

Derma Therapist interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for dermal therapist roles usually mix a clinical conversation with a practical or scenario-based assessment. Employers want to see how you assess skin, choose safe treatments and talk to clients about aftercare.

- **Clinical assessment:** Questions about how you analyse skin, take a history and decide on a treatment plan.
- **Technical treatment:** Questions about specific modalities such as chemical peels, microdermabrasion, laser and dermoscopy.
- **Safety and infection control:** Questions about sterilising equipment, skin penetration rules and laser safety.
- **Client-facing communication:** Questions about explaining treatment options, managing expectations and giving post-treatment advice.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Questions about handling requests that fall outside safe practice or when a client's skin reacts unexpectedly.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example of how you handled a difficult treatment or client situation.

A typical process starts with a phone or video screen with a clinic manager, then a practical assessment or skin consultation role-play, then a panel or one-on-one interview with a senior dermal therapist or practice owner. Some clinics ask for a paid trial shift.

1. Walk me through how you assess a new client's skin before recommending a treatment.

Why they ask

This shows your clinical process and whether you can spot contraindications before you pick up a tool.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: greet and build rapport, take a medical and skin history, perform visual and tool-based assessment, discuss goals, explain options, gain consent.

Example answer

"I start by asking about their medical history, medications and any previous reactions to treatments. Then I look at their skin under good lighting, use dermoscopy and VISIA imaging to check pigmentation, pores and sun damage, and ask what they want to change. I explain what I see in plain language, offer a few treatment options with likely downtime, and only book a treatment once they understand the plan and give consent."

2. Tell me about a time you had to adjust a treatment plan because a client's skin reacted unexpectedly.

Why they ask

Behavioural questions reveal how you handle complications in real time and whether you document and follow up.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"A regular client came in for a peel, but when I cleansed her skin I saw new redness and a few broken capillaries. I stopped the peel, switched to a gentle hydrating treatment, and explained why I was changing the plan. I documented the reaction in Cliniko, gave her written aftercare, and checked in two days later. She appreciated that I did not push ahead, and she stayed with the clinic for her ongoing skin care."

3. A client asks for a stronger peel than you think is safe for their skin type. How do you handle that?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and your ability to say no without losing the client.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: pause, explain risk, offer safe alternative, document, escalate if needed.

Example answer

"I would acknowledge what they want and explain why a stronger peel could cause pigmentation or burning on their skin type. I would show them the treatment plan I recommend instead, maybe a series of gentler peels or a different modality, and give them time to think. If they still pushed, I would offer to have the senior therapist review their skin. I would document the conversation so the whole team knows the plan."

4. What steps do you take to maintain infection control and sterilise equipment between clients?

Why they ask

Safety is non-negotiable in skin penetration and laser treatments, and employers listen for specific routines.

How to structure your answer

Sequence: hand hygiene, surface cleaning, instrument reprocessing, waste disposal, documentation.

Example answer

"I follow the clinic's infection control policy and the relevant state skin penetration guidelines. Between clients I clean surfaces with hospital-grade disinfectant, reprocess reusable instruments through the steriliser, and use single-use items where required. I check steriliser logs, dispose of sharps safely, and document everything in the treatment notes. I also keep my laser safety training current and check equipment before each session."

5. How do you explain post-treatment care to a client who is anxious about downtime?

Why they ask

Client-facing questions show whether you can give clear advice and reduce unnecessary worry.

How to structure your answer

Empathy then plain language: listen, normalise, give written steps, check understanding.

Example answer

"I would let them tell me what worries them, then explain what to expect in simple terms. I would say that some redness and flaking can be normal for a few days, and give them a written aftercare sheet with products to use and things to avoid. I would show them how to contact me if they have questions and check that they understood the main points before they leave."

6. Describe your experience with laser systems such as Candela and how you ensure safe parameters.

Why they ask

Technical questions confirm you can operate specific equipment safely and adjust for different skin types.

How to structure your answer

Technical walk-through: training, skin assessment, test spot, settings, monitoring.

Example answer

"I have used Candela laser systems for hair reduction and pigmentation after completing state-based laser safety training. Before treatment I assess the client's skin type, check for contraindications and do a test spot. I select settings based on that response, start conservatively and monitor the skin during the session. I document the parameters and the client's reaction so the next treatment is safe and consistent."