

Running a Mock MMI at Your School: Teacher Guide

MedicHut for Schools - free toolkit, medichut.com/schools

This guide explains how to run a practice MMI (Multiple Mini Interview) for medicine applicants. The quick format needs no clinical expertise. Station 2 requires qualified clinical/legal sign-off before delivery. Print candidate pages separately from confidential assessor and actor pages.

What is an MMI?

MMI stands for Multiple Mini Interview. Instead of one long interview, the student moves around a circuit of short stations. Each station lasts about five to eight minutes and tests one thing, such as ethics, communication or motivation. A fresh assessor at each station scores the student independently.

Universities use different interview formats, including MMIs and panel interviews. The format each university uses is published on its admissions pages, and our question bank links to those pages for each university.

Why medical schools use interviews

Grades and admissions tests show academic ability. Interviews test the things grades cannot: communication, empathy, ethical reasoning, teamwork and whether the student understands what a career in medicine actually involves.

This is good news for you as a teacher. The quick format needs no clinical expertise. Sensitive clinical or legal teaching, including Station 2, needs qualified review before delivery.

What students are typically assessed on

This teaching toolkit uses the following qualities. University criteria may differ:

- Communication: clear, structured, listens as well as talks
- Empathy: understands other people's feelings and perspectives
- Reasoning: weighs both sides of a problem before deciding
- Reflection: can honestly describe what went well and what they would change
- Professionalism: honesty, respect and self-awareness
- Motivation: a realistic understanding of a healthcare career, drawing on accessible experiences and reliable research

How to prepare rooms and staff

You need one space per station. Classrooms, offices or marked corners of a hall all work. Put the printed candidate card face down on the desk outside or inside the station. Each station needs one assessor. Station 6 also needs an actor, who can be a staff member or a reliable sixth-form volunteer.

Brief every assessor before the day. Give them their station's assessor sheet and scoring sheets, and make sure they understand they are scoring communication and reasoning, not medical knowledge.

How to brief students

Use the slides provided, or cover these points yourself: the format and timings, that they get reading time before each station, that they cannot carry notes between stations, and that the assessors are not trying to catch them out. Reassure nervous students that being nervous is normal and that this is practice, not the real thing.

How to organise station rotations

Give each student a starting station number. On each bell, everyone moves to the next station in numerical order, with the last station wrapping back to the first. Print the rotation plan and pin it up where everyone can see it. With six students and six stations, everyone starts at once. With fewer students than stations, some stations simply sit empty each round.

How to manage timings

Use one loud timer or bell for the whole circuit so every station stays in step. The standard timing is 1 minute of reading time, then 6 minutes with the assessor, then 1 minute to change over. If a student finishes early, use listed follow-ups where supplied. Do not invent follow-ups during the role-play. If they run over, the bell ends the station anyway, just like the real thing.

How to assess without medical expertise

Every station in this toolkit comes with an assessor sheet listing what a stronger answer looks like and the common weaknesses. You are comparing what you hear against those descriptions. Score what you observe: did they structure the answer, did they show empathy, did they weigh both sides. You are not scoring whether their medical facts are correct.

Use the behavioural anchors on the scoring sheet. Choose Not observed when a criterion was not tested or could not be observed, including eye contact in Station 3. Explain the evidence rather than automatically choosing a lower rating. Do not total ratings to rank students.

How to give constructive feedback

Vague feedback like be more confident does not help. Use this shape instead: name two or three specific things that went well, give one or two specific, actionable improvements, and agree one thing to practise before the next session.

For example: your explanation was easy to follow because you used short steps. Next time, pause after each step and check what the listener understood. Do not treat eye contact as a universal requirement; respect individual access needs.

What to do if a student becomes distressed

Interviews can make anxious students tearful or frozen. If this happens, stop the station. It is practice, and nothing is at stake. Take them aside, be kind and normalise it: this is exactly why we practise. Offer to let them watch a station instead of answering, retry the same station later, or stop for the day. Follow your school's usual pastoral procedures if you have any wider concerns.

