

# Post-Baccalaureate Health Professions

## Situational Judgment Tests Casper and PREview



Continuing Education  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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1. What are they and why are they part of the admissions process?
  2. Casper Tips
  3. Duet Tips
  4. PREview Tips



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## Why are SJTs part of the admissions process?

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Among students with similarly strong academic records, experiences, and recommendations, some thrive in professional school and as clinicians, whereas others struggle with interpersonal skills and/or professionalism.

Motivation from an admissions perspective: **Are there better ways to predict who falls into which category?**

## Why are SJTs part of the admissions process?

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Motivation from an admissions perspective: **Are there better ways to predict who falls into which category?**

### How scores are typically used:

- **In admissions:**
  - Typically used as a screen-in tool rather than a screen-out tool
  - Possible exception: If LORs flag professionalism concerns *and* the SJT score is also low, that may give pause ... but these factors are still considered within a holistic review process
- **For institutional use (*not* in admissions):**
  - Identify the incoming students who may benefit from additional guidance/mentoring
  - Collect data over time to assess if there is a statistically significant relationship between SJT scores and successful progression through professional school.

# Casper vs. PREview

They assess similar competencies in different ways.

Casper	PREview
<p><b>“What would you do?”</b></p> <p>Free-response format: written and video scenario prompts, spoken and typed response formats</p> <p>There isn't a “right answer” The focus is on your thought process</p> <p><b>Commonly required by professional schools.</b></p>	<p><b>“How effective is this action?”</b></p> <p>Read a written scenario, rank the effectiveness of each option provided</p> <p>There IS a right answer Answers adjacent to it are worth partial credit</p> <p><b>Recommended by many MD and DO schools*, required by several.</b></p>

Scores can be very different!



\* At the schools that recommend PREview but don't require it, typically ~60% of applicants have taken it.

# Casper vs. PREview

	Casper	PREview
<b>Payment</b>	Initial fee includes multiple schools, additional fee to add more schools	Single fee covers all school designations
<b>Score Reports</b>	Applicants receive quartile score, schools receive actual score	Applicants receive actual score
<b>How Long Scores Last</b>	Limit of one test per year, score is only good for that testing year	Limit of two tests per year, schools will see all scores ever earned

**Applies to both:**

- Offered on select dates; register in advance. Take at home with a live, remote proctor.
- Duration: 65 to 85 minutes
- Plan on ~5 to 8 hours of prep time with free materials



# What are they assessing?



Casper



PREview

# What are they assessing?

Questions are based on common, realistic situations that you are likely to face, not high-stakes ethical dilemmas.

How You Interact With Others	How You Conduct Yourself Professionally	How You Learn From Your Experiences: Know Better, Do Better	How You Solve Problems and Navigate Ambiguous Situations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Communication Skills</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Cultural Awareness</li> <li>• Cultural Humility</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Commitment to Equity</li> <li>• Dependability</li> <li>• Ethical Responsibility to Self &amp; Others</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Motivation (drive to participate &amp; contribute)</li> <li>• Reliability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to Learning &amp; Growth</li> <li>• Self-Awareness</li> <li>• Self-Reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Problem-Solving</li> <li>• Resilience</li> </ul>

# Casper

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## Video-based scenario 2: Group Contribution



Watch the video in full, then click below to see the sample questions. During the Casper test, you will have 3.5 minutes to answer both questions.

Questions to the Applicant –

You are a group member.

1. One of your group members, Paul, has stopped contributing to your group assignment due to a medical condition. How should you and your group members handle this situation? Explain your response.
2. Imagine that Paul contributed a significant amount to the assignment before he put his courses on hold. How, if at all, would this change your response to the previous question? Explain your reasoning.

# Casper: Format

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## Two sections: Video Response and Typed Response

Within each section, some of the scenarios will be presented in writing and others as a video vignette to watch.

