

# Dentistry mock interview

A second dentistry circuit with no question repeated from mock 1, built around consent, sugar and the public. Interviewers do not need to be dentists.

MOCK INTERVIEW 2   MMI CIRCUIT   7 STATIONS   7 MINUTES PER STATION

## BEFORE YOU START

### How to run this mock

- 1 Set up seven stations, one room or clearly separated space each, with a door card from the back of this pack on the door and one interviewer holding the matching station page.
- 2 Run students round in order: 7 minutes in the station, 2 minutes to move on. Seven students fit in one 63 minute circuit, twenty one if you start three at different points.
- 3 Interviewers mark all four domains at every station on the 1 to 4 scale, and write one line of evidence before the next student comes in, while it is still fresh.
- 4 Collect the station pages, copy the marks onto the scoring summary, and give every student one strength and one thing to work on. The debrief is the part that changes results.

## MARKED THE SAME WAY AT EVERY STATION

### The four scoring domains

#### M Motivation and insight

Knows what a dentist does all day, the practical and repetitive parts included.

- 1 Reasons that would fit any health course.
- 4 Specific, and clear about the real job.

#### C Communication

Explains clearly to someone anxious or in pain, and listens to what worries them.

- 1 Talks at the listener, or hides in jargon.
- 4 Plain, warm, and checks it has landed.

#### R Reflection and self awareness

Learns from experience rather than listing it, and knows the limits of their skill.

- 1 Describes what happened, learns nothing.
- 4 Says what changed, and what needs practice.

#### V Professional values and ethics

Puts the patient's health before what is quickest, cheapest or most wanted.

- 1 Gives the patient whatever they ask for.
- 4 Weighs need against want, and says why.

## MOTIVATION FOR DENTISTRY

## You could apply for medicine with the same subjects and the same grades. Why dentistry?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What would you miss about medicine?
- What is it about the mouth in particular that holds your interest?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Gives positive reasons for dentistry rather than reasons against medicine, and does not rubbish a course they may yet apply to.
- Names things that are genuinely different: working with the hands all day, seeing the same patients over years, and a practice that has to pay for itself.
- Knows that a dentist usually diagnoses and treats in the same appointment, which is much of both the appeal and the pressure.
- Has tested the preference against something real: a visit, a conversation, reading, or their own experience as a patient.
- Sounds settled rather than defensive: this is a choice, not a fallback.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

A student who says they considered medicine seriously and then chose this is stronger than one who pretends the thought never crossed their mind. Mark the honesty as well as the reasons.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

|                                | Little evidence | Some evidence | Clear evidence | Strong evidence |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Motivation and insight         | 1               | 2             | 3              | 4               |
| Communication                  | 1               | 2             | 3              | 4               |
| Reflection and self awareness  | 1               | 2             | 3              | 4               |
| Professional values and ethics | 1               | 2             | 3              | 4               |

EVIDENCE: ONE LINE, IN THEIR WORDS, BEFORE THE NEXT STUDENT COMES IN

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## WORK EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION

**You will have seen someone handle a member of the public who was frightened or angry. Describe what they did, and what you would copy.**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What did the other person do that told you it was working?
- What would you have found hardest about being in that position?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- One occasion described concretely, from a shop, a cafe, a care home, a club or a waiting room.
- What the handler actually did: their pace, their tone, what they did not say, and how much they let the other person talk.
- Notices the difference between calming someone down and simply getting rid of them.
- Attention to the frightened or angry person, not only to the professional handling them.
- A learning point tied to a dental chair, where people arrive frightened as a matter of course.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

No placement is needed here and a Saturday job on a till is a rich source. Mark what they noticed and what they took from it, not where they happened to be standing.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Motivation and insight         | 1               | 2             | 3              | 4               |
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## ETHICAL REASONING