Supporting students with accessibility needs

Ask students in advance about any adjustments they receive in exams, and mirror those where you can. Reasonable adjustments might include extra reading time, a printed copy of questions in a larger font, a quieter room, or a break between stations. Tell students before the day what adjustments are available so nobody has to ask in front of the group.

Common mistakes teachers should avoid

- Letting stations run over time, which puts the whole circuit out of step
- Assessors giving a running commentary during the answer instead of listening
- Scoring medical knowledge rather than communication and reasoning
- Skipping the briefing, so students waste their first station working out the rules
- Giving only praise, or only criticism, instead of one strength and one change
- Treating the scoring as a precise science; it is a guide to help feedback, not an exam mark

The two formats

Quick School MMI (45 minutes for up to three candidates). Three stations: motivation, teamwork and role-play. Use three assessors and one actor for three candidates in parallel. With one assessor and one actor, run one candidate at a time; allow 45 minutes per candidate. Ethics is excluded while professional review is pending.

- 0 to 5 min: briefing and starting positions
- 5 to 12 min: round 1 (1 minute reading, 6 minutes answering)
- 12 to 13 min: changeover
- 13 to 20 min: round 2
- 20 to 21 min: changeover
- 21 to 28 min: round 3
- 28 to 33 min: assessors finish feedback sheets; students reflect quietly
- 33 to 45 min: return station feedback and agree one next practice task

Full School MMI (90 minutes for up to six candidates). Six assessors and one actor, with up to six candidates rotating in parallel. Station 2 must receive qualified clinical/legal review before delivery. Until then use the three-station format, not the unreviewed ethics station.

- 0 to 10 min: briefing and starting positions
- 10 to 17 min: round 1; 17 to 18 min: changeover
- 18 to 25 min: round 2; 25 to 26 min: changeover
- 26 to 33 min: round 3; 33 to 34 min: changeover
- 34 to 41 min: round 4; 41 to 42 min: changeover
- 42 to 49 min: round 5; 49 to 50 min: changeover
- 50 to 57 min: round 6
- 57 to 70 min: break, student reflection and assessor feedback preparation
- 70 to 90 min: return station feedback and agree next practice tasks

Worked rotation plans

Each row is one candidate. Columns are successive rounds. Each candidate answers every listed station once. Place each candidate at the first station in their row.

Quick School MMI

Candidate A: Station 1 > Station 5 > Station 6

Candidate B: Station 5 > Station 6 > Station 1

Candidate C: Station 6 > Station 1 > Station 5

Full School MMI

Candidate A: Station 1 > Station 2 > Station 3 > Station 4 > Station 5 > Station 6

Candidate B: Station 2 > Station 3 > Station 4 > Station 5 > Station 6 > Station 1

Candidate C: Station 3 > Station 4 > Station 5 > Station 6 > Station 1 > Station 2

Candidate D: Station 4 > Station 5 > Station 6 > Station 1 > Station 2 > Station 3

Candidate E: Station 5 > Station 6 > Station 1 > Station 2 > Station 3 > Station 4

Candidate F: Station 6 > Station 1 > Station 2 > Station 3 > Station 4 > Station 5

Setup checklist

- Six quiet station spaces with separate candidate cards, kept away from assessor sheets
- Six assessors, one actor for Station 6 and one person responsible for the shared timer
- Check professional sign-off for Station 2 before delivery
- One scoring sheet per candidate per station and one overall feedback form per candidate
- Print the rotation rows below. Row A starts at Station 1, row B at Station 2, and so on

Contingencies:

- Fewer staff: use the quick format. Running two three-station halves requires a separate timetable, not this 90-minute plan
- More candidates: run another complete circuit or a later cohort. Observers do not count as having answered a station
- For paired practice, repeat the full rotation after swapping roles so both students answer every station
- Use school-agreed access adjustments and build any extra reading or rest time into a revised shared timetable