

# Dentistry mock interview

A fourth dentistry circuit about the repetitive side of the job, saving teeth against taking them out, and fluoride. Interviewers do not need to be dentists.

MOCK INTERVIEW 4   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

## What first put dentistry in your mind, and what have you done since to test whether it is right for you?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What have you found out that made you less sure?
- What would change your mind now?

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

- A specific starting point they can date, rather than a story that sounds assembled for the interview.
- Real testing since: reading, a visit, a conversation with someone who does the job, or work that puts them in front of the public.
- Something they found out that complicated the picture, and what they did with it.
- A distinction between liking the idea of dentistry and wanting the working life it produces.
- Openness about what they still do not know, without sounding uncommitted.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

The testing is what this station is for. Two students can have the same reason for applying and be a long way apart on what they have done to check it.

## 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

**Describe something dull or repetitive you have watched someone do at work. What did it tell you about their job, and about dentistry?**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What kept them going through it?
- What would you find hardest about doing that every day?

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

- One concrete example from any workplace: stock, cleaning, paperwork, or the same conversation forty times in a shift.
- Notices that doing a routine thing to the same standard on the fortieth repeat is a skill, not a failure of the job.
- Links it honestly to dentistry, where much of the work is a small set of procedures done many times over.
- Says what they think would keep them steady through that, and is realistic about it.
- Does not dress the observation up as inspiring when it was simply dull.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

A shop, a kitchen or a care home gives a better answer here than a day spent shadowing a surgeon. Mark what they saw in the repetition, not where they saw it.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

|                                | Little evidence | Some evidence | Clear evidence | Strong evidence |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
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## ETHICAL REASONING

**A patient asks for an aching back tooth to be taken out rather than saved, because it is quicker and cheaper and he would rather not come back. What would you do?**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Does it change anything if he has already lost two teeth on that side?
- What if he genuinely cannot take more time off work?

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

- Takes the request seriously rather than treating it as ignorance: his reasons are real ones.
- Makes sure he knows what he is choosing, including what a gap does to the teeth around it and what replacing it later involves.
- Weighs his right to decide against the dentist's duty not to do lasting harm for the sake of convenience.
- Notices the pressures on both sides, including time off work and what a practice is paid for each option.
- Knows when the decision is his to make, and when to ask a senior colleague first.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

The tension is the patient's autonomy against long-term harm, and there is no single right answer. Mark whether they inform before they persuade, and whether they can respect a decision they would not make.

## 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

**Some areas add fluoride to the drinking water and some do not. What are the arguments on each side, and where would you come down?**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Who benefits most if it is added?
- What would you say to someone who objects to it on principle?

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

- Explains the case for it plainly: less decay across a whole population, including people who never see a dentist.
- Gives the case against fairly, including consent and choice, and the argument that a benefit does not settle the principle.
- Notices that the gain is largest for children in the poorest areas, which is why the question keeps returning.
- Distinguishes what they know from what they believe, and does not invent evidence.
- Takes a position when pressed, and gives a reason for it rather than sitting on the fence.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Stay neutral in your face as well as your words, because students guess what you want on this one. Mark how fairly they put the side they do not agree with.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

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## COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAY

**Your elderly neighbour has stopped going to the dentist because of what it costs. Speak to her now.**

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What if she says her teeth are fine and she would know?
- What if she asks you not to mention it to her family?

## BRIEF FOR THE PERSON PLAYING THE PART

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Your part        | You are seventy nine and last went two years ago. A denture rubs, so you chew on one side. You are proud and you want neither help nor pity, and you keep turning the talk to the candidate's exams. If they are gentle and specific, you admit the denture hurts. |
| Open with        | At my age it hardly matters. I get by perfectly well as I am.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| If handled well  | Admit the denture rubs, and agree to ask about it if they suggest something concrete.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| If handled badly | Become breezy and dismissive if they push, and say you will think about it.                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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

- Asks about her situation before offering any advice.
- Treats the cost as a real problem, not an excuse to argue with.
- Knows some patients pay nothing, and suggests she finds out rather than assuming.
- Leaves her with one step and her dignity intact.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Two people run this station: one marks, one plays the neighbour. Mark tact as much as content. No candidate is expected to know the charges.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

|                                | Little evidence | Some evidence | Clear evidence | Strong evidence |
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## DATA AND PROBLEM SOLVING

**Look at the table. Which of these would you want in your own mouth, and what else would you need to know first?**

## HOW LONG THREE KINDS OF REPAIR LAST, ONE INVENTED DATASET

| Repair        | Average years in place | In place at 10 years | Time in the chair |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| White filling | 7                      | 38%                  | 40 minutes        |
| Metal filling | 12                     | 61%                  | 35 minutes        |
| Crown         | 16                     | 78%                  | Two visits        |

These figures are invented for this exercise. They are not data from any real study and should not be quoted as such.

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Does the quickest option stay the cheapest over twenty years?
- What would change your answer if you were sixteen rather than sixty?

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

- Reads the table accurately, including the difference between an average lifespan and the share still in place at ten years.
- Sees that the longest lasting option is not automatically the right one for every tooth or every patient.
- Thinks about the whole life of the tooth: a replacement means more drilling, more time and more chances of a problem.
- Brings in what the table leaves out, including the patient's age, their habits and how much tooth is left.
- Notices that time in the chair matters to a frightened patient, and to a practice that has to pay for itself.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Print this page so the candidate can see the table. Mark the reasoning rather than any dental knowledge. The lifespans are invented, so do not correct a candidate with real figures.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

|                                | Little evidence | Some evidence | Clear evidence | Strong evidence |
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## PERSONAL INSIGHT

## What do you do when you make a mistake in something practical, where the mistake is there in front of everyone to see?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Who did you tell, and how quickly?
- What do you do with the feeling afterwards?

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

- A real example where something they made or did went wrong and could not be quietly deleted.
- Says what they did first, and whether that was to hide it, fix it or tell someone.
- Shows they can own a mistake without either shrugging it off or collapsing under it.
- Describes what actually changed in how they work afterwards.
- Connects it to a job where mistakes happen in someone's mouth and have to be declared.

## NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Dentistry is unforgiving about hidden errors. Listen for whether telling someone came early in the story or late, and mark honesty over polish.

## MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

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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.

**What first put  
dentistry in your  
mind, and what  
have you done  
since to test  
whether it is right  
for you?**

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

**Describe something dull or repetitive you have watched someone do at work. What did it tell you about their job, and about dentistry?**

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

**A patient asks for an aching back tooth to be taken out rather than saved, because it is quicker and cheaper and he would rather not come back. What would you do?**

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

**Some areas add fluoride to the drinking water and some do not. What are the arguments on each side, and where would you come down?**

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

**Your elderly  
neighbour has  
stopped going to  
the dentist  
because of what it  
costs. Speak to her  
now.**

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

**Look at the table.  
Which of these  
would you want in  
your own mouth,  
and what else  
would you need to  
know first?**

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

**What do you do  
when you make a  
mistake in  
something  
practical, where  
the mistake is  
there in front of  
everyone to see?**

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