**A patient needs an X-ray before a tooth can be treated safely. He refuses the X-ray but wants the treatment anyway. What are the issues, and what would you do?**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What if he says he had one at another practice two years ago?
- How would you explain the risk of working blind?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Starts by finding out what is behind the refusal, whether that is radiation, cost, time or a previous experience.
- Explains why the picture matters: treating without it means guessing at what is under the surface.
- Holds the patient's right to refuse alongside the dentist's right not to do something they believe is unsafe.
- Looks for a middle path, such as a different view, a delay, or treating only what can be seen safely.
- Knows the conversation and the decision must be written down, and when to involve someone senior.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

No knowledge of dental imaging is needed. Mark whether they ask before they persuade, and whether they can decline a patient's request without simply refusing and closing the door.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

|                                | Little evidence | Some evidence | Clear evidence | Strong evidence |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Motivation and insight         | 1               | 2             | 3              | 4               |
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## DENTISTRY AND THE PUBLIC

## What does the difference between NHS and private dentistry actually mean for a patient sitting in the chair?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Should a routine check up cost a patient anything at all?
- What happens to someone who can afford neither?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Knows the practical difference: what an NHS band covers, what it does not, and that some treatments are only available privately.
- Explains that most practices do both, and that a patient may be treated by the same dentist either way.
- Sees the business side honestly: a practice has staff, rent and equipment to pay for, whichever list the patient is on.
- Notices the effect on people: care delayed because of cost, and the awkward conversation that leaves with the dentist.
- Presents private care as neither a scandal nor an obvious upgrade.

### NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Avoid arguing a position of your own. Mark whether the candidate can describe a system fairly from more than one point of view, the practice's included.

### MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

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## COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAY

**You are helping with a Year 7 session on teeth. One pupil says it is boring and he knows it all. Speak to him now.**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What if he says his brother drinks energy drinks all day and is fine?
- How would you end the conversation?

## BRIEF FOR THE PERSON PLAYING THE PART

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Your part        | You are twelve, bored and slightly showing off. You brush sometimes, drink a fizzy drink most days and think teeth are not interesting. You are not rude, just hard to impress. If the candidate asks what you actually do, you tell them honestly. |
| Open with        | We did this in primary school. Brush your teeth, no sweets. Can I go?                                                                                                                                                                               |
| If handled well  | Get interested, ask a real question about your own drinks, and name one thing you will change.                                                                                                                                                      |
| If handled badly | Go quiet and start looking at the door if they only list rules at you.                                                                                                                                                                              |

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Finds out what he already knows before explaining anything.
- Pitches it at a twelve year old without talking down to him.
- Makes it matter to him now, rather than warning him about being forty.
- Keeps it to one or two things, and checks he has taken them away.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Two people run this station: one marks, one plays the pupil. Mark the pitching and the listening, not the dental facts.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

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## DATA AND PROBLEM SOLVING

**Look at the table. What would you say to a fifteen year old who drinks two of these a day, and what does the table not tell you?**

## SUGAR IN FOUR DRINKS, AGAINST A RECOMMENDED DAILY MAXIMUM

| Drink               | Sugar per bottle (grams) | Teaspoons | Share of daily maximum |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Cola                | 35                       | 9         | 117%                   |
| Energy drink        | 27                       | 7         | 90%                    |
| Orange juice carton | 18                       | 5         | 60%                    |
| Flavoured water     | 12                       | 3         | 40%                    |

The daily maximum used here is 30 grams. These figures are invented for this exercise. They are not measurements of any real product and should not be quoted as such.

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Does it matter whether a drink is finished at once or sipped all afternoon?
- Which of these would you actually worry about most, and why?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Reads the table properly first, including which figure is per bottle and which is a share of a daily limit.
- Notices that a drink that sounds healthier can still carry a great deal of sugar.
- Knows that how often and how long a drink is in contact with teeth matters as much as the total amount.
- Talks to the fifteen year old in a way that might change something, rather than delivering a warning.
- Names what the table cannot say, including acidity, what else is eaten, and how often teeth are brushed.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Print this page so the candidate can see the table while they talk. The sugar figures are invented, so do not correct a candidate against a real product.