### Video Response Section

- 30 seconds to organize thoughts
- Two questions, asked one at a time
- 1 minute to respond to each

### Typed Response Section

- 30 seconds to organize thoughts
- Two questions asked at same time
- 3.5 minutes to type full answer to both questions  
- Typically 5-8 sentences

Note: The limited response time is meant to reduce opportunities for cheating. They know you'll probably run out of time and end up getting cut off mid-sentence. That's totally normal; it's better to get cut off than to give a short answer that is less complete.

# Casper: Rating

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## Separate rater for each scenario

- Reduces the potential that a given rater’s unconscious biases will impact your overall score
- Even if you bungle one answer, the raters for the other scenarios won’t know.
- Final score is an average of all raters’ unique impressions of your various responses
- Scoring is normalized relative to peers
- Raters are from wide range of backgrounds, professions, and geographies

# Types of Casper questions

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<b>Situational</b>	“What would you do in this tricky situation?”	Use Casper Decision-Making Framework
<b>Complex Social Issues</b>	“What do you think society should do?”	Use Casper Decision-Making Framework
<b>Behavioral</b>	“Think about a time when ...”	Identify the competencies being assessed Respond using STARR Framework
<b>Personal Reflection</b>	“What are your personal preferences?”	State your view and explain why Reflect on its strengths and limitations Provide an illustrative example

# Casper: What strong responses have in common

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## Guidance in a nutshell:

- The point of Casper to explain your thought process:  
What factors do you consider as you grapple with a multifaceted topic?



## For Situational Questions and Complex Social Issues:

- **Focus on telling the rater how you would think about the situation and how you would arrive at a decision.**
- **Avoid jumping to conclusions.** You won't have all of the facts. There is more going on than it appears on the surface.
- **Don't rush to a solution.**
  - A common mistake is immediately jump to saying what you would do. That's actually the **least** important element of your answer.
  - Any proposed solutions in alignment with Casper's competencies are valid.
- **Don't stress about trying to "check every box."** The goal is to demonstrate thoughtful reasoning.

# Casper: What strong responses have in common

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## Demonstrate the competencies

- How you interact with others
- How you conduct yourself professionally
- How you learn from your experiences: know better, do better
- How you solve problems and navigate ambiguous situations

# Casper: What strong responses have in common

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## Demonstrate the competencies

- How you interact with others
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- How you learn from your experiences: know better, do better
- How you solve problems and navigate ambiguous situations

### Responding to Problem-Solving Prompts in Casper

- What issues or trade-offs are you being asked to weigh? State them.
- Consider multiple perspectives and catch assumptions.
- What additional information would you want to gather to make an informed decision? How?
- Consider and evaluate multiple reasonable solutions.



# Casper Decision-Making Framework

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- 1. What issues or trade-offs are you being asked to weigh? State them.**
  - What competencies might this question be trying to assess?
- 2. Consider multiple perspectives and catch assumptions.**
  - Who could be impacted by the outcome? In what ways are their interests in conflict?
  - For scenario-based questions: Express empathy for each of the people involved.
  - Are there assumptions you are tempted to make? If the prompt is leading you to have a negative judgment about someone's behavior, that means that there are unnamed factors influencing their behavior.
- 3. What additional information would you want to gather to make an informed decision? How?**
  - For scenario-based prompts: Always start by respectfully talking with the people involved to understand what they are worried about and what their constraints are.
  - Where applicable, say that you would consult relevant policies or supervisors.
  - What else would you want to know? How might you learn more before making a decision?
- 4. Consider and evaluate multiple reasonable solutions** (more info on next slide)
  - Identify and choose between Options A and B, or
  - Describe a series of steps you'd take to find your way to a solution.

# Casper Decision-Making Framework

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## 4. Consider and evaluate multiple reasonable solutions.

