. The vaccine has only had limited testing and the long term effects are not fully known. People who refuse to accept the vaccine are quarantined. What are the issues? Is it ethically right for the Public health sector to make decisions on the behalf of the individual?

Answer

Issues: rights of the individual, safety of the country. Possible infection of people in quarantine.

Is it right for them to make the decision: yes, for the good of the country, so that they know the status of everyone, and can treat accordingly? So while it may seem unfair on the personal level, it benefits the country as a whole. Made an example of Immigration laws and how immigrants need to go through tests to prove health, recognised internationally.

Aside: said well done and wished me good luck.

Interview Tips:

1. Develop a rapport with each interviewer and gain a smile out of them, its a lot easier to win someone over when they are amused or have taken a liking to you. I mostly smiled, shook hands, said hello, looked them in the eye, tried to be interesting, attentive and engaging.
2. Next best advice would be to draw examples from news/ personal experiences where applicable when answering questions.
3. Be decisive and logical in your answers. Give an answer and **SHOW YOUR WORKING** ... explain away. They like to see your thought process.
4. Listen carefully. I only asked for a repeat once or twice for the prompts. You don't want to look dull by repeatedly asking them to repeat the question.

I don't think I stuffed up any station and spoke to full time for 9/10 stations. Almost all of them wished me good luck and some of them were inquisitive enough to ask 'aside' curiosity questions about my personal life. I got a CSP offer a week later so I guess my MMI technique worked.