

Med/Vet/Dental Application Newsletter

Situational Judgement Tests

2026 – 2027 Cycle

March 2026

As many of you already know, there is one more facet of the application process – the Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs). Situational Judgement Tests (SJT) aim to evaluate a person’s [personal and professional competencies](#), with a focus on ethical problem-solving. SJTs are scenario-based tests that assess how you make “judgment calls,” or in other words, how you think through a situation in real life using ethical and humanistic problem-solving. You can, and should, prepare, though it is a very manageable process, and actually very interesting!

There are TWO SJTs, each of which has a distinct approach. Depending on your school list, you may not need to take either, you may need only one, or you may need to take both. One is called CASPer, which is hosted by Acuity Insights. The other was created by the AAMC and is called the AAMC PREview Professional Readiness Exam. Most of you will have a medical school list that requires you to take one or both tests, so please review this newsletter to understand what they are, what they entail, and how to prepare for them.

Contents

What are CASPER and AAMC Preview, and what is their purpose?	1
Preparing for CASPER	2
Preparing for AAMC PREview	3
Considerations for Ethical Decision-Making.....	3
You’ve Got This!.....	4
Where can I find HPP Application Resources?.....	4

What are CASPER and AAMC Preview, and what is their purpose?

CASPer and PREview are two different SJTs, and each approaches its tests from a different perspective.

CASPer asks applicants: WHAT they would do in a hypothetical dilemma and, importantly, WHY they would do it, including what the possible impact or outcome might be of that choice. CASPer presents a video or written scenario and asks open-ended questions for applicants to reflect on. Answers are timed, and applicants provide either written responses or video responses. For CASPer, the emphasis is on using your combined life wisdom and knowledge to name the dilemma; note the main stakeholders, what possible approaches you might take, and the potential consequences of different approaches. If they ask you to make a final decision, it would be based on thinking through those elements and drawing a conclusion you think is best, all things considered.

Prioritize recognizing different points of view and avoid being judgmental. If the situation has complexity, acknowledge that. Think of an “if/then” type of approach. For instance, “Given this situation/stakeholder, I would consider X, which might have X outcomes; on the other hand, taking into account W, I would do K because...In the end, I’d do X...”

PREview was created by the AAMC. Its approach is quite different and asks applicants to evaluate “the effectiveness of a series of behavioral responses to each scenario.” They are interested in what you think is the best, or what they designate as a “very effective” answer. It’s multiple choice, and the answer options are: very effective, effective, ineffective, or very ineffective. Scenarios emphasize the ethos of medical school applicants/future physicians. It’s evaluated such that “very effective” is NOT the only “right answer, so much as on a gradient of best answers.

Important Things to Know:

- **YOU CAN AND SHOULD PREPARE FOR SJTS IF SCHOOLS ON YOUR MED SCHOOL LIST REQUIRE IT. PREPARATION IS STRAIGHTFORWARD; YOU CAN PREPARE ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT BUYING SPECIAL COACHING.**
- **CASPer** is used by several medical, dental, and other professional health schools. Some schools use it in the applicant review process, and some use it only for research. You can find out which schools use CASPer by checking [its website](#). CASPer is hosted by Acuity Insights.
- **PREview** is only used for medical schools. At this time, only a handful of schools require it, but if one of those schools is on your list, you will need to take it. The AAMC posts updated information about participating schools on [its website](#).
- **Fee Assistance:** If you were approved for Fee Assistance from AMCAS, AACOMAS, Texas JAMP, or Texas Early Assurance, both PREview and CASPer will honor that, and you won’t be charged.

Preparing for CASPER

CASPer presents scenarios that could happen in day-to-day life that require assessing the situation and making a judgment call. CASPer wants to know your thought process; therefore, it’s important to practice “showing” your thought process when faced with a scenario, rather than simply presenting your conclusion. Name the problem/dilemma. Who are the stakeholders? What are the different or creative ways you can approach the problem? What are the possible ramifications of these approaches? Does the scenario call for empathy and compassion? In considering all of this, what are your values? What choices would you make and why? Practice thinking out loud through writing and speaking.

CASPer is divided into two different sections – a video response section and a typed section. There are 11 scenarios in total in the test. For the video response section, there are four questions, and you will have one minute to record your response for each question. For the typed response section, each scenario will have two questions, and you will have 3.5 minutes to respond to the two questions.

Give yourself time to practice thinking and writing down the steps of your thought process, including the possible different perspectives and ramifications of the choices you might make. After getting a feel for “thinking out loud,” **practice typing out your thoughts with a timer at hand**. You can also prepare for the video response section by speaking aloud and recording yourself on Zoom.