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## PERSONAL INSIGHT

## How do you know when a piece of your own work is good enough to hand in?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- When did you last decide something was not good enough and redo it?
- Whose judgement on your work do you trust, and why?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Has an actual standard rather than a feeling: a mark scheme, a comparison, or someone whose eye they trust.
- Gives an example of stopping and starting again, and what it cost them in time.
- Knows the difference between good enough and perfect, and can say where they draw the line.
- Recognises that in dentistry the person judging the work also has to live with it in their mouth.
- Honest about the times they have handed in something they knew was not right.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

This station is about self-assessment, which is most of clinical training. A candidate who admits they sometimes settle, and says what they do about it, is answering well.

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## Scoring summary

One row per student. Copy each mark across from the station sheets, then total the row. Every station is marked out of 16, so the circuit totals 112.

M Motivation and insight    C Communication    R Reflection and self awareness    V Professional values and ethics

[illegible]

## THE SCALE, AT EVERY STATION

- |   |                 |                                                                                                                     |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Little evidence | Barely addressed, or addressed in a way that raises a concern. Would need substantial work before a real interview. |
| 2 | Some evidence   | Touched on it, but thinly or only when prompted. The material is there and the answer is not.                       |
| 3 | Clear evidence  | Covered it well and unprompted. The kind of answer that does the candidate no harm at a real interview.             |
| 4 | Strong evidence | Covered it with insight and specifics, and made the interviewer want to hear more. Rare, and should stay rare.      |

# Briefing for interviewers

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Read this once before the circuit starts. It takes about three minutes, and it is the difference between a mock that flatters everyone and one that tells a student something they can act on.

## You do not need to be a dentist to interview

You are not judging dental knowledge. You are judging whether a seventeen year old can think out loud, listen, reflect honestly and hold more than one side of a problem, which is what a dental school is looking for too. Everything you need is on your station page, and the four domains mean the same thing at every station in the circuit.

## Before the circuit starts

- Read your station page twice, including the two follow up prompts, and check the door card outside matches your station.
- Have the page, a pen and a watch or a phone timer in front of you. Someone will call the changeover, but keep your own eye on the time.
- Decide with the coordinator who calls time if you are running the role play station, because that station needs two people.

## Running your station

- Ask the question exactly as written, so every student gets the same station.
- Then stop talking. Let a silence run for a good five seconds before you prompt: thinking time is not a fault.
- Use a follow up only if the candidate has stalled or has finished early. Two prompts is the maximum.
- Do not teach, correct or react. Nodding along warmly to one student and sitting stony faced with the next is the most common way a circuit becomes unfair.
- Keep the listening aid beside you, not in front of the candidate. It is there to help you hear a thin answer, and it is not a checklist to tick off or read aloud.

## Marking

- Mark all four domains, every time, even at a station that leans on two of them. A candidate who communicates beautifully and says nothing can score 4 and 1 on the same answer.
- Mark immediately, before the next student walks in. Marks written at the end of the afternoon are memories of the strongest and the weakest, and nothing in between.
- Write one line of evidence per student, in their words if you can. That line is what makes the debrief useful, and it is the part students remember.
- Use the whole scale. If everyone gets a 3, the circuit has told the student nothing.

## Afterwards

- Hand your station pages to the coordinator with every mark and evidence line filled in.
- Flag anything that worried you, for example a student who was very distressed or an answer that raised a safeguarding concern, to the member of staff running the day rather than to the student.
- If you can stay for ten minutes, the students get far more from hearing one strength and one improvement from you directly than from a score.

**You could apply  
for medicine with  
the same subjects  
and the same  
grades. Why  
dentistry?**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

**You will have seen someone handle a member of the public who was frightened or angry. Describe what they did, and what you would copy.**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

**A patient needs an X-ray before a tooth can be treated safely. He refuses the X-ray but wants the treatment anyway. What are the issues, and what would you do?**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

# What does the difference between NHS and private dentistry actually mean for a patient sitting in the chair?

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

**You are helping  
with a Year 7  
session on teeth.  
One pupil says it is  
boring and he  
knows it all. Speak  
to him now.**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

**Look at the table.  
What would you  
say to a fifteen  
year old who  
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table not tell you?**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

**How do you know  
when a piece of  
your own work is  
good enough to  
hand in?**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.