

PCP CANDIDATE INTERVIEW INFORMATION

All learners applying for the PCP Program will be required to attend a Candidate assessment day (CAD) before they are eligible to be offered a seat in the program. The goal of the assessment is to competitively rank applicants to the program so those with the best chances of success will advance. The assessment consists of two (2) elements: an online medical knowledge test and a behavioural interview.

After all the CADs have taken place, the successful candidates will be contacted and offered a seat in the program.

EMR Level Medical Knowledge Exam

- Candidates are able to write practice tests prior to completing the online assessment.
- The online assessment will be available to you for 90 minutes once you've begun.
- The online assessment **MUST** be completed prior to your interview

Interview

- Candidates will be interviewed in groups of three by a two-person panel of interviewers (unless notified otherwise).
- This is a behavioural interview. The questions are based on criteria that relate to success in the PCP program.
- Areas to prepare for include: Interpersonal skills, communication skills, work standards and initiative. *Ensure you review the sample interview questions at the end of this document.*

General Information

- Feedback on interview results will not be provided. Please see section on "Avoid low scores on the interview" (page 3)

Interview Techniques

PCP Candidate Interviews are conducted using the **STAR** method. The STAR method is a structured manner of **responding** to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.

<p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Situation or Task</p>	<p>Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event. What goal were you working toward? (Task)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">A</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action</p>	<p>Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you actually did.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">R</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Results</p>	<p>What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?</p>

Use situations from internships, classes and school projects, activities, team participation, community service, hobbies and work experience as examples of your past behavior. In addition, you may use examples of special accomplishments, whether personal or professional, such as scoring the winning touchdown, winning a prize for your artwork or raising money for charity.

Remember that many behavioral questions try to get at how you responded to *negative* situations; you'll need to have examples of negative experiences ready, but try to choose negative experiences that you made the best of or those that had positive outcomes.

Suggestions on how to prepare for the PCP behavior-based interview:

Do:

- Identify six to eight examples from your past experience where you demonstrated the behaviors and skills outlined in the PCP selection criteria. Be able to describe these examples in the STAR format - be sure each story has a beginning, middle and an end (i.e., be ready to describe the situation, including the task at hand, your action, and the outcome or result).
- Ensure you include examples of situations that started out negatively but either ended positively or you made the best of the outcome.
- Talk about your role in the story – what action did YOU take. The story should focus around you – not your supervisor or co-workers.
- Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed account of one event.
- Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.
- Use fairly recent examples.
- **Practice** answering interview- type questions prior to coming for your interview!

Do not:

- Try to “wing it” during the interview; be prepared with examples and **practice** answering interview- type questions prior to coming for your interview!
- Start your answer with “I usually ...” Give a specific example of a situation where you demonstrated what is being asked.
- Tell stories unrelated to the question.
- Try to make up a story that is false.

Avoid low scores on the interview

Here is a list of the top 4 reasons candidates score low on the interview:

1. The situation given did not answer the question being asked.
 - Listen carefully to the question. What criteria does it fall under?
 - Ensure your situation is relevant to the question being asked.
2. Not enough detail was provided.
 - Be sure to include enough detail to paint a picture of the situation, the actions that were taken and the outcome or result.
3. Answers were disorganized and scattered, leading to unanswered questions.
 - Organize your thoughts prior to presenting them
 - Practice prior coming to your interview. Have family members or friends ask you interview questions.
4. Answers were too general, even when the candidate was prompted for specifics.
 - Give **specific examples**, not a general response of what you would do in any given circumstance.
 - Ensure the situation you use **answers** the question asked.

Selection criteria and sample questions

Preparation is vital for Behavioral Interviews. Recall can be difficult when put on the spot, especially during an interview. It is hard to remember your experiences quickly if you have not thought of them in years; however, if you practice sample behavioral interview questions, the time you spend will allow you to refresh your memory and answer the interview questions with more confidence.

Below you will find the 7 criteria/competencies required for not only a good paramedic, but also a successful student. The questions asked in the PCP interview are based on these criteria.

1. Interpersonal Skills – Ability to demonstrate a sincere caring and consideration for the needs of colleagues, faculty, preceptors and other individuals encountered in the program; to evoke trust and respect; to work cooperatively and harmoniously with other students; to be diplomatically assertive.

Sample Questions:

- Tell us about a time in the last six months when a person has asked for your assistance or advice on how they should handle a work or personal problem?
- Describe two or three behaviours you have shown in the last month that have resulted in an improved relationship with a co-worker.

2. Learning Motivation – Extent to which a person is motivated to engage in continuous learning; to be open to new ideas, knowledge and concepts; to ask questions to gain understanding and further knowledge; participates positively in class discussions, exercises, projects and simulations.

Sample Questions:

- What personal skill development actions have you completed in the last year?
- Give us an example of a time you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.

3. Communication Skills – Ability to speak, listen to, write and read English to a level required for program success.

Sample Questions:

- What are the most difficult types of communication situations you have encountered? Tell us about them and explain why they are difficult for you.
- Tell us about a time when you had to persuade others to accept your course of action or recommendation on something.

4. Initiative – Willingness to do the program work without being asked or prodded; self-directed; participates positively in class discussions; voluntarily helps colleagues; deals with program related problems and situations without procrastination.

Sample Questions:

- Have you ever received a formal award or commendation for taking initiative, either on the job or off? Tell us about it.
- What community service or volunteer activity are you currently involved with? Tell us how you got involved and how much time you spend on it?

5. Planning and Organizing Skills – Ability to identify and structure tasks and activities for self and others to complete program assignments, projects and examinations.

Sample Questions:

- Tell us about a time when you were unable to meet an assignment or project deadline.
- Give us an example of how you prioritize a list of tasks or assignments related to an educational program.

6. Work Standards – Ability to complete program assignments and projects in a thorough, accurate, timely and high quality manner; sets high standards for self and others; can be relied upon to do the things they agreed to.

Sample Questions:

- Describe a time when a problem was not resolved to your satisfaction.
- Have you ever received recognition for exceptional work? Tell us about it.

7. Stress Tolerance – Capacity to maintain acceptable program performance and demonstrate stable behaviour while subjected to significant program and personal stress.

Sample Questions:

- In your last position, what were your most significant stressors?
- Has a co-worker caused you to become irritated or frustrated? Tell us about the situation and how you handled it.