

Undergraduate Medical Course

The MBChB at KEELE UNIVERSITY - THE INTERVIEW

Short-listed candidates will be invited for interview. No candidate will be offered a place without an interview. On the day of the interview candidates will also have the opportunity to meet medical students and staff informally and to tour the School of Medicine.

The interview itself is a formal though friendly process. Each interview lasts 20 minutes (no more, no less). The interview panel comprises three interviewers, of whom one will chair the interview. The candidate will not have the opportunity to ask questions of the interviewers. Any questions that the candidate may have can be raised with staff or students during the remainder of the day.

The interview is not a test of candidates' academic knowledge. Candidates will not be asked questions directly related to their curriculum. The pre-interview screening process operated by the School of Medicine (based on academic grading, personal statement and school/college reference) will already have assured that all candidates called to interview are of sufficient academic calibre. The purpose of the interview is to assess the candidate as a whole person.

The interviewers will expect the candidates to be nervous and will of course make allowances for this. In most cases, outward signs of nervousness evaporate within two or three minutes of starting the interview.

The interview panel, in addition to forming an overall impression of the student, will be assessing in particular the following areas:

1. Ability to communicate. Communication skills are essential to the practice of almost all aspects of medicine. We expect candidates to be able to express their ideas clearly and coherently and to be able to follow a reasoned argument. Candidates who give spontaneous yet well-thought-out answers to questions are more likely to impress the interviewers than those who give obviously rehearsed and 'coached' responses. There are clearly some questions which schools and students will anticipate (see below) but during the course of the interview there will be other questions which occur spontaneously to the interviewers and cannot be anticipated by the students.
2. Why does candidate wish to be a doctor? This is an obvious though vital question. It is also the question to which candidates most frequently reply with a coached and practised answer. This is not to say that practised answers would entirely rule a candidate out of consideration, however they are clearly not as impressive as answers which are spontaneous and show genuine flair and enthusiasm for the subject.

3. Does the student have genuine outside interests? Candidates can expect to be asked at some length about their hobbies and interests, and other non-academic pursuits. Obviously a starting point for these questions will be areas the candidate has mentioned on his/her personal statement. Clearly, this may lead onto other areas but candidates should be aware that anything they write on their personal statement may be questioned at interview. Thus candidates are advised to be careful when compiling their personal statement and not to include a list of hobbies with which they have only a passing interest, merely to compile a list.

Interviewers themselves have a wide range of interests, which often include many of those cited by candidates! The panel is not at all concerned as to exactly what candidates' outside interests are: merely to assess whether they are able to talk about them with some degree of knowledge and enthusiasm.

4. Previous caring experience. Any experience in a caring role will clearly be a topic raised by the interviewers. This role need not be in a medical environment. The interview is an opportunity for candidates to relate not only the facts and details of their role but also their emotional response to it, what it has taught them, and what they have gained from it.
5. Matters of current interest. Candidates will not be expected to have detailed knowledge of medical or social issues. However, the panel will feel it reasonable to expect the candidate to have an intelligent layperson's view on current issues related to health and society. Ethical problems may be raised for discussion but candidates should be reassured that neither the panel nor the School of Medicine will take a fixed position on any ethical issue. It is not the candidate's ethical opinions that the panel will be interested in, but rather how coherently the candidate expresses those views.

Candidates will not be asked questions in any of the following areas: gender; sexuality, marital or parental status; race; religion; socio-economic background.

At the end of the interview, after the candidate has left the room, the panel will discuss the merits of the candidate for approximately five minutes. Candidates will not be informed of the decision of the panel on the day of the interview. Candidates will receive the University's decision by post within a few weeks of the interview. For candidates who have not already satisfied the academic requirements for entry, offers will be conditional upon the achievement of the appropriate standard in forthcoming examinations.

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