



AAMC

Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

# AAMC Standardized Video Interview: Applicant Preparation Guide

Association of  
American Medical Colleges

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## Overview

The AAMC Standardized Video Interview (SVI) is an innovative tool that enables applicants to share objective, performance-based information about themselves, beyond academic metrics, to add breadth and depth to their applications, as well as to provide residency program directors with additional information to assess applicants. The AAMC is using this tool in an operational pilot program with the ACGME-accredited emergency medicine community for the ERAS<sup>®</sup> 2019 season.

While this document focuses on tips tailored to preparing for and completing the Standardized Video Interview, many of the strategies you might use to prepare for an in-person or telephone interview will also be helpful. The AAMC Careers in Medicine<sup>®</sup> site is a great resource for general information on interviewing. Finally, although the format may seem more informal, the Standardized Video Interview is an official interview, and we encourage you to approach it as you would any formal interview. Prepare, present yourself professionally, and focus.

To complete the Standardized Video Interview, you will need the following:

- A sample of experiences through which you demonstrate your knowledge of or behaviors related to professionalism or interpersonal and communication skills.
- A stable internet connection.
- A computer or tablet with a good webcam and microphone. Although a mobile phone may be used, we recommend using a computer or tablet to improve stability.
- A private, quiet, and well-lit space that is free of distractions, where you can be alone.

Please refer to the [AAMC Standardized Video Interview: Essentials](#) for the official policies and procedures.

## Format

The AAMC Standardized Video Interview is an online, unidirectional interview. Six questions are presented in text prompts, and applicants record an audio/video response; there is no human interviewer. The applicant's face must be visible and voice must be audible throughout the recorded response. Applicants can complete the interview using any internet-enabled computer, tablet, or smartphone. Because the interview is unidirectional, applicants can complete the video interview in a location and at a time most convenient for them during the Interview Window.

Applicants will have up to 30 seconds to read and reflect on each written question and up to three minutes to record a response. Once applicants are exposed to a question, there will be no pauses until the time to record the response has elapsed. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants ensure that they are in a disruption-free environment for at least 3.5 minutes after launching a question. After recording a response, applicants may choose to progress to the next question or take an untimed break. You will not be afforded the opportunity to view your video responses during or after you complete the Standardized Video Interview.

To clarify, the Standardized Video Interview is *not*:

- A one-on-one interview with a human interviewer
- A tailored or personal interview with a specific residency program
- A replacement for an in-person interview

## Competencies

The Standardized Video Interview assesses two ACGME competencies that medical educators and physicians have identified as key prerequisites for success in residency and in the practice of medicine.

- **Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** Being able to demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals.
  - Oral Communication
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Teamwork and Leadership
- **Knowledge of Professional Behaviors (Professionalism):** Being able to demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles.
  - Empathy and Altruism
  - Ethics
  - Cultural Competence
  - Conscientiousness

## Questions

While every applicant's video interview will assess the same two competencies—Interpersonal and Communication Skills and Knowledge of Professional Behaviors—the specific questions asked may differ.

- **Behavioral questions** will ask applicants to describe previous experiences to demonstrate their level of knowledge and skills in the competencies of Interpersonal and Communication Skills and Knowledge of Professional Behaviors (Professionalism).
- **Situational questions** will ask applicants to describe their level of knowledge and skill in the two competencies noted above by applying the core concepts to different hypothetical situations.

Sample questions for each competency are included below.

## Interpersonal and Communication Skills Questions

1. Describe a time you worked with a challenging patient. What was the situation? What specific actions did you take? What was the outcome?
2. Describe a situation in which you were successful in communicating a difficult message. How did you communicate the message? What was the outcome?
3. Imagine you are leading a multidisciplinary team composed of professionals with different areas of expertise. How would you make sure everyone works together effectively?

## Knowledge of Professional Behaviors (Professionalism) Questions

1. One of your patients refuses treatment because it is incompatible with the patient’s religious beliefs. What was the situation? What action did you take? What was the outcome?
2. Tell me about a time when you noticed a mistake or an error that had been made. What was the situation? What action did you take? What was the outcome?
3. You have just received test results for a patient indicating that her disease has progressed beyond any available treatment. How would you deliver the news?

