

# Makeup Artist interview questions

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

## What to expect

Makeup Artist interviews are practical and portfolio-led. Employers want to see your work, watch you handle a brush and hear how you talk to a client, so expect the conversation to move between your book, a short demo and questions about hygiene, pricing and difficult days.

- **Portfolio and technical:** Questions about specific looks in your book: how you built a base, why you chose a product, how you adapted a design for different skin tones or lighting.
- **Client consultation:** Role-play or discussion around reading a brief, managing expectations and handling a client who wants something that will not suit them.
- **Hygiene and safety:** How you sanitise tools, store products, handle reactions and keep a kit safe when working with several clients or performers in a day.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of tight timelines, last-minute changes, difficult clients and how you kept a booking or a shoot on track.
- **Commercial and client-facing:** For salon, retail or freelance work: pricing, deposits, no-shows, retail advice and how you build repeat bookings.

Most interviews start with a look through your portfolio or Instagram, then a conversation with the salon owner, retail manager or creative director about your experience and availability. Many include a short practical component, either a demo on a model or a timed application, followed by questions on hygiene and customer service. Freelance or agency work may instead be a single conversation about your kit, your rates and your reliability on set.

## 1. Walk us through your process from a client's first enquiry to the finished look on the day.

### Why they ask

They want to see whether you have a repeatable process or work on instinct, and whether your consultation and trial habits protect the client on the day.

### How to structure your answer

Process walk-through. Break it into stages (enquiry, consult, trial, prep, application, finish and aftercare), and name what you confirm or check at each stage.

### Example answer

*"The enquiry stage is where I ask about the event, the time of day, the venue, the outfit and any skin concerns, so I can quote properly. If it is a wedding, I push for a trial a couple of weeks out and ask them to bring the outfit or a photo of it. At the trial I photograph the finished look in daylight and under indoor light, note the products on a face chart and check for reactions over the next day. On the day I arrive with time to set up, cleanse and prep the skin, work through the party in a set order and finish with setting spray and a small touch-up kit. After the event I check in, which is usually where referrals come from."*

## 2. Tell me about a time a client asked for a look that would not have suited them. How did you handle it?

### Why they ask

This tests tact, consultation skill and whether you can hold a professional position without losing the booking.

### How to structure your answer

STAR, with the emphasis on the action and the client's response.

#### Example answer

*"A client came in for her engagement party wanting a heavy, full-coverage base and very dark smoky eyes, but she has quite dry skin and told me she had been breaking out. Rather than refuse, I showed her the difference. I did one eye her way and one eye with a softer smoked liner, then handed her a mirror. She could see the second one looked fresher on her skin. I explained what I would do differently and why, kept the intensity she liked around the lash line, and used a lighter base with spot concealing. She booked me for the wedding and referred two friends, so the honesty paid off commercially as well as for the photographs."*

### **3. You are on set and the brief changes ten minutes before the talent is needed. What do you do?**

#### Why they ask

Film, television and event work turn on staying calm and prioritising when the plan collapses.

#### How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure. Say how you triage, who you communicate with and what you protect first.

#### Example answer

*"First I get the change confirmed in plain terms from the person who owns the decision, whether that is the director, the producer or the photographer. Then I triage by what takes the longest to undo: base and colour correction first, then eyes, then lips, which are the quickest to rework. I tell the talent what is changing and roughly how long it will take so they are not sitting in the dark. If there is genuinely not enough time, I say so early and offer the closest option rather than promising something I cannot deliver before the call. I keep continuity notes and photos so the look can be matched if we come back to it later."*

### **4. How do you choose a base and products for a client with oily skin who needs the makeup to last a full wedding day?**

#### Why they ask

A technical question that separates product knowledge from marketing talk.

#### How to structure your answer

Reasoning out loud: assessment, prep, product choice, application, and the test that proves it works.

#### Example answer

*"I start with what the skin is doing on the day, not just what they told me on the phone, so I look at the t-zone, any texture and how the skin behaves after cleansing. I use a light gel or water-based moisturiser and a mattifying primer only where it is needed, because drying the whole face out makes oil production worse. For base I lean on a long-wear formula applied in thin layers with a damp sponge, building coverage rather than putting one heavy layer on. I set selectively with a fine powder through the t-zone, use a cream blush and a setting spray, and I always test the finish in daylight at the trial. I also send them home with blotting papers and a small touch-up plan."*

### **5. How do you manage hygiene across a busy day with back-to-back clients?**

#### Why they ask

State health guidance, client trust and your own reputation all sit on this. Interviewers listen for a routine, not good intentions.

#### How to structure your answer

Checklist structure. Cover tools, products, hands, surfaces and waste, and say how you keep it practical when you are rushed.

#### Example answer

*"I work from a checklist so it does not depend on how busy I am. Brushes get washed and dried between clients, or rotated through a spare set, and anything that touches skin like spoolies, mascara*

wands and lip applicators is single use. Palettes get scraped and wiped with alcohol, pencils get sharpened and wiped, and I decant product onto a clean palette rather than going back into the pot. Hands are washed and sanitiser is on the station, and the bench gets wiped before the next client sits down. If someone has a reaction or a cold sore, I stop, disinfect everything involved and refer them on rather than working around it."

## **6. A client is running late and then asks to add two extra people to the booking. How do you handle it?**

### **Why they ask**

This is about protecting your schedule and your standards while keeping the client, which matters most in freelance and salon work.

### **How to structure your answer**

Client-facing problem solving. Acknowledge, set the boundary, offer options, and confirm in writing.

### **Example answer**

*"I stay warm about it but I am honest about time. I tell them what is still achievable in the window we have and what would need to move. If the extras are straightforward, I might fit one in by simplifying the looks or skipping the lash application for the original client. If there is simply no room, I offer to either add them to a later slot the same day or book them in for another date, and I follow up with a message confirming what was agreed. I ask for a deposit on larger group bookings up front, which sets the expectation early and means late additions are a conversation rather than a problem."*