

Student Services Adviser interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Student Services Adviser roles typically assess your ability to support students through a mix of behavioural, scenario and process questions. You may also face questions about your technical familiarity with student management systems.

- **Behavioural:** Questions about how you have handled student issues, conflicts or sensitive situations in the past.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations where you must decide how to respond to a student in distress or a complex enrolment problem.
- **Process:** Questions about how you manage case notes, referrals or student records in systems like Callista or StudentOne.
- **Client-facing:** Questions that explore your communication style and empathy when dealing with students from diverse backgrounds.
- **Technical:** Questions about your proficiency with student management systems, CRMs or learning platforms.

The interview often begins with an introduction to the role and team, followed by a mix of behavioural and scenario questions. You may be asked to complete a short task, such as prioritising a list of student enquiries, or to discuss how you would handle a specific case. The interview usually ends with an opportunity for you to ask questions.

1. Tell me about a time you helped a student who was struggling to stay engaged with their studies.

Why they ask

Assesses your casework skills, empathy and ability to follow through with support.

How to structure your answer

Use the STAR method: describe the situation, the task you needed to accomplish, the actions you took, and the result.

Example answer

"At [previous institution], I worked with a student who had stopped attending classes after a family bereavement. I met with them to listen to their concerns and referred them to the counselling service. I also worked with their teachers to arrange extensions and a modified study plan. Over the next month, I checked in weekly to monitor their progress. The student re-engaged with their studies and passed all their subjects that semester."

2. How would you handle a student who is upset about a failed assignment and demands an immediate remark?

Why they ask

Evaluates your ability to manage emotional situations and follow institutional policies.

How to structure your answer

Use a scenario response: acknowledge the student's feelings, clarify the policy, act within your authority, and follow up.

Example answer

"I would first acknowledge the student's frustration and invite them to a private space to discuss. I would explain the remark policy and the grounds on which a remark can be requested. If the student

still wanted to proceed, I would guide them through the formal process and offer to refer them to an academic adviser for support. I would also follow up with the student after the process to ensure they felt heard and understood."

3. What experience do you have with student management systems such as Callista or StudentOne?

Why they ask

Tests your technical competence and ability to maintain accurate records.

How to structure your answer

Technical question: describe the systems you have used, the tasks you performed, and how you ensure accuracy.

Example answer

"In my current role, I use Callista daily to update student records, process enrolment variations and log case notes. I also use Salesforce to track student interactions and Canvas to monitor engagement. I have a strong attention to detail and double-check all entries to avoid errors. I am confident I can quickly learn any new system your institution uses."

4. Describe a time you had to refer a student to external support services. How did you ensure they received the help they needed?

Why they ask

Assesses your knowledge of referral pathways and your commitment to student wellbeing.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, and include the follow-up step you took to confirm the student accessed support.

Example answer

"I once worked with a student who was experiencing financial hardship and housing insecurity. After an initial conversation, I referred them to our financial counselling service and a local community housing provider. I made the initial appointment for them and followed up a week later to confirm they had attended. I also helped them apply for a bursary. The student was able to secure stable housing and continue their studies."

5. How do you prioritise your workload when multiple students need urgent assistance at the same time?

Why they ask

Tests your time management and ability to triage under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Process question: describe your method for assessing urgency and taking action, including how you communicate with your team.

Example answer

"I assess each situation based on risk. If a student is in immediate distress or danger, I drop everything to support them and involve emergency services if needed. For other urgent matters, I quickly note the key details and let the student know when I will follow up. I use a prioritisation matrix, categorising tasks by urgency and impact. I also communicate with my team so we can cover each other during busy periods."

6. What strategies do you use to engage students from diverse backgrounds in orientation and transition programs?

Why they ask

Explores your community engagement and inclusivity skills.

How to structure your answer

Behavioural plus approach: describe past actions you took and ideas you would bring to the role.

Example answer

"I have found that partnering with student clubs and cultural groups is key. At my last institution, I co-designed an orientation session with the Indigenous student support unit and ran a welcome event for international students. I also used targeted email and social media outreach to reach students who might not attend in person. Attendance grew and feedback showed students felt more connected."