## Rating Scale

The AAMC Standardized Video Interview will be scored by raters trained by the AAMC.

The following explains scoring in detail and highlights certain aspects of the process.

- Six raters evaluate each interview, with a different rater assigned to each question. This minimizes any one rater’s influence on the total interview score. Raters have completed the AAMC unconscious bias training, as well as training on the competencies being assessed and the rating scales. As part of training, raters complete activities in which they discuss program directors’ ratings of example videos. This helps to ensure that raters make ratings that are consistent with those of program directors.
- Each question is rated by a trained rater using anchored rating scales specifically designed for the AAMC Standardized Video Interview. The rating scale ranges from a low of 1 to a high of 5. Anchors are behavioral examples that define each proficiency level on the rating scale. A general description of each proficiency level on the rating scale is shown below.

1	2	3	4	5
<b>Rudimentary</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
Is not likely to be successful in tasks that require this competency	Applies the competency in simple or limited number of situations	Applies the competency in common situations	Demonstrates proficiency in difficult situations	Demonstrates proficiency in considerably difficult situations

- The total score is the sum of the ratings from each question and ranges from 6 to 30. For more information about interpreting your Standardized Video Interview score, refer to the [score distribution and percentile rank table from the 2017 \(ERAS 2018\) administration](#).
- An applicant's score will be provided to all ACGME-accredited emergency medicine programs to which he/she applied for in the ERAS 2019 season and that participate in the Standardized Video Interview as part of the application.

## Preparing for the Interview

- Read the [AAMC Standardized Video Interview: Essentials](#).
- **Practice.** A majority of applicants in the 2017 Operational Pilot spent 1-4 hours preparing for the SVI. Spending more than 4 hours did not result in improved performance. In addition, more than half of applicants reported using one or more of the following preparation strategies:
  1. Reading this guide, the AAMC Standardized Video Interview: Applicant Preparation Guide
  2. Completing one or more practice interview questions in HireVue, the interview platform
  3. Studying sample interview questions related to the competencies assessed
  4. Rehearsing your responses without technology
  5. Rehearsing your responses with technology

## Identify Sample Experiences

- Review your CV and reflect on your experiences and learning before you complete the interview. Try to identify some examples of situations you either participated in or witnessed that highlight your knowledge or demonstration of professional behaviors or interpersonal and communication skills.
- In the months leading up to your interview, make note of situations you participate in or witness that exemplify professional behaviors or interpersonal and communication skills.
- Discuss your experiences with your advisors and consider the SVI rating scale. Which may be the best examples of your knowledge of or behaviors related to the competencies? Your best examples should demonstrate your highest level of proficiency in each competency.
- Consider creating a brief list of experiences that demonstrate your knowledge of professional behaviors and interpersonal and communication skills and could be used in response to different questions. It may be helpful to have these experiences in mind to consider as you read and prepare your response to each interview question.

## Practice Describing your Experiences

With your peers and advisors, conduct mock interviews to practice developing responses using specific behavioral examples from your life and experiences. These mock interviews can be done in person or over a web-based application, such as Skype or Google Hangouts. As you practice, keep track of time to get used to responding within the 3-minute time limit.

- When practicing responding to **behavioral questions**:
  1. Be sure to discuss the situation or task you encountered, the actions you took, and the outcome of your actions.
  2. If you cannot identify a past experience where you demonstrated a competency, describe a situation you witnessed or speak hypothetically about what you would do in that situation.
- When practicing responding to **situational questions**:
  1. Discuss the actions you would take, why you would take those actions, and what you would expect the result of your actions to be.
  2. You may draw on your past experience to explain why you would take specific actions.

