Drafter interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Drafter interviews tend to mix technical CAD checks with questions about accuracy, compliance and how you handle revisions under deadline pressure. Employers want to see that you can work cleanly from someone else's sketch or brief without losing detail along the way.

- **Process:** How you actually move a drawing from initial concept through to issued, checked documentation.
- **Technical knowledge:** Familiarity with specific CAD packages, compliance references and when to use 2D versus 3D output.
- **Behavioural:** Real examples of catching errors, handling feedback, or managing revision cycles under time pressure.
- **Scenario:** Judgement calls when instructions conflict or a design issue is discovered late.

Most drafter interviews start with a short screening conversation about software and qualifications, move into a portfolio or drawing sample review where you talk through your own work, then a panel-style discussion covering compliance knowledge and how you've handled revisions or conflicting feedback in past roles.

1. Walk me through your process for turning an engineer's sketch or brief into a finished CAD drawing.

Why they ask

This checks whether you have a repeatable, careful workflow rather than just software familiarity.

How to structure your answer

Walk through it step by step in order: how you clarify the brief, set up the drawing, build in checks along the way, and what happens before it's issued.

Example answer

“I start by reading the brief and any existing drawings closely, and I'll go back to the engineer with questions before I open CAD if anything's ambiguous. I set up the drawing in AutoCAD or Revit using the correct templates and layers, then build it up section by section, cross-checking measurements against the source sketch as I go rather than leaving it to the end. Once it's drafted I do a full read-through against the original brief and relevant standards, then send it for review before it's issued, noting any assumptions I've made so the engineer can confirm them.”

2. Tell me about a time you caught an error in a drawing before it went to construction.

Why they ask

Accuracy is the core of this role, and employers want a concrete example, not a general claim about being detail-oriented.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the specific task, the action you took to catch and fix it, and the result.

Example answer

“I was finishing a structural drawing set where the mark-ups had been applied inconsistently across sheets. While cross-checking dimensions against the architectural drawings, I noticed a beam location that didn't line up between the two sets. I traced it back to an earlier revision that hadn't been carried through to every sheet, corrected it, and updated the revision log so the change was visible to the whole team. It meant the error was fixed before issue rather than discovered on site, which would

have meant rework and delay."

3. How do you make sure a drawing complies with the National Construction Code and relevant Australian Standards?

Why they ask

Compliance knowledge is core to the role and interviewers want specifics, not a vague 'I check the codes' answer.

How to structure your answer

Explain your actual checking process and name the reference documents you use, showing you know which standards apply to which type of work.

Example answer

"I keep a checklist specific to the type of drawing, whether it's structural, mechanical or architectural, and I check dimensions, clearances and specifications against the relevant sections of the NCC and the applicable Australian Standards for that trade. If I'm unsure whether a detail meets code, I raise it with the engineer rather than guessing, and I note any compliance assumptions on the drawing so they're visible during review."

4. A structural engineer and an architect give you conflicting instructions on the same drawing. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests judgement under pressure and whether you escalate appropriately rather than picking a side yourself.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: state your immediate action, who you'd involve, and how you'd document the resolution so it doesn't cause confusion later.

Example answer

"I wouldn't just pick one instruction and proceed. I'd flag the conflict to both parties as soon as I noticed it, ideally in a short meeting or email chain so there's a record, and ask them to agree on the resolution rather than deciding it myself. Once it's resolved I'd update the drawing and note the change in the revision history so anyone looking back can see why the detail changed."

5. Describe a situation where you had to revise a drawing multiple times based on feedback. How did you manage it?

Why they ask

Drafting involves constant iteration, and employers want to know you can handle that without losing track of versions or missing deadlines.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, with particular focus on how you tracked changes across revisions and kept the deadline on track.

Example answer

"On a project with a tight issue date, the engineer sent through mark-ups over four separate rounds, some overlapping. I kept a running revision log against the drawing number so I could see exactly what had changed and when, and I checked each new mark-up against the previous version before applying it, rather than assuming everything was still current. That meant the final drawing matched the latest instructions exactly and went out on time."

6. Which CAD packages are you proficient in, and how do you decide between 2D and 3D output for a given project?

Why they ask

Employers need to know your tool skills match what they use, and whether you understand when 3D modelling adds value versus when it's unnecessary.

How to structure your answer

Answer directly and technically: name the tools you know, then explain the reasoning behind 2D versus 3D choices with a concrete example.

Example answer

“I'm most experienced in AutoCAD and Revit, with some exposure to MicroStation on civil and utilities work. For straightforward documentation like site plans or simple details, 2D is usually faster and perfectly clear. For anything with complex geometry, like services coordination or a building with multiple intersecting structural elements, I'll model in 3D because it makes clashes obvious before they become a problem on site, even though it takes longer to set up.”