



# Approach to CASPer

SAMVEG SHAH [MED 2]

CASPer is an online test that medical schools across the world are starting to implement in their selection process. CASPer is comprised of 12 prompts. Each prompt has 3 associated questions that you are asked to answer within a time limit of 5 minutes. The answers are analyzed and marked by a group of human raters to vet for professionalism, empathy, and other valuable qualities for the profession. Rater's scores are normalized to ensure fairness to all applicants. Below, I'm going to give some advice to prepare for CASPer.

Overall, there are two types of prompts that may come up - personal prompts, and situation-based prompts. Personal prompts ask you to reflect on your experiences and talk about what you have learned through this process. For example, personal prompts will ask you about a time that you showed strength, conflict-resolution techniques, etc. Situation-based prompts will ask you to imagine yourself in a specific circumstance and the questions will ask you to describe your thought process.

*Just a heads up - this is my personal opinion, and what I found helpful. There are millions of approaches to doing well on CASPer and there's no secret sauce to getting a good score. These are just some tips to point you in the right direction!*

## General advice

1. **Be honest, have fun, and take care of your physical and mental health during the application cycle!** You're about to start an incredible journey and we believe in you!
2. **Practise, practise, practise.** As students, we are trained to study. This means that you will need to do practise scenarios. Personally, I went through as many MMI (Multiple Mini Interview) scenarios as possible and typed up my answers to the prompts while I was timing myself. This was super beneficial as I would have had to prep for the MMI later, and I was a bit ahead of the curve!
3. **Ask your friends to review your responses.** Find a study group, and ask your friends to review what you wrote. Their feedback is extremely helpful as they are likely to show you another point of view which is always helpful!
4. **Try to do mock exams.** You don't have to pay for these (I didn't!). Simply find 12 MMI scenarios online, and give yourself 5 minutes to answer each. Run through them all one after the other as you would on test day!
5. **Account for test-day anxiety.** Personally, I find that I get super nervous on test days, and my brain "lags" behind. To prepare for this, I would try to complete my questions within 4.5 minutes instead of 5. This ensured that I had an extra 30 seconds for my brain to get back to reality.
6. **Practise, practise, practise.** I can't stress this enough - you should do as many scenarios as possible.



### Approach to Personal Questions

1. **Try to have some stories/scenarios ready to go.** These stories should be variable and they should ideally reflect times when you have displayed your strengths, weaknesses, conflict resolutions techniques, teamwork, one of your mistakes, challenged authority, were challenged by an authoritative figure, etc.
2. **On test day, take your time to calmly read the prompt, and the questions they are asking.** When we are nervous and pressed for time, we often ramble incoherently. Instead, take a deep breath, think about what you want to say, and then start typing. It's always quality over quantity. Answering 2 parts of a 3 part question very well is much better than answering all 3 parts poorly.
3. **Always format your answer - start off with an introduction that sets the scene for the paragraph.** Describe the situation in 1 or 2 sentences, and what you did in the next 1 or 2 sentences, Lastly, end off the scenario with lessons learned. You don't have to relate the lessons specifically to medicine, however if they're relevant, draw a connection.
4. **Try to be genuine with your answers.** It's okay to show weaknesses, and it's okay to talk about failures. It makes you seem human and more candid in the eyes of a reviewer.

### Approach to Situation-based Questions

1. **Take your time to calmly read the prompt or watch the video and understand the major themes they are dwelling on.** Usually, they'll be asking you to compare two of the three tenets of medical ethics - beneficence (to help others), justice (to help society), and autonomy (allowing people to make decisions for themselves).
2. **In your introductory sentence, list the two opposing views to show that you understand the crux of the dilemma.** Next take 2 or 3 sentences to convey the pros and cons for both sides to show that you have thoroughly thought about the issue. Lastly, pick a side and try to defend it. You may use personal examples and stories, relevant current/old news, legal or medico legal arguments, or even just mention that it's your gut feeling. It's important to be honest here, try to pick a side that you truly believe in, rather than what you assume is the "medical school" answer - your argument should be passionate.
3. **Practise, practise, practise.** I really can't stress this enough! Get your friends to review your answers and try to understand their points of views.