- All of this is great interview prep!
- While we wish you didn’t have to do more “stuff,” it is very thought-provoking to walk through these types of scenarios, and you will genuinely gain growth and insight from the process.

Please note the following:

- **Be sure to review the [FAQ](#) and [Test Prep](#) sections of the website to prepare for CASPer.**
- If you haven't used your full allotted five minutes for the typed response section, review your answer. Consider if there's anything else you can reflect on or if there's another element to the scenario.
- You will not be graded on spelling or grammar—you may even get cut off mid-sentence, but do make sure that your answers are clear and understandable.

Preparing for AAMC PREview

Unlike CASPer, PREview is a multiple-choice exam. You can learn more about PREview content, policies, and procedures by reviewing the [AAMC's PREview Essentials handbook](#). You can also prepare by using the AAMC's [preparation resources](#).

To prepare, take the two AAMC PREview Practice Exams. After the first one, use the answer key that provides the rationale for each answer. Go through their answer guide thoroughly so you can get an understanding of how they are thinking about the problems presented in their scenarios. *Even if you are not taking PREview, it is still valuable and useful for interview prep and professional development.* Unlike CASPer, PREview sets up the scenario and creates the different approaches for you, but then for each approach, PREview asks you to decide if it is "Most Effective, Effective, Ineffective, or Very Ineffective." There could be multiple effective or ineffective choices for any scenario.

Considerations for Ethical Decision-Making

As you review the information for both SJTs, there are a few principles that may help you consider your answers for either SJT. When it comes to ethics, much is written, but there are four basic principles:

- Autonomy (respecting the rights of individuals and letting them make choices for themselves).
- Beneficence (doing good; what is in someone's best interests).
- Non-maleficence (avoiding harm).
- Justice (while acknowledging the law).

As you check out practice scenarios for CASPer and review the practice test for PREview, consider how any of these principles might play a role in your reflection. It's not about "naming" the principles in your answers but utilizing an understanding of their meaning in your reflections/assessments.

Why do some applicants score better on CASPer?

According to the CASPer FAQ page, applicants score better based on the following criteria:

- **Effort:** They may have tried harder to respond to questions (for instance, they may have explained their position fully or used the full amount of time before moving on to the next question, compared to those who applicants who place in the first quartile).
- **Empathy:** They considered all perspectives in a meaningful way.
- **Equity:** They show the same high degree of respect for the experiences and needs of others.
- **Communication:** They demonstrated above-average ability to effectively articulate their ideas.
- **Familiarity with the medium:** They familiarized themselves with the format of the test (video, typed response, etc.) and were able to successfully navigate these aspects of the test.

What about PREview?

- This is a newer test with less feedback. Its approach might even seem to conflict with the CASPer approach, but think of it as expanding one's approach options to life situations. Familiarity with the practice exam and answer guide will be most helpful. As you review their answer guide, pay attention to the nuances of what they consider effective/most effective to consciously understand what makes them so.

Steps in the Ethical Decision-Making Process-you can practice this way of thinking.

- State the problem and gather the facts.
- Note the ethical issues.
- Identify the affected parties and relevant factors (e.g., stakeholders).
- Think creatively about potential actions (vs dualistic yes/no; right/wrong).
- Identify the consequences,
- Identify the obligations (principles, rights, justice).
- Consider your character and integrity.
- Check your instinct.
- Decide on the proper ethical action and be prepared to deal with opposing arguments.

Having a framework in mind, such as the PPRDJ, can be helpful when approaching ethical decision-making scenarios.

- **Problem:** Identify the main problems or conflicts
- **Perspective:** Identify the perspectives of each of the people involved
- **Responsibility:** Identify your responsibility in this situation
- **Decision:** Make a decision about how you should approach the situation
- **Justify:** Justify your Decision

You've Got This!

Use prompts you can find online for CASPer. Use free websites to gather examples. For PREview, use their materials thoroughly. It will take an investment of a few hours in both cases, but it will pay off! We really don't know how SJTs are utilized in application decisions, so give yourself the best odds possible in case they are considered strongly by some school, and again, take comfort in knowing they absolutely contribute to interview prep.

Where can I find HPP Application Resources?

As we move through the application cycle, we'll post links to our newsletters, resources, and forms to the [Resources, Newsletters, & Forms](#) page of the HPP website. Additionally, you can find recordings of our application workshops and medical school admissions webinars on our [Application & Admissions Webinars](#) page. **We strongly encourage you to bookmark these pages for your ease of reference.**