### 1. Identify and choose between Option A & Option B

- Identify a couple of possible courses of action, discussing their upsides and downsides
- Then state, “Based on the information I currently have, I’d choose Option A because \_\_\_\_.”
  - State which value you’ve chosen to prioritize and how it led you to select that option.

### 2. Describe a series of steps you’d take to find your way to a solution

- “The first thing I would try is \_\_\_\_\_. Depending on how that goes, then I’d \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Indicate how the information you’d gather would push you toward one response or another.

**Tip:** If the scenario points to a broader systemic issue, you could discuss longer-term improvements that could prevent similar problems in the future.

# Casper Tips from a High-Scoring Student

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## Guidance from former student Aliya Cowie:

- A good goal is to try to answer the question: “Who all is affected, and how do I support everyone fairly?”
- I often started with something along the lines of, “I can understand why person A would feel X and person B would feel Y,” or by saying, “This is a difficult situation and I’d want to avoid placing blame when I don’t know all the facts.”
- My answers predominantly focused on:
  - Acknowledging the emotions or reasons for the actions taken, and
  - Identifying any missing information or proposing questions I’d want to know before reaching a decision.
- A lot of questions seemed like they were trying to goad us into saying something like, “Person A was wrong to steal the bike.” Resist! It is critical to avoid that trap.
- I often found myself saying: “Should \_\_\_\_\_ prove true, I would likely take \_\_\_\_\_ action, but if \_\_\_\_\_ was the case, then it would be prudent to consider \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Casper Example

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**Question:** *Do you think that your group member, who has a fear of public speaking, should present the research findings on behalf of the group at the upcoming lecture? Why or why not?*

## Casper Example

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**Question:** *Do you think that your group member, who has a fear of public speaking, should present the research findings on behalf of the group at the upcoming lecture? Why or why not?*

### The Casper Approach to Problem-Solving

- What issues or trade-offs are you being asked to weigh? State them.
- Consider multiple perspectives and catch assumptions.
- What additional information would you want to gather to make an informed decision? How?
- Consider and evaluate multiple reasonable solutions:
  - Identify and choose between Option A & Option B, or
  - Describe a series of steps you'd take to find your way to a solution

## Casper Example

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### Low-scoring response:

*I think that group member who has a fear of public speaking should definitely be encouraged to present the research findings. I strongly believe that you cannot overcome the fear of something unless you experience it at least once in your life.*

## Casper Example

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### Low-scoring response:

Fails to consider multiple perspectives

*I think that group member who has a fear of public speaking should definitely be encouraged to present the research findings. I strongly believe that you cannot overcome the fear of something unless you experience it at least once in your life.*

Superficial reasoning

Fails to demonstrate key aspects of social intelligence & professionalism

## Casper Example

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### Medium-scoring response:

*I think that since the group member has a fear of public speaking to the point where she has panic attacks then she should not have to present. She can always explain in detail and help the other group members grasp the material better so they can present. Her fear can lead to a bad presentation so delgating that role to other students may be more benefical.*

*Note: It's okay to have typos!*

## Casper Example

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### Medium-scoring response:

demonstrates Casper aspects of empathy and collaboration

Considers multiple perspectives

*I think that since the group member has a fear of public speaking to the point where she has panic attacks then she should not have to present. She can always explain in detail and help the other group members grasp the material better so they can present. Her fear can lead to a bad presentation so delgating that role to other students may be more benefical.*

