

Avant factsheet:

CV and interview skills

Quick guide

- Attention to detail helps make a good impression
- Consider what is it that makes you stand out from the crowd and emphasise these points
- Review your social media profile

Your CV

- Keep the layout simple, consistent, structured and easy to read (use lots of white space).
- Quantify your experience and strengths in objective measurable achievements.
- When listing your achievements, summarise what you have learnt from them.
- Connect your skills, experience, traits and jobs requirements with those the employer is seeking.
- Pay attention to the details (check spelling and grammar).
- Number each page of your CV and ensure your name is on each page.
- Provide the best contact number for you with your email address.
- Customise your CV for each role and employer when possible.
- Some employers have a set format for CVs (do your research before submitting your CV).
- List your:
 - career objectives
 - career history
 - education and training
 - roles held including dates, responsibilities and achievements
 - professional memberships and qualifications
 - prizes, bursaries, awards and scholarships
 - publications, research courses, presentations
 - special study modules and electives
 - relevant work experience
 - non relevant work experience and volunteering
 - additional skills, achievements and interests
 - referee details.
- Ensure the information is current and up to date.
- If you trained overseas, include details of the international English language teaching system and the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board.

Don't undersell yourself but be honest; medicine is a competitive career and you need to set yourself apart in some way. Consider what it is about you, your experience and your achievements that makes you different.

There are certain matters that you must disclose to a potential employer during a recruitment process (such as certain criminal convictions). There are other matters that you may be concerned about disclosing to a potential employer (such as an absence of months or years during your training or an early pregnancy). If you have any concerns about what you should and should not disclose, you should seek advice from your training institution or Avant.

Cover letter

Your cover letter should provide a brief introduction and summarise the main points you hope will attract the employer.

Specify the role you are applying for and tailor the letter to the role by:

- Explaining why you are interested in the role.
- Outlining how your experience, education, skills and personal qualities relate to the criteria for that role.
- Emphasising what you could bring to the role that sets you apart from other applicants.

Online applications

Many employers now require you to complete and submit an online application.

The points listed above about preparing your CV also apply to online applications. You should also:

- Check your spelling and grammar carefully (spellcheck is often not available when completing online forms).
- Ensure you have answered each question.
- Ensure you have attached all relevant documents properly.
- Ideally, print or save a copy of the completed online application in case you need to refer to it later.

Preparing for interviews

Do your research; about the job and organisation you are applying for, and the style and format of the interview itself.

Behavioural-based questions

These examine both how you think and how you will perform in specific situations. An example might be a time that you made a mistake and how you handled it and learnt from it. Think about examples from your medical school and early career experiences where you demonstrated a certain behaviour or learnt a pertinent lesson. Framing your answer around this experience will make it relevant and interesting.

Competency-based questions

These test what you have learned from your experience. Be clear and accurate about your specific personal actions in achieving the goal being discussed. Describe the situation you faced, the tasks you performed, the actions you took or decisions you made, the results you achieved and, perhaps, the lessons you learned. A good example is an interpersonal conflict question where you would be expected to mention communication, respect, and consideration of other people's point of view.

A clinical scenario

Often you will be given a clinical scenario – remember to cover off the basics as well as the advanced medical knowledge. Referring to key principles such as consent, privacy, communication and good documentation will demonstrate you are safe and thorough.

The person or panel conducting the interview, or if an online format the person reviewing the recording of the interview, will usually be a senior medical practitioner who will be asking themselves "is this a safe doctor who I want on my team?" so think about how you can demonstrate that you are a team player and easy to get along with.

Be prepared also to discuss your career goals, and link these to the job you are applying for. For example, if applying for a training position, show how your career aspirations align with the role or the program and rotations offered by the specific hospital.

During the interview

- Remember rapport: greet the interviewer appropriately, use eye contact and smile.
- Be enthusiastic and authentic.
- Speak clearly and confidently about your experiences and skills.
- Listen carefully to the questions asked and be specific in your answers (make sure you understand the question before responding and provide specific examples to help you answer the question).

- Remember this is a patient based industry so ensure you demonstrate your compassion, empathy, and strong communication skills.
- Maintain appropriate professionalism with any member of the interview panel with whom you have a personal relationship.
- Always have a strong statement to close with if given the opportunity such as 'is there anything you would like to add to support your application'.
- Ensure that you understand the next step in the selection process.

Online interviews

Increasingly employers are using an online platform such as 'Zoom' to interview candidates or to shortlist candidates. All of the key principles apply but also consider:

Location: it is important to find somewhere quiet where you will not get interrupted and also a background that is neutral like an office or blank wall.

Lighting: you need front-facing lighting so moving a desk lamp to sit behind your computer screen is a good idea.

Technology: ensure you are familiar with the platform and test your equipment before starting the process. If you can do the interview without a headset this is preferable. Testing beforehand will assist in establishing the sound quality.

Notes: one good thing about an online interview is you can have notes to refer to but be careful not to read your answers. If you are concerned, use dot points rather than full sentences.

Eye contact: Consider aligning your camera so your eyes are at the same height, so you are not looking down constantly with a distorted profile.

Following the interview

If it feels appropriate, you can send the interviewer or hospital contact a note/email thanking them for their time and restating your interest in the role is worth considering.

Social media

Prospective employers may conduct social media checks as a part of their assessment of your application. How you appear on your social media accounts can be used by employers as a measure of your professionalism. Consider your use of social media and the privacy settings you have in place to limit access to your social media accounts.

Ensure your details on LinkedIn and other similar sites are professional and up-to-date.

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