

Computer Hardware Technician interview questions

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What to expect

Computer Hardware Technician interviews are practical by nature. Employers are trying to work out whether you can isolate a fault without guessing, whether you can be trusted around other people's equipment and data, and how you come across to the customers whose devices you hand back. Expect the conversation to move between technical reasoning and the day to day realities of a repair bench.

- **Technical fault diagnosis:** Questions that ask you to reason through a specific fault, often out loud, to show your elimination order and how you decide what to test next.
- **Process and record keeping:** Questions about how you log jobs, update asset registers and hand over devices so nothing goes missing and service history stays accurate.
- **Behavioural:** Tell me about a time questions that probe how you have handled difficult repairs, mistakes and customer expectations in past roles.
- **Scenario and customer-facing judgement:** Situations where the technical answer is not the whole answer, such as a declined warranty claim, an upset customer or a deadline you cannot meet.
- **Safety and handling:** Questions about ESD precautions, safe bench practice, handling customer data and knowing when a job is beyond the scope of the workshop.
- **Practical or work sample:** Some employers ask you to diagnose a prepared faulty machine or talk through a bench task, so it is worth being ready to demonstrate rather than just describe.

The process usually starts with a short phone screen covering your background, availability and licence, then moves to a face-to-face with the workshop supervisor or IT manager. That interview often includes a practical element, either a machine with a planted fault or a walk-through of how you would handle a repair from intake to handover. Some employers add a second conversation with the operations manager, and questions generally progress from your experience, to technical reasoning, to scenario and customer questions.

1. Walk me through how you diagnose a desktop that powers on but will not boot.

Why they ask

This is the core skill of the role. The interviewer wants to hear an ordered, logical approach rather than a list of parts you would swap out.

How to structure your answer

A step by step walk-through. Start with what you observe, then move through checks in order of cost and likelihood, saying what each check rules out before moving on.

Example answer

"First I confirm what the user actually sees: whether the power light and fans come on, any beep codes, and any message on screen. A beep code or a POST error narrows things straight away. If the machine gets power but never reaches the operating system, I reseat the memory and check the drive and power connections before swapping anything, because loose connections and failing drives are the most common causes and cost nothing to rule out. If it still will not boot, I pull the drive and test it in a caddy, then run a memory test such as MemTest86. I work from the outside in so I am not replacing a power supply when the real problem is a cable, and I tell the customer what I have ruled out as I go."

2. Tell me about a time you had to explain a technical fault to a customer who did not understand the problem.

Why they ask

Hardware technicians spend as much time talking to people as they do at the bench. The interviewer is listening for plain language, patience and whether you kept the customer informed.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, but weight the answer toward the Action and Result. The result should show what the customer understood or did differently, not just that the repair was completed.

Example answer

"A customer brought in a laptop she used for her small business accounts and it would not start at all. She was mostly worried about losing her files and did not know what had happened. I ran the checks, found the drive had failed, and explained it in plain terms: the drive is where the files live, the rest of the machine was fine, and here were the recovery options and what each one involved. I avoided talking about sectors and controllers because it was not useful to her. She chose the recovery service, and when she collected the machine I set up a simple backup routine with her before she left the counter. She has brought every repair since to us and sends other people in her building our way."

3. A client brings in a laptop under warranty and the fault turns out to be accidental damage the warranty will not cover. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests judgement under pressure. The interviewer wants to see that you can follow policy and warranty conditions while keeping the customer relationship intact.

How to structure your answer

A judgement under pressure structure. Acknowledge the situation, state what you check and why, then explain how you communicate the outcome and what options you offer.

Example answer

"I would document the fault properly first, with photos and notes, because I need clear evidence before I tell a customer the warranty does not apply. Then I would check the manufacturer's conditions and the purchase terms so I am working from the actual policy, not a guess. When I speak to the client, I would show them what I found and explain the difference between a manufacturing fault and damage, without being defensive about it. I would give them a written quote for the repair and mention any alternatives, such as a refurbished replacement or a data recovery option if the drive is affected. If they want to escalate it, I would pass it to my manager with the documentation ready so the decision is consistent."

4. How do you keep repair records and asset registers accurate when the workshop is busy?

Why they ask

Lost devices, missing parts and unclear service history are real risks in a repair environment. The interviewer is checking your habits, not just your intentions.

How to structure your answer

A process answer. Describe the routine you follow, then give a concrete example of a time it caught a problem.

Example answer

"I log a job as soon as the device comes in, with the serial number, accessories received, the reported fault and the customer's contact details, before I start any diagnostic work. While I am working I note each part I replace and the test results, because that is much harder to reconstruct at the end of the day. Before handover I check the asset register against the physical device and confirm the record"

matches what actually left the bench. On one job that habit caught a mix-up where two identical laptops came in on the same morning for different customers. The records showed clearly which one had the drive replaced, so both went back to the right owner with the right service history."

5. Which tools do you use for testing memory and drives, and what does each one tell you?

Why they ask

This is a direct technical question. Employers want to know the tools are genuinely part of your routine rather than something you have read about.

How to structure your answer

A technical answer: name the tool, say what it detects, and give a short example of using it to make a repair decision.

Example answer

"For memory I use MemTest86, running it long enough to catch intermittent errors rather than stopping at the first clean pass. It tells me whether a module is throwing errors under load, which is often why a machine reboots randomly or fails during heavier work. For drives I use CrystalDiskInfo to check SMART attributes, which shows whether a drive is reporting reallocated sectors or other warning signs before it fails outright. For temperatures and voltage readings I use HWMonitor, which helps when a machine shuts down under load and I need to separate a cooling problem from a power problem. Recently a desktop came in restarting during video calls; MemTest86 found errors on one module, I replaced it, and the machine has been stable since."

6. Tell me about a time a repair did not go to plan.

Why they ask

Everyone makes mistakes on a bench. The interviewer is looking for ownership, honesty and whether you changed how you work afterwards.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, but make the Result about what you fixed and what you changed in your process, not about how the problem resolved itself.

Example answer

"I once ordered a replacement motherboard for a client's desktop based on the model number without checking the revision of the board that was actually installed. The new board arrived and was not compatible with the existing configuration, which delayed the job by several days while the correct part came in. I told the customer what had happened and gave them a realistic new date rather than letting it slip silently. Afterwards I changed my process: I photograph the board and record the exact revision and part number before ordering anything, and I check it against the supplier listing before the order goes through. I have not had a wrong-part order since, and the customer came back for their next repair."