## Practice with Technology

- Practice responding with the device you'll be using, and without an interviewer. When you complete the SVI, you will do so alone with your device. Look at the device's camera, not at the screen, and keep your head and shoulders centered in the camera's view. If possible, record yourself so you can get a sense of your eye contact, sound quality, and whether you're fidgeting, swiveling in your chair, or making distracting gestures, such as a covering parts of your face.
- Practice in the HireVue® system. The AAMC is providing two opportunities to practice responding to questions in interview platform.
  1. *Complete an SVI practice form.* The AAMC is making one practice interview form available in HireVue® at no cost. This practice form mirrors the SVI in both length and functionality. It includes six retired SVI questions and gives you a chance to practice in the interview platform environment. You can complete the practice interview form one or more times as you prepare for the interview. Instructions and access to the practice form will be available in Spring 2018.
  2. *Complete typical job interview questions.* Upon receiving your SVI invitation email from HireVue®, you will have access to unlimited practice questions in the interview platform. These questions are not specific to medical residency but will provide an opportunity to respond to questions in the interview platform. Instructions and access to practice questions will be available in Summer 2018.

## Setting Up

### Technology

- We recommend using a computer or tablet with a good webcam and microphone. Although a mobile phone may be used, a laptop or tablet improves stability. In 2017, approximately 93% of applicants used a computer, and approximately 7% used a mobile phone.
- Double-check your microphone and camera to make sure they're working well. Make a note of how they're positioned so you can recreate a setup that works when you log in to the system to complete your interview.
- Shut down all programs on your device so that no alerts, notifications, or other electronic interruptions distract you.
- Before proceeding, ensure the system checks are all green. Troubleshoot any areas that did not pass the test prior to completing your interview (practice or real).

### Environment

- Identify a private, quiet, and well-lit space where you can complete the interview by yourself, you are free of potential distractions, and you can speak freely (e.g., avoid the library). In 2017, a majority of applicants completed the interview at home and a small percentage completed the interview in a recording space provided by their school. Performance in the interview did not differ by location.
- Avoid sources of bright light (e.g., sunlight, lamp) directly behind you.
- Consider the backdrop you will use during your interview. While raters evaluate your interview based on the content of your responses, program directors will have access to and may watch your videos.

### Logistics

- Dress professionally, as you would for an in-person interview. While raters evaluate your interview based on the content of your responses, program directors will have access to and may watch your videos.
- Do the interview at a time when you're rested and focused. As with any formal interview, you want to be able to focus on understanding the questions, crafting coherent responses, and presenting your best self.
- Give yourself plenty of time to complete the video interview. Allow time at the beginning to conduct a technology check, answer practice questions, and get used to the interview environment.



## Completing the Interview

### Logistics

- Read the entire question before you begin responding. Make sure you respond to all parts of the question.
- Do not repeat the interview question. Raters will have access to the questions.
- If you have a rough start, take a deep breath and attempt to answer the question again. You don't need to apologize or explain if you restart—just focus on responding to the question in the remaining time.
- You don't need to take the full 3 minutes to respond if you feel you've answered the question effectively and comprehensively in less time.

### Responding to Questions

- Try to focus on providing detailed examples of behavior that you engaged in from your life and experiences when responding to questions, if possible.
- Use clinical and nonclinical experiences to respond to questions as appropriate.
- Provide detailed responses and try to avoid speaking in generalities. One strong example is better than several weak or tangential examples.
- When responding to **behavioral questions**:
  - Try to share past experiences and be sure to discuss the situation or task you encountered, the actions you took, and the outcome of your actions.
  - If you cannot identify a past experience where you demonstrated the competency, you can describe a situation you witnessed or speak hypothetically about what you would do in that situation.
- When responding to **hypothetical questions**:
  - Make sure you discuss the actions you would take, why you would take those actions, and what you would expect the result of your actions to be.
  - You may draw on your past experience to explain why you would take specific actions.
- Keep in mind that raters are trained to evaluate your Knowledge of Professional Behaviors and Interpersonal and Communication Skills. They are not evaluating your medical knowledge.
- A note on patient confidentiality: some interview questions may ask you to describe previous experiences with colleagues and patients. While it is important to provide specific responses to the interview questions, you **must not** provide any information that could be used to identify patients or colleagues.

Specialists are available to assist you with the video interview process, policies, and procedures to help ensure resolution of your question or concern. Please contact AAMC and allow two business days for a reply. From all of us at the AAMC, we wish you the best of luck when completing your Standardized Video Interview.