Reasonable Justification

# Casper Example

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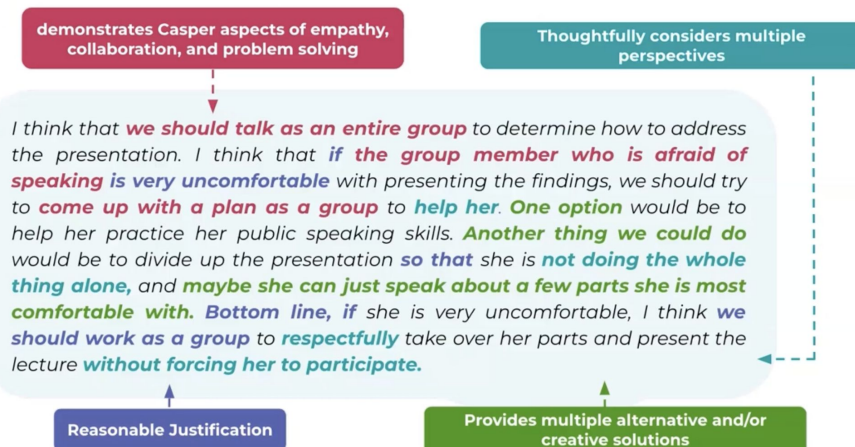
## High-scoring response:

*I think that we should talk as an entire group to determine how to address the presentation. I think that if the group member who is afraid of speaking is very uncomfortable with presenting the findings, we should try to come up with a plan as a group to help her. One option would be to help her practice her public speaking skills. Another thing we could do would be to divide up the presentation so that she is not doing the whole thing alone, and maybe she can just speak about a few parts she is most comfortable with. Bottom line, if she is very uncomfortable, I think we should work as a group to respectfully take over her parts and present the lecture without forcing her to participate.*

# Casper Example

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## High-scoring response:



# Casper: Logistical Tips From Former Students

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## Before the Test

- Choose a testing date that aligns with your application timeline: allow 2 to 3 weeks for score report
- To overcome camera shyness, practice by regularly sending video messages to your friends and family:
  - Text messages
  - Marco Polo app
- Since there is a video component to Casper, be intentional about presenting a professional image:
  - Record your video responses in a well-lit, uncluttered, private room so you won't be interrupted or accidentally display something in the video that you don't intend for others to see.
  - Wear comfortable "business casual" attire
    - Raters are aiming to focus on the substance of your answers and not your clothing, but certain clothing choices can be distracting (e.g., pajamas)
  - Ensure your webcam is on, uncovered, and facing you.
  - Your microphone should be close to your mouth for clear audio, with the volume adjusted for optimal recording.

# Casper: Logistical Tips From Former Students

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## Test Day Tips

- **General Guidance**
  - Use the total time allotted when responding to each question. It is unlikely that you can provide a complete answer in less than the allotted time.
  - If you start to feel flustered because you're running out of time, it may help if you normalize the experience by remembering that everyone across the country who is taking the test at that very same moment is under the same time pressure, and they're probably running out of time, too.

# Casper: Logistical Tips From Former Students

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## Test Day Tips

- **Video Response Section**
  - Take notes as you watch the scenario:
    - Write down key details, including people's names and roles.
    - Use your notes to help keep track of perspectives and relevant information.
- **Written Response Section**
  - Prioritize speed, clarity of reasoning, and a comprehensive answer over spelling and grammar
    - The raters have been trained to ignore typos and sentence fragments. They know you are under time pressure.
  - Bullet points are acceptable.
  - Copy-and-paste is not available.



# How to prepare for Casper

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## Casper Technical Prep

- Review the “Technical Requirements for the Casper Test” webpage in advance.
- You’ll need to complete a mandatory System Requirements Check within 6 hours of your test’s start time.

## Casper Test Prep

- Acuity Insights’ Casper Test Prep page:
  - Read **all** of the information on that page.
  - Complete each of the sample scenarios at the bottom of that page.
- After creating your Acuity Insights account, complete the full official practice test.
  - Includes both video responses and typed response question types.
- Practice additional timed scenarios using the response framework we've discussed until it feels natural.
  - Source additional practice prompts from third-party services or AI.
  - Caveat: do not over-prepare. Just practice enough to feel comfortable with the framework and timing.



# Duet

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**Acuity Insights also offers a short survey called Duet that is sometimes required by schools.**

## What is it?

- A values-based assessment that helps schools determine if your interests are a good match for their program.
- They will give you pairs of program characteristics to consider and will ask you to select which in the pair is more important to you.

