

Fitter and Turner interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Fitter and Turner roles focus on your trade skills, safety awareness and how you solve problems on the workshop floor. Employers want to know you can work to tolerance and keep plant running safely.

- **Technical trade knowledge:** Questions about machining, fitting, measurement and reading drawings.
- **Safety and compliance:** How you manage hazards, follow procedures and use PPE.
- **Fault-finding and problem-solving:** How you diagnose machinery faults and decide on repairs.
- **Behavioural and teamwork:** Past examples of working with others, handling pressure and communicating.
- **Practical assessment:** A short test where you machine a part, read a drawing or complete a fitting task.

A typical interview starts with a site or workshop tour, then a sit-down conversation with a supervisor or maintenance manager. You may be asked to complete a short practical test, such as machining a part to tolerance or reading a drawing. Safety questions are woven throughout. The interview usually finishes with a chance to ask your own questions.

1. Can you walk me through how you set up a lathe to machine a shaft to a specific tolerance?

Why they ask

This checks your process knowledge and whether you can work methodically to a drawing.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: start with the drawing, then material preparation, setup, tooling, speeds and feeds, measuring, and final checks. Explain each step in order and mention the tolerances you are working to.

Example answer

"First I read the drawing to confirm the material, dimensions and tolerance. I check the material for straightness, then mount it in the chuck and indicate it to make sure it runs true. I select the right tooling for the material and set the speed and feed. I take a light cut to establish a datum, measure with a micrometer, then work down to the final size, checking as I go. I finish with a file or emery if needed and verify all dimensions before removing the part."

2. Tell me about a time you diagnosed a fault in production machinery. How did you go about it?

Why they ask

This looks at your fault-finding approach and how you work under pressure when equipment stops.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the fault, what you did to find the cause, and the result. Include how you communicated with operators and supervisors.

Example answer

"At my last workplace, a conveyor kept stopping. I started by asking the operator what they noticed, then I isolated the drive and checked the motor, gearbox and bearings. I found a worn bearing causing misalignment. I replaced the bearing, realigned the shaft and tested it under load. I also noted the wear pattern and recommended a greasing schedule change to prevent repeat failures."

3. What do you do if you measure a part and it is outside the tolerance? Can you give an example?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement, quality focus and honesty when something goes wrong.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: acknowledge the issue, recheck your measurement, decide on next steps, act to contain the problem, and prevent it happening again.

Example answer

"First I recheck the measurement to make sure it is not a tool or technique error. If it is genuinely out, I stop and quarantine the part. I would not try to hide it or send it through. I would look at what caused the deviation, maybe tool wear or a setup issue, correct that, and machine a replacement if the part cannot be reworked. Then I would tell my supervisor so they know the status."

4. How do you make sure you are working safely when using machine tools and hand tools?

Why they ask

Safety is a core part of the trade, and employers need to know you will follow procedures and speak up.

How to structure your answer

Safety framework: identify hazards, apply controls, use PPE, follow procedures, and report anything you cannot fix.

Example answer

"Before I start, I check the machine guards, emergency stops and that the work area is clear. I wear the right PPE for the job, including safety glasses and hearing protection. I follow the safe operating procedures for the lathe or mill, never leave a running machine unattended, and use the correct tool for the task. If I see a hazard I cannot control, I stop and report it. I also keep my hand tools in good condition and use the right one for the job."

5. Describe a time you worked with a team to complete a repair or maintenance job under time pressure.

Why they ask

This shows how you communicate and cooperate when a production line is down and everyone is under pressure.

How to structure your answer

STAR: set the scene, explain your role in the team, describe the actions you took together, and give the outcome and what you learned.

Example answer

"We had a breakdown on a production line before a big run. I worked with a fitter and an electrician. I took the mechanical side, machining a replacement bush and fitting it while the electrician checked the motor. We communicated clearly about what we each needed. We got the line running again before the shift ended, and we did a debrief afterwards to see if we could speed up next time."

6. What experience do you have with CNC machines and CAD/CAM software?

Why they ask

Many workshops use CNC equipment, so this checks your practical experience with the tools listed in the job.

How to structure your answer

Skills inventory: list the machines and software you know, your level of experience, and give a specific example of a job you completed.

Example answer

"I have operated Fanuc-controlled lathes and machining centres, and I use Mastercam to program simple parts. I also read and mark up AutoCAD drawings. In my last role, I set up and ran a Mazak lathe for a batch of bushes, editing the program at the control when the first part needed a small adjustment. I am comfortable reading G-code and making offsets."