

Plastics Technician interview questions

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What to expect

Plastics Technician interviews usually combine technical process questions with safety and quality scenarios. Employers want to see that you can set up machines, diagnose faults and work safely under production pressure.

- **Process and setup:** Questions that ask you to walk through machine setup, changeovers or process adjustments.
- **Technical troubleshooting:** Questions about diagnosing faults in injection moulding, extrusion or blow moulding equipment.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for examples of past problems you solved or times you worked in a team.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about WHS procedures, lockout/tagout and quality standards.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Questions that put you in a production problem and ask what you would do.
- **Quality and testing:** Questions about how you check parts and handle out-of-spec product.

The interview often starts with a brief chat about your background, then moves to technical questions about specific machines and processes. You may be asked to describe a fault you fixed or walk through a setup. Some employers include a plant tour or a practical assessment on a machine. The interview usually ends with your questions for them.

1. Walk me through how you set up an injection moulding machine for a new production run.

Why they ask

This tests your systematic approach and whether you understand the steps from tooling to first-off approval.

How to structure your answer

Give a step-by-step walk-through. Start with safety checks and tooling installation, then describe parameter setting, first-off inspection and documentation. Finish with how you hand over to production.

Example answer

"First I review the job sheet and check the mould is correct and undamaged. I isolate the machine, fit the mould and connect water and hydraulic lines. Then I set the initial parameters based on the material data sheet and previous runs. I run a few shots, check dimensions and weight against the specification, and adjust until they are within tolerance. Once first-off approval is signed, I record the settings in SAP and hand over to the operator with a clear brief on what to watch."

2. Tell me about a time you diagnosed a recurring production fault.

Why they ask

Shows your problem-solving process and how you work under pressure.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"We had a recurring short shot on a thin-wall container across two shifts. I started by checking the material feed and found no issue, so I reviewed the process log and noticed the injection speed had been drifting. I ran a pressure curve study and found the hydraulic oil temperature was rising

mid-shift. I arranged for the cooler to be serviced and adjusted the setpoints. The fault stopped and we ran the next three days without a reject."

3. You notice finished parts are consistently out of tolerance on one dimension. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests your judgement when quality is at risk.

How to structure your answer

Show a calm, methodical approach. Stop production if needed, check the obvious causes, then escalate and document.

Example answer

"I would stop the machine and quarantine the affected parts so they don't reach the next stage. I'd check the dimension against the specification and look at the last inspection record. Then I'd inspect the mould for wear or damage, check the material batch and review the process parameters. If I couldn't find the cause quickly, I'd call the supervisor or toolroom. Once fixed, I'd run a first-off check and record the corrective action."

4. How do you use Moldflow or similar software to support process improvement?

Why they ask

Checks your ability to use simulation tools for real production gains.

How to structure your answer

Explain what you model, how you validate results and how you apply findings.

Example answer

"I use Moldflow to simulate filling and packing before a mould is cut or when we have a persistent defect. For example, on a new part I ran a fill analysis and found a weld line in a high-stress area. I adjusted the gate location in the simulation and then on the tool. After the change, the weld line moved to a non-critical area. I always validate the simulation with actual shots and adjust the process based on real data."

5. What are the key safety checks before operating a blow moulding machine?

Why they ask

Safety is critical in plastics processing. They want to see you know the risks.

How to structure your answer

List the checks in order: guards, emergency stops, lockout/tagout, PPE, material handling.

Example answer

"First I check that all guards are in place and the emergency stops are working. I make sure the machine is locked out before any tooling change. I wear the required PPE, including hearing protection and safety glasses. I check the material handling system for blockages and ensure the area is clear of obstructions. I also review the pre-start checklist and sign it off before running the machine."

6. How do you balance production targets with quality requirements?

Why they ask

Employers want to know you won't sacrifice quality to hit numbers.

How to structure your answer

Show that you understand the commercial pressure but prioritise quality and communicate early.

Example answer

"I understand that production targets matter, but I never let a bad part go through. If I see a quality issue, I stop and fix it. I communicate with the shift supervisor as soon as possible so they can adjust schedules or bring in help. I also look for ways to improve the process so we can hit targets without compromising quality. For example, by reducing changeover time, we freed up capacity without rushing the run."