

Airline Customer Service Agent interview questions

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What to expect

Airline customer service agent interviews test how you handle people under pressure as much as what you know about check-in systems. Expect questions that walk through your process at the counter, test your judgement in a disruption, and check that you understand the compliance side of accepting passengers and baggage.

- **Process and technical:** How you run a check-in, a boarding gate or a rebooking, including the reservation systems and document checks involved.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of handling complaints, difficult passengers or competing priorities on a shift.
- **Scenario and judgement:** A disruption or irregular operation is described and you talk through what you would do, in what order, and why.
- **Safety and compliance:** Dangerous goods acceptance, travel document validity, security identification and weight and balance basics.
- **Roster and availability:** Whether you understand and can commit to shift work, early starts, late finishes, weekends and public holidays.

Most carriers start with a phone or video screen covering your availability and customer service background, then move to a face-to-face or assessment centre at the airport. That session usually combines a one-to-one interview with a practical exercise such as a mock check-in or boarding scenario, sometimes a short group activity, and a conversation about shift patterns. Offers are conditional on a police check, an Aviation Security Identification Card and often a medical and drug and alcohol screening, so expect those to come up near the end.

1. Walk me through what you do from the moment a passenger reaches your check-in counter to the moment they head for security.

Why they ask

The interviewer wants to see that you know the order of the job and the checks that cannot be skipped, not just that you can smile and print a boarding pass.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: greet and confirm the booking, verify identity and travel documents, check the destination's entry requirements, ask the security questions, weigh and tag baggage, take excess charges if applicable, seat the passenger, issue the boarding pass and give clear directions. Finish with the paperwork or system update that closes the transaction.

Example answer

"I greet the passenger, ask for their booking reference and identification, and pull up the reservation. I check the passport or licence against the name on the booking, then check the destination's entry requirements, including visa or electronic travel authority for international services, because that is the point where a problem is cheap to fix. I ask the security questions, weigh the bags, tag them through to the final destination and process any excess baggage charge. Then I seat the passenger, keeping families and assistance cases together, issue the boarding pass, point out the gate number and boarding time, and let them know to go through security. Finally I make sure the baggage record and the seat allocation have gone through in the system before I call the next passenger."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with an angry or upset customer.

Why they ask

Complaint handling is a daily part of the role, and the interviewer is listening for whether you defuse situations or escalate them unnecessarily.

How to structure your answer

STAR: the situation and what the person was upset about, the task you took on, the specific actions you used to calm and resolve it, and the result for the customer and the operation.

Example answer

"A passenger arrived at the counter after a missed connection and was told at the service desk that the next available flight was the following morning. He was furious, and rightly frustrated. My job was to get him somewhere to sleep and booked on the first flight out. I let him finish, apologised for how the day had gone, and told him exactly what I could and could not do. I checked partner carriers first and found a seat on a late service to his destination, reissued the ticket, gave him a meal voucher and arranged a hotel in case the flight did not go. He made the flight, and he came back through the following week to thank me. It also reminded me to check partner options before telling a passenger they are stuck overnight."

3. A flight is cancelled and a large group of connecting passengers is queuing at your desk. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is the scenario the job is really built around. The interviewer wants your judgement on priorities under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: secure the operation first, then triage the queue by who is most at risk, communicate early and often, and note what needs escalating to a supervisor or operations control.

Example answer

"First I would confirm what I actually know from operations control, because passengers can handle bad news but not conflicting news. Then I would triage rather than serve the queue in order: unaccompanied minors, passengers with medical needs or mobility assistance, and anyone with a tight connection that still has a chance of being made come first. I would ask a colleague to help and ask the supervisor whether we can open a second desk or hand out written information so people stop guessing. I would tell every passenger the same thing in the same words, give them a realistic time frame, and update the queue if anything changes. Anything beyond my authority, such as hotel allocations or partner carrier seats, I would flag to the supervisor early rather than let it sit."

4. How do you make sure the baggage you accept complies with dangerous goods rules and the aircraft's load limits?

Why they ask

Compliance questions separate candidates who understand the regulatory side from those who only know the customer service side.

How to structure your answer

Step-by-step explanation: ask the required questions, know what is prohibited or restricted, check quantities and packaging for the permitted items, tag and record correctly, and escalate anything unclear instead of guessing.

Example answer

"I ask the security questions at check-in every time, not just for passengers who look unsure, and I listen for the items people do not think of, such as spare lithium batteries, aerosols, e-cigarettes and power tools. If something is restricted I check it against the current dangerous goods guidance rather than rely on memory, confirm the quantity and packaging meet the limits, and either accept it with the correct tag and notification or refuse it and explain why. Anything ambiguous goes to a supervisor"

before it goes anywhere near the aircraft. On the load side, I tag and record bags accurately and watch the bag counts coming through at the gate, because an error there affects weight and balance and can delay the departure.”

5. This role works a rotating roster with early starts, late finishes, weekends and public holidays. How do you manage that?

Why they ask

Employers want to know you will stay through the roster rather than leave after a few months, and that you have thought about the practical side of shift work.

How to structure your answer

Honest, practical answer: acknowledge the reality, describe how you have handled shift work before, and give a concrete routine for sleep, travel and recovery that shows you have done this before.

Example answer

“I have worked rotating airport shifts for the past few years, including 4am starts and finishes after midnight, so I know what it takes. I keep my sleep routine as consistent as I can across a roster block, plan meals and transport around the shift rather than on the day, and use my days off to actually recover instead of filling them. I check the roster as soon as it is published so appointments and family commitments go in the gaps. The part I genuinely like is that no two shifts are the same, and the early bank is my favourite because the terminal is busy and the day moves quickly.”

6. You notice a colleague has boarded a passenger whose travel document is not valid for the destination. What do you do?

Why they ask

Integrity and safety questions come up because carriers face fines and repatriation costs when an inadmissible passenger is boarded, and the interviewer wants to know you will speak up.

How to structure your answer

Judgement and escalation: act on the immediate risk, tell the right person quickly, keep records, and handle the colleague side privately and professionally.

Example answer

“The immediate priority is the aircraft, so I would raise it with the boarding supervisor or the duty manager straight away so the passenger can be offloaded before departure rather than after. If there is time, I would re-check the document against the destination's requirements to be sure I am right before making it an issue, because I would not want to offload someone on a misreading. Then I would record what I saw and when, and let the supervisor handle the conversation with the colleague. I would talk to the colleague privately afterwards, without an audience, because the point is fixing the process, not embarrassing anyone.”