

Student Progress Committee (SPC) Interview Advice Document

Tips on how to prepare for an SPC Interview

It can be overwhelming to be asked to come before the SPC for an interview. Student Affairs, the Student Progress Committee, and students who have interacted with SPC collaborated on this document. We hope it will help you understand the process. **It is not intended to be a policy statement and isn't tailored to your individual situation.** We are sharing it with you in hopes of your future success.

SPC really wants every student to graduate! This is your chance to tell them how you are going to succeed going forward. Quotes from actual students after meeting with SPC:

"Sometimes it may feel like the SPC is this evil congress of villains that are out to get us, but they really do care about our success and their main goal is to help us."

"This isn't a trial. You aren't being asked to defend all your struggles or mistakes. This is an opportunity to explain your progress, share your plan for success, and assert your continued commitment to a career in medicine."

Do

- Use the resources available to you!
 - Read your SPC letter one more time.
 - Meet with a Student Affairs Dean and the Proactive Advisor to strategize what your path going forward should look like academically.
 - Consult with your College Mentor (or faculty mentor of your choice) for advice on what/how much to share with SPC. Get their feedback on your written and oral statements before the meeting. Ask them to come to the meeting to support you. (SPC staff will work with them on the details – you don't need to do that)
 - Meet with your Academic Support specialist to help make a concrete study plan.
 - Schedule a mock interview with the Seattle Counseling Team. They are great at navigating what information to present and giving you a chance to practice.
- Strike a balance between privacy and transparency. Personal issues, medical diagnoses, and other private matters often impact performance. Do find a trusted person to share these with openly, such as the medical school counselor, to help navigate whether these should be shared with SPC. SPC has a firm commitment to confidentiality, and hearing about any underlying issues directly from you can help SPC better understand your situation.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before, be well-rested, and arrive early.
- Dress up. You don't need a full-on med school interview outfit, but nicer attire shows you are taking this seriously.

- Keep your letter to SPC brief and clear
 - 1- 3 pages: “less is more”
 - See template below for content suggestions
 - Divide the letter into sections for ease of reading
 - Pay attention to margins, font, spelling and grammar
 - Do have someone you trust proofread it for errors and style.
 - Make sure to submit it on time (1 week prior to meeting)
 - Self-reflection and sincerity are key
- Keep the focus of your letter on your future success
 - Talk about what has changed that will allow for your success
 - List the specific resources that will support you going forward
 - Be clear and realistic with your plans
- Practice your oral statement for SPC
 - Your oral summary should a summary of the most relevant points of your letter
 - This is your opportunity to convey your potential to succeed in school and your commitment to medicine.
 - Do the mock interview mentioned above
 - Should be less than 10 minutes – think of the difference between a patient write up (your written statement) and an oral case presentation (your oral statement).
 - If there are things that you prefer to share verbally rather than in a document, this is your opportunity
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Don't

- **Don't try to do this process on your own. While this is a stressful and overwhelming (and perhaps embarrassing) experience, lean on the individuals at UWSOM who offer support and are there for you.**
- Don't state every detail of all of your blocks/classes/circumstances
- Don't entirely blame others (think about what parts you can own)
- Don't forget to write about your plan for success and be specific
- Don't give a long oral statement at SPC. Your statement should be 10 min or less, with the rest of the time for questions from committee members.
- Don't read your letter aloud. It's ok to read a prepared statement, but you don't need to read your whole letter. SPC members will have reviewed it just before your interview.
- Don't respond to SPC's questions with anger or defensiveness.

Letter to SPC: Template

Name

Date

Introduction

- Thank the committee for their time
- Brief statement of who you are
- State what led to the problem(s) that require your SPC interview.

Past Circumstances

- What happened: brief overview. The committee has your academic record in front of them, so you don't need to repeat all the details.
- Consider bullet points
- Take ownership of the parts that you can. While external circumstances are important, owning how you responded to them is important because it shows what can be different in the future.
- It is tempting to try to show that circumstances beyond your control caused the problem. But make sure you make an honest accounting so you can tell SPC what parts of the problem are within your capacity to change. This is key!

Strategies for Success

This is the most important section! It should be very specific and should include:

- actions you have taken
- further actions you plan to take
- resources you will lean on
- a timeline for your plan
- ways you will keep yourself accountable
- achievements you've already made (i.e., my practice step scores have already increased from X to Y)

Future Plans

Brief statement of your career goals, "if I am allowed to continue in medical school..."

- Does not need to be specific
- Give a general sense of where you see yourself in the future.