

PN INTERVIEW PROCESS

Interview

Ozarks Technical Community College Practical Nursing Program has introduced the multiple mini interview (MMI) into the admission process. OTC Practical Nursing Program seeks to admit individuals who will make not only excellent students but ultimately outstanding nurses who possess the skills necessary to communicate in the health care setting.

What is MMI?

The MMI was pioneered by McMaster University's faculty of medicine. During this process each candidate rotates through a series of stations. At each station, the candidate responds to a scenario designed to test for competencies and specific attributes that are considered necessary for success in the education program and in the profession.

What might I see in an MMI scenario?

The actual scenarios are to remain confidential. Preparing for these interviews does not require knowledge of the exact questions asked. Although the scenarios may involve medical issues, familiarity with those issues is not a requirement to answer the questions. If the student would like to prepare for this type of interview it is recommended the student practice expressing their answers verbally, logically, and in a short time frame. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please see the following sample scenario.

You are a student. Your patient speaks very little English. Her husband, who speaks English fluently, translates for her. He frequently cuts you off during discussion and appears to be making decisions for her, sometimes without translating your information for his wife. The woman is very quiet and rarely smiles.

You are worried that she may not have the information she needs to make fully informed choices about her health care.

How would you approach this situation?

Attributes assessed:

Respect for difference and diversity. The applicant shows respect for others, regardless of sex, race, cultural background, beliefs, or marital status. Does not exhibit or support discrimination and aims to provide patient centered care at all times.

Compassion and empathy. The applicant describes the need to advocate for the rights of the patient. Demonstrates and understanding of the multiple factors that may influence an individual's or family's response.

Effective communication. The applicant demonstrates verbal skills, engagement with the interviewer, behavior under stress, assertiveness, and presents reasoning clearly.

Critical thinking and effective decision making. The applicant has an awareness of a range of perspectives, ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty; shows flexibility.

What will an MMI station assess?

The stations will assess characteristics like compassion, empathy, teamwork, responsibility, communication, critical thinking, and ethics. It is well documented that these non-cognitive characteristics are essential qualities in good nurses. One of the stations will involve standard interview questions such as “why do you want to be a nurse?” The other stations may involve discussing one’s viewpoint on a particular social ethical dilemma, role playing with an actor or simulated patient. Interviewers are also asked to indicate on the interview form, any “concerning behaviors” the applicant displays during the interview process. Concerning behaviors are identified as any behaviors that may not represent the characteristics that future employers desire in a nursing professional. Examples assessed for include, but not limited to:

- Rambling or lengthy answers that are not clear and succinct.
- Inability to make decisions, or give input.
- Inability to make eye contact.
- Inability to understand the interview question or give an appropriate response.
- Unaware or disregard for the rules of defining personal space.
- Making rude, condescending, insulting and demeaning statements to others.
- Using angry, hostile tones.
- Attacking immediately if criticized or questioned.
- Showing insensitive or disrespectful treatment of others.

What is the evidence for the MMI?

Admission to nursing schools is highly competitive. Academic ability is the best predictor of academic performance during the educational process but its relationship with clinical performance is less clear. An interview is commonly used in addition to academic qualifications to aid in admission requirements to medical school and in some nursing schools. Research has shown the MMI is more reliable and has better predictive power than traditional panel interviews. Performance on the MMI did not appear to favor subjects from particular sex, age, and racial groups or academic ability.

How do applicants feel about the MMI?

Surveys and interviews have shown that applicants generally give high approval ratings of the format and consider it a fair method of assessing candidates.

What does it actually mean when an applicant has been offered an interview?

Applicants offered an interview often believe that they are ‘in’ but for the interview, so if they are not selected they believe the interview was the tipping point. This assumption is incorrect. The Practical Nursing Programs usually offer at least 100-140 applicants the opportunity to interview during each admission cycle. That means that going into the interview, there will be a very wide range of ‘pre-interview’ scores. Then, the score the student receives in the interview is added to their pre-interview score. This constitutes the final score, and only the students with the top final scores are selected. For

example, if Student A scores very well on the Kaplan Admission Exam, has very good grades in prerequisite courses, and has great references, s/he will come into the interview with a very high score. Conversely, if Student B simply passes the Kaplan and gets marginal grades and references, his/her score will be much lower. If both students do well with the interview and score similarly, Student A will be selected due to the higher pre-interview score.

What should an applicant do, if after the interview, they are NOT selected?

First, look at ways to improve the pre-interview score. For example, retake prerequisite courses with unfavorable grades, retake the Kaplan Admission Exam, etc. Then, consider utilizing the services of the Career Employment Services office here at OTC to help improve professional interviewing techniques. Those skills will not only be helpful in the admission process but will also be helpful when the applicant is applying for a job in the future.