

Dive Instructor interview questions

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What to expect

Dive instructor interviews combine a conversation about your certifications and experience with a practical assessment of your teaching and safety judgement. Employers want to see that you can keep students calm, follow standards and handle the unexpected.

- **Teaching demonstration:** You may be asked to teach a scuba skill as if to a student, either in the interview room or in a pool. The interviewer watches how you break down the skill and check understanding.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past safety incidents, difficult students or customer conflicts. They look for real examples, not hypothetical answers.
- **Scenario:** What would you do if questions covering low air, lost buddy, equipment failure or a panicked diver. They test your judgement under pressure.
- **Technical:** Questions about dive theory, decompression, equipment maintenance and compressor operation. They confirm you know the why behind the procedures.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about handling nervous first-timers, complaints or refund requests. They check your customer service and conflict resolution.

Interviews usually start with a phone or video screen with the dive centre manager, covering certifications, availability and right to work. Shortlisted candidates then attend an in-person interview at the shop or boat, which often includes a practical skills demonstration in the pool or open water. Some operators run a trial day or supervised dive with students before making an offer.

1. Walk me through how you would brief a group of first-time divers before their first open water dive.

Why they ask

This is a process question that checks whether you can teach a safety critical routine in a clear, repeatable way.

How to structure your answer

Give a step by step walk through: pre-dive classroom or surface briefing, equipment check, hand signals, dive plan, entry and descent, underwater tour, ascent and debrief. Keep it in order and mention safety stops.

Example answer

"I start on the surface with a simple brief. I show them the hand signals we will use, then I check everyone has their mask, fins and weight belt sorted. I explain the dive plan in plain language: we will descend to five metres, swim along the reef for twenty minutes, then ascend slowly with a safety stop. I remind them to equalise early and often, and that if they feel uncomfortable they can signal me and we will surface together. I do a final head count, then we enter the water one at a time."

2. Tell me about a time you had to manage a student who panicked underwater.

Why they ask

A behavioural question that looks at your emergency response and your ability to keep a student safe without scaring them out of diving.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Focus on what you actually did, not what you would have done.

Example answer

"During an open water course, a student started bolting for the surface at eight metres. My task was to stop her safely and get her calm again. I grabbed her BCD gently, made eye contact, gave the stop signal and held her regulator in place. I slowly ascended with her, and once we were on the surface I had her inflate her BCD and breathe. We talked through what happened, and I offered a repeat pool session. She completed the course the next week."

3. What would you do if a certified diver on a guided dive signalled they were low on air at 18 metres?

Why they ask

A scenario question that tests your ability to make quick, safe decisions under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Talk through your judgement under pressure: assess the situation, act to control the ascent, communicate with the group, and follow the dive plan's safety stop rules without panic.

Example answer

"First I would check my own air and gauges. I would signal the diver to share air if needed, or if they still had enough, I would signal the group to start a controlled ascent. I would keep the diver close, monitor their breathing, and make the safety stop at five metres if air allowed. If it did not, I would surface slowly and get them to the boat or shore. On the surface I would record the incident and check the diver was okay."

4. How do you maintain scuba gear and compressor equipment to keep it safe and reliable?

Why they ask

A technical question that checks you understand routine maintenance and can spot faults before they become problems.

How to structure your answer

Describe your routine: daily checks, fill logs, washing gear, checking hoses and O-rings, and reporting faults. Mention documentation.

Example answer

"After every dive day I rinse all regulators, BCDs and wetsuits in fresh water and hang them to dry. I check hoses, O-rings and tank valves for wear. For the compressor, I keep a daily fill log, check the air quality filter and drain the condensate. If I find a fault, I tag the equipment out of service and tell the manager straight away so it does not get used on the next trip."

5. A customer complains that the dive was too short and wants a refund. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

A client-facing question that looks at how you manage expectations and resolve conflict without giving away the shop.

How to structure your answer

Use a listen, acknowledge, explain, resolve structure. Stay calm and never argue in front of other customers.

Example answer

"I would take the customer aside and listen to their concern without interrupting. I would acknowledge that they feel the dive was too short and explain that we follow a set bottom time for safety, based on air supply and depth. If the shop has a policy for refunds, I would follow it. If not, I would offer a discount on a future dive or free equipment hire as a goodwill gesture. I would also let the manager know so they can decide on any refund."

6. What do you do if you notice a colleague skipping a safety check before a dive?

Why they ask

A safety culture question that tests whether you will speak up and follow correct reporting lines.

How to structure your answer

Safety first: describe immediate action, a private conversation, and escalation if the behaviour continues.

Example answer

"I would not ignore it. If it was a minor thing, I would have a quiet word with my colleague away from customers and remind them of the standard. If it was a serious safety check, like missing a head count or not checking air, I would stop the dive from proceeding and tell the supervisor or manager. I would write an incident report if needed. Safety is everyone's responsibility, and letting it go could put students at risk."