

Salon Assistant interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for salon assistant roles usually focus on reliability, client service and how you handle a busy floor. Employers want to know you can follow hygiene standards, support stylists without being asked, and stay calm when the salon is full.

- **Process:** Questions about your routine for opening or closing a salon, or how you manage bookings.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask you to describe a time you handled a difficult client or worked in a fast paced team.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a busy salon moment, such as a colour client arriving early while a stylist is running late.
- **Technical:** Questions about sterilising tools, mixing colour, or using booking software like Kitomba or Phorest.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about greeting clients and making them feel welcome.

A typical interview starts with a short tour or meet and greet, then a one on one conversation with the salon owner or manager. You may be asked to demonstrate a shampoo or basin service. Some salons hold a paid trial shift instead of a second interview.

1. Walk me through how you open the salon in the morning.

Why they ask

Tests reliability, routine and whether you can set up the floor before the first client arrives.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through structure. Start with the first task, then move through the list in order, and finish with how you check everything is ready before the first client.

Example answer

"I arrive with enough time to set up before the first booking. First I turn on lights, check the appointment book for the day, and look at any notes from the previous afternoon. Then I put towels out, check basin supplies, and run through the tool steriliser to make sure everything is ready. I do a quick sweep of the floor and reception area, and I check that retail shelves are tidy. Before we open, I let the stylists know if anything is low so they can plan around it."

2. Tell me about a time you had to juggle several tasks at once in a busy salon.

Why they ask

Assesses multitasking, prioritisation and how you stay calm under pressure.

How to structure your answer

STAR. Describe the situation, the task you had, the action you took, and the result.

Example answer

"At my last salon, a Saturday morning had three colour clients arrive within ten minutes while the senior stylist was still finishing a blow dry. I was asked to keep everyone comfortable and make sure no one was left waiting without an update. I greeted each client, offered tea or coffee, and checked the booking system to see which stylist was free next. I started shampooing the client who was ready, then let the others know roughly how long the wait would be. By staying organised, we moved everyone through without any complaints and the stylists could focus on their services."

3. A client arrives 20 minutes late for a colour appointment and the stylist is already behind. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement, client care and how you handle a common salon pressure point.

How to structure your answer

A judgement under pressure structure. Acknowledge the client, check with the stylist, offer a clear option, and stay calm.

Example answer

"I would greet the client warmly and let them know the stylist is just finishing another service. I would check with the stylist quickly to see if they can still take the client or if we need to adjust the service. Then I would explain the options to the client, such as waiting a short while or rebooking, and make sure they feel looked after. I would keep the reception area calm and avoid making the client feel rushed or blamed."

4. How do you sterilise tools and maintain hygiene between clients?

Why they ask

Tests technical knowledge, safety awareness and attention to salon standards.

How to structure your answer

A step by step technical explanation. Name the steps, the products, and how you check the standard.

Example answer

"I follow the salon's sterilisation procedure. I remove any hair from tools, wash them with warm soapy water, then place them in sterilising solution or a UV cabinet for the required time. I use fresh towels for each client and disinfect the basin after every shampoo. I also wipe down chairs and stations between clients, and I check that all solutions are within their use by dates. If I am unsure about any step, I ask the senior stylist."

5. How would you make a nervous first time client feel comfortable?

Why they ask

Tests empathy, client service and whether you can read a room.

How to structure your answer

A client care structure. Notice the client's mood, introduce yourself, explain what will happen, and check in during the service.

Example answer

"I would introduce myself and ask how they are feeling about their appointment. I would explain what will happen next, such as a consultation with the stylist or a shampoo, so they know what to expect. During the service I would check they are comfortable, offer a drink, and keep my tone calm and friendly. If they have questions I would answer what I can or find the stylist. The goal is to make them feel welcome and confident that they are in good hands."

6. Tell me about your experience with salon booking software and managing stock.

Why they ask

Tests digital literacy, organisation and whether you can keep the salon running smoothly behind the scenes.

How to structure your answer

A skills based structure. Name the software, describe how you use it, then give an example of how it helped the salon.

Example answer

"I have used Kitomba and Square Appointments to book clients, check stylist availability, and send reminders. I also keep a simple stock list for retail and backbar products, so I know when to reorder before we run out. In one salon I set up a weekly check of colour supplies and towels, which meant the team was never caught short during a busy weekend. I am comfortable learning new systems and I pay attention to details like client notes and appointment times."