

Wool Handler interview questions

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What to expect

Wool handler interviews are usually practical and informal, often held on the property or by phone with the grower or shearing contractor. They want to know you can handle the physical pace, follow the classer's directions and keep the wool room safe and clean.

- **Process questions:** These ask you to walk through how you handle fleeces, skirt edges or press a bale. They check your familiarity with the wool room routine.
- **Behavioural questions:** These probe how you have worked in a team during a shearing run, handled a fast pace or dealt with a difficult day.
- **Safety and compliance questions:** These cover WHS in the shed, manual handling, chemical awareness and keeping the clip free of contamination.
- **Technical questions:** These focus on the wool press, bale branding, fleece hooks and other equipment you will use.
- **Motivation and remote work questions:** These explore why you want to work on a remote property and whether you can commit to a full shearing season.

The interview often starts with a short chat about your experience, then moves to specific questions about the wool room and safety. Many employers include a practical trial on the board or at the press so they can see your technique. You may also meet the wool classer, who will explain how they like lines sorted.

1. Walk me through your routine when a fleece comes off the board.

Why they ask

They want to see you know the sequence and can keep up without mixing lines.

How to structure your answer

A clear walk-through: pick up, move to table, skirt, sort to classer's line, then press.

Example answer

"First I pick up the fleece with the fleece hooks, keeping it in one piece so it doesn't tangle. I carry it to the wool table and lay it out. Then I skirt off any stained, seedy or burry edges and put those in the correct bin. I check with the classer if I'm unsure which line it belongs to, then I move it to the pressing area. I keep the table clear so the next fleece can go straight on."

2. Tell me about a time you had to keep up with a fast pace in the shed.

Why they ask

Shearing runs move quickly; they want to know you can handle the pressure without cutting corners.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"During a six-stand shearing run last spring, the pace picked up after smoko and fleeces were coming off the board faster than usual. I was on the wool table, and I had to skirt and sort without holding up the classer. I focused on a steady rhythm, keeping my skirting strokes quick and my bins close by. I also asked a shed hand to keep the press loaded so I didn't have to stop. By the end of the day we had met the pen target and the lines were still clean."

3. What would you do if you noticed the wool press losing pressure mid-bale?

Why they ask

They want to see you can act safely and keep the clip protected.

How to structure your answer

Stop, assess, act, report: stop the press, check for obvious faults, follow lockout or isolate if needed, and tell the supervisor or classer.

Example answer

"I would stop the press straight away and make sure no one is near it. I'd check for any obvious leaks or loose fittings, but I wouldn't try to fix anything unless I was trained and authorised. I'd isolate the power and let the supervisor or the contractor know so they can decide what to do. In the meantime, I'd keep the fleeces covered and off the floor to avoid contamination."

4. How do you keep yourself and others safe in the wool room?

Why they ask

WHS is critical in a shed, with heavy bales, moving parts and long days.

How to structure your answer

A practical list: manual handling, housekeeping, PPE, communication, and following shed rules.

Example answer

"I start with housekeeping: keeping the floor clear of loose wool and tools so no one trips. I use correct manual handling when lifting fleeces or moving bales, and I wear the right PPE, like boots and gloves. I make sure I know where the emergency stops are on the press and that I never reach into moving parts. If I see a hazard, I fix it if I can or tell the supervisor straight away. I also keep an eye on the other shed hands, especially when we're all working close together."

5. How do you follow the wool classer's instructions when sorting lines?

Why they ask

The classer sets the lines; you need to show you listen and don't guess.

How to structure your answer

Describe how you clarify, confirm, and stay consistent.

Example answer

"At the start of the run I ask the classer to show me the lines they want and where each bin goes. If I'm unsure about a fleece, I don't guess, I ask. I keep the lines separate and check in during the day to make sure I'm still matching their spec. I also watch for anything that could contaminate a line, like odd fibres or rubbish, and pull it out before it gets pressed."

6. Why do you want to work on a remote property for the season?

Why they ask

Employers want to know you'll stay for the whole season and cope with isolation.

How to structure your answer

Honest motivation, awareness of remote life, commitment to the season.

Example answer

"I like the focus of shed work and the team you get on a remote property. I know it means long days and being away from town, but I'm used to that from previous seasons. I'm looking for a full season where I can settle in, learn how the classer wants things done, and be reliable every day. I also enjoy the outdoors and the routine of a shearing run."