Multiple mini-interviews are being used collaboratively by a higher education institution and an NHS trust to select nurses with the right skills and value.

**In this article...**
- How multiple mini-interviews differ from traditional interviews
- Who can conduct MMIs
- How MMIs help in the assessment of attitude and values with return to practice nurses

**Authors** Val McGouran is lecturer in adult nursing and course director return to practice; Katrina Emerson is lecturer in adult nursing and director of admission; both at University of East Anglia; Julia Saunders is practice development nurse at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King’s Lynn Foundation Trust.

The effectiveness of traditional interviews in assessing candidates’ suitability for nursing has been called into question (Perkins et al, 2013; Rodgers et al, 2013). There is also a risk of interview bias or chance (Eva et al, 2009). The use of the multiple mini-interview (MMI) to select candidates was pioneered in Canada; it is now used in many parts of the world.

Several studies have evaluated the MMI’s feasibility, validity and effectiveness in determining the suitability of applicants and their subsequent clinical performance (Dowell et al, 2012; Eva et al, 2009; 2004; Reiter et al, 2007). Its success as an indicator of the professionalism and task performance (Dowell et al, 2012; Eva et al, 2009) has been called into question (Perkins et al, 2013; Rodgers et al, 2013). There is also a risk of interview bias or chance (Eva et al, 2009).

Preparing and running the MMIs

The School of Nursing Sciences at the University of East Anglia prepares students for interviews after qualifying by offering them practice in interview skills. The school recently adopted the MMI system in collaboration with King’s Lynn Foundation Trust, one of our service partners.

Chances and bias may be prevented by using many different interviewers and, to assist us in the MMI practice interviews, we recruited a trust governor, a service user, an NHS manager, a matron, a practice development nurse, a ward sister and a nurse lecturer. The interviews were offered to students on a return-to-nursing course and 10 took part.

On the day, we provided several short independent assessments at several stations, each with a theme. The time at each station was kept short, and stations were run simultaneously, with students moving in a circuit from station to station to prevent unnecessary waiting. Interviewers remained at the same station, where they assessed candidates on agreed criteria, such as professionalism, collaboration, communication and interpersonal skills, and task performance. This system potentially gives candidates and interviewers a better chance of producing a good performance as they concentrate on one theme at a time.

A fairer approach

In an informal discussion after the MMIs, students said they preferred the MMI approach to traditional interviews.

All students said anxiety had affected their performance regardless of which station they started at. However, they felt they gave a better performance as the interview cycle progressed and said they enjoyed the process once they had overcome their nervousness.

Interviewers found the MMI system less fatiguing and more interesting than traditional interviews. Many valued the informality the system created but would have liked to have spent more time with the candidates. They also appreciated the opportunity to be involved in candidate selection.

The MMI approach may be a fairer system than the traditional interview. It allows a fuller assessment of a candidate’s attitudes and values. Involving different NHS personnel and service users appears to improve the selection process. It could also help to achieve a more accurate understanding of whether a candidate has the 6Cs – care, compassion, competence, communication, courage and commitment – that the chief nurse has called for.

**References**


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