

Defence Force Officer interview questions

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What to expect

The interview for a Defence Force Officer role is a structured assessment designed to test your leadership, judgement, and commitment to the values of the Australian Defence Force. It is not just about technical knowledge; the panel wants to see how you think and how you would behave under pressure.

- **Process and motivation:** Questions about why you want to be an officer and your understanding of the commissioning process.
- **Behavioural leadership:** Questions asking for examples of when you have led a team, resolved conflict, or managed a difficult situation.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Hypothetical situations that test your decision-making, often involving safety, ethics, or operational risk.
- **Technical and planning:** Questions about your knowledge of military planning processes, systems, and logistics.
- **Safety and risk:** Questions about how you manage risk, emergency response, and the welfare of your personnel.

The interview typically begins with an introduction and a brief overview of the role. You may then face a panel of serving officers who will ask a mix of behavioural and scenario questions. Some interviews include a short presentation or a psychometric assessment beforehand. The panel will also ask about your motivation and your understanding of the ADF values. Security clearance and medical checks are usually separate stages.

1. Why do you want to become a Defence Force Officer?

Why they ask

The panel wants to understand your motivation and whether you have a realistic view of the role and its demands.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through of your personal motivation: start with what drew you to the military, then link it to the ADF values, and finish with how you see your career progressing.

Example answer

"I want to become a Defence Force Officer because I am drawn to the responsibility of leading people in a meaningful way. I have always valued service, courage, and integrity, and I see the ADF as an organisation that embodies those values. I understand that the role is demanding, requiring long hours and time away from home, but I am prepared for that because I want to make a difference to the people I lead and to the nation's security. In the long term, I hope to specialise in operational planning and eventually command a unit."

2. Tell me about a time you led a team through a difficult situation.

Why they ask

This behavioural question assesses your leadership style, problem-solving, and ability to stay calm under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use the STAR method: describe the Situation, the Task you faced, the Action you took, and the Result you achieved. Focus on your specific contribution.

Example answer

"During a field training exercise, my platoon was tasked with navigating through unfamiliar terrain in heavy rain. Morale was low and one soldier had a minor injury. I gathered the team, reassessed the route, and assigned roles based on individual strengths. I took point myself to set the pace and kept communication open. We completed the navigation ahead of schedule and the injured soldier received proper care. The platoon later received positive feedback for teamwork and resilience."

3. You are leading a platoon on a training exercise and a soldier is injured. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario question tests your ability to prioritise safety, follow procedures, and make decisions under pressure.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: immediately ensure safety, assess the situation, follow emergency procedures, communicate with command, and then support the individual and the team.

Example answer

"My first priority is the safety of the soldier and the rest of the platoon. I would halt the exercise, secure the area, and assess the injury. If it is serious, I would call for medical support and administer first aid as trained. I would then inform higher command and document the incident. After the soldier is treated, I would brief the platoon, address any concerns, and conduct a quick risk assessment before deciding whether to continue. I would also follow up to ensure the soldier receives ongoing care and support."

4. How would you manage a conflict between two junior officers under your command?

Why they ask

The panel wants to see your interpersonal skills, fairness, and ability to maintain discipline and morale.

How to structure your answer

A behavioural and process structure: describe your approach to mediation, starting with listening to both sides, then applying policy, and finally following up to ensure resolution.

Example answer

"I would first speak to each officer separately to understand their perspective and the root cause of the conflict. I would then bring them together in a neutral setting, reiterate the standards expected of officers, and facilitate a conversation where each can express their concerns. If the conflict involved a breach of discipline, I would follow the appropriate policy and document the process. My goal would be to resolve the issue fairly and restore working relationships. I would follow up after a few weeks to ensure the tension has eased and the team is functioning well."

5. What do you know about the Australian Defence Force's operational planning process?

Why they ask

This technical question assesses your knowledge of how the ADF plans and executes operations, which is central to the officer role.

How to structure your answer

A structured explanation: outline the main steps of the planning process, such as mission analysis, course of action development, and orders production, and connect it to your experience.

Example answer

"The ADF uses a joint operations planning process that starts with mission analysis, where we identify the problem and the commander's intent. We then develop and wargame courses of action, select the

best one, and produce orders. I have applied this process during training exercises, where I led a team through mission analysis and developed a course of action that was adopted by the battalion. I am familiar with the tools used, such as MILIS and the Battle Management System, to support planning and execution."

6. How do you prioritise the welfare of your personnel alongside mission objectives?

Why they ask

This values-based question tests your understanding of the balance between mission success and the wellbeing of your team.

How to structure your answer

A values and judgement structure: discuss the importance of both, then explain how you assess risk, communicate with your team, and make decisions that uphold both.

Example answer

"I see welfare and mission success as linked, not opposing. A team that is well-led and supported is more effective. I would assess the risks to personnel, ensure they have the resources and rest they need, and keep communication open so they can raise concerns. If mission objectives put someone at unnecessary risk, I would raise it with command and seek a safer approach. I have done this in training when I adjusted a schedule to give my platoon proper rest, and we still met all objectives. Ultimately, taking care of my people is part of achieving the mission."