Examples:

- Would you prefer to focus on research or on service to people in underserved populations?
- Are you interested in working in an urban setting or rural?
- No prep is needed. There are no right or wrong answers. If you've chosen schools that genuinely align with your background and interests, your Duet responses will be on-point.



# Duet

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## Duet Logistics

- No additional fee – the cost is covered by your Casper registration fee
- Approximately 15 minutes long
- Once you've scheduled a Casper test date, you can take Duet at home at any time.
  - If you take Duet within two weeks of your Casper test date, schools will get both results at the same time. It's also fine to take it later.
- After you register for Casper and select your schools, Duet will automatically appear in your Acuity Insights account if any of those schools require it.



# PREview

## MD/DO only

- You'll be given scenarios of hypothetical situations you could encounter as a medical student.
- For each scenario, you are given a list of possible actions you could take.
- You'll assess each proposed action independently: is it likely to make the situation a lot better, a little better, a little worse, or a lot worse?
  - Not a rank-order list. There could be several actions that would make it a lot better, several that would make it a lot worse, etc.
- There IS a correct answer. If you're one rating away on the correct side of the scale from the right answer, you'll get half-credit. No credit for other answers.



# PREview Example

You are pursuing a two-week volunteer opportunity at a well-regarded local clinic. When you receive your course schedule, you realize the volunteer opportunity would conflict with your weekly required lab. This is the only time that the lab is offered this semester, so you are not able to make up the lab. Participation in the lab will count toward your grade.

*Please rate the effectiveness of each response to this situation.*

1. Skip your lab for two weeks to attend the volunteer opportunity.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Ask your lab instructor to identify a solution that will allow you to attend both.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Stop pursuing the volunteer opportunity so that you can attend the required lab.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Tell your lab instructor in advance that you will miss two of your scheduled lab sessions.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Attend the lab and investigate if similar volunteer opportunities are available at another time.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# PREview Tips

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## The Strategy for Success on PREview

- Memorize the definitions for the AAMC's 9 Professional Competencies
- For each question, ask yourself: "Which of the competencies is this scenario testing?"
- As you read each of the proposed actions, ask yourself:  
"How well, on a scale of 1-4, would this action uphold the competencies that are being tested here?"

## Additional Tips

- For each prompt, use the notepad feature to write down the name of the relevant competencies before you read through the proposed actions. The note will get linked to that question, so you'll be able to reference it later if you decide to come back to that question.
- Make your decisions based *only* on the information provided in the prompt. Some people have gone astray in the past by making assumptions and then basing their answers on those assumptions. Stick to the facts you've been given.



# PREview: How to Prepare

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## Test Preparation

- Make use of all of the resources posted on the AAMC's "Prepare for the AAMC PREview Exam" webpage
  - Read the entire Examinee Preparation Guide (it's short).
  - Watch the AAMC's PREview videos, which provide explicit tips for success.
    - Be discerning. There are many videos to choose from. Watch only the ones that feel applicable.
  - Complete the free full-length practice tests under timed conditions.
  - Complete the \$20 scored PREview practice exam.



# PREview: How to Prepare

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## Logistical Details

- Need to have a form of governmental ID ready
- Taking PREview with the remote proctor is a weird experience:
  - Plan to take the test in an empty room, such as a study room in the library.
    - You'll need to show the proctor your entire room.
    - If you have anything other than your desk and computer in the room (such as art on the walls, books on a desk, etc.), you'll have to cover it up.
  - The proctor will be watching the whole time to monitor your body positioning and where you are looking. They may tell you to keep your hands where they can see them, to make sure you're facing the screen, etc.
- Prepare in advance to use ProctorU:
  - Prior to test day, download the ProctorU software and add the extension to your browser.
  - Former students highly recommend that you log in before your test day to walk through ProctorU's tutorial.