

Dog Breeder interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for dog breeder roles typically assess your practical experience, breeding philosophy, and ability to manage both animal welfare and business operations. Expect a mix of technical, behavioural and compliance-focused questions.

- **Technical:** Questions on genetics, health testing, whelping, and puppy development.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experiences with difficult buyers, animal health issues, or kennel management.
- **Scenario:** Questions presenting hypothetical situations such as a difficult birth or a buyer dispute, to test judgement.
- **Compliance and safety:** Questions on local council regulations, animal welfare standards, and record-keeping.
- **Process:** Questions about your breeding cycle, from selection to placement.

The interview may begin with a phone screen covering your basic experience and breeding philosophy, followed by a face-to-face or on-site interview where you might be asked to walk through your kennel management practices. Some employers include a practical component, such as handling a dog or demonstrating record-keeping.

1. How do you select breeding pairs to ensure healthy, well-tempered litters?

Why they ask

This tests your technical knowledge of genetics, health screening and breed improvement.

How to structure your answer

Explain the factors you consider: health test results, pedigree, temperament, and avoiding inbreeding. Give a brief example of a pairing decision.

Example answer

"I start by reviewing health test results for both dogs, focusing on conditions common to the breed such as hip dysplasia or eye issues. I also consider temperament, because I want puppies that are confident and friendly. I check the pedigree to avoid close line breeding and to maintain genetic diversity. If a dog has a fantastic show record but poor health scores, I would not use them. I also look at the breed's history and any known issues in the lines. For example, when I bred my last litter, I paired a dog with excellent hip scores and a gentle temperament with a bitch who had similar qualities, and the puppies all passed their health checks and went to families who appreciated their calm nature."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult buyer or a buyer who was not suitable.

Why they ask

This assesses your customer service, judgement and commitment to responsible placement.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on how you handled the interaction and what outcome you achieved.

Example answer

"Situation: A potential buyer wanted to take a puppy home before it was eight weeks old. Task: I needed to ensure the puppy's welfare and also maintain a good relationship with the buyer. Action: I

explained why the puppy needed to stay with its mother and littermates for socialisation and health reasons, and I offered to send weekly photos and updates until it was ready. I also invited them to visit the puppy at the kennel. Result: The buyer understood and waited, and they later thanked me because the puppy was well-adjusted and easy to train. They have since recommended me to friends."

3. What would you do if a bitch rejected a newborn puppy?

Why they ask

This tests your ability to stay calm, prioritise animal welfare and take decisive action under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Assess the situation, take immediate action, monitor, and seek professional help if needed. Explain your priorities.

Example answer

"First, I would check the puppy's condition and make sure it is warm and breathing. If the mother is rejecting it, I would try to encourage her to accept it by placing the puppy near her teats and gently holding her. If she continues to reject, I would remove the puppy and start hand-rearing or find a surrogate. I would consult my vet about feeding schedules and temperature requirements, and I would keep detailed records of the puppy's weight and feeding. I would also monitor the mother for any health issues that might be causing the rejection. Throughout, I would prioritise the puppy's survival and wellbeing, and I would not hesitate to seek veterinary advice."

4. What are your responsibilities regarding local council regulations and animal welfare?

Why they ask

This checks your understanding of the legal and ethical framework you must operate within.

How to structure your answer

List key obligations: registration, record-keeping, housing standards, health checks. Mention specific legislation or codes you follow.

Example answer

"I ensure that my kennel is registered with the local council and that I comply with the relevant state animal welfare regulations, such as the Domestic Animals Act. This includes keeping accurate records of all dogs, litters, and sales. I also follow the codes of practice for breeding, which cover housing, exercise, and veterinary care. I microchip and vaccinate all puppies before they go to new homes, and I provide buyers with pedigree papers and health records. I stay up to date with any changes to legislation by checking with my council and industry bodies like Dogs Australia."

5. Walk me through your breeding cycle from selecting a pair to placing puppies.

Why they ask

This gives the interviewer a clear picture of your end-to-end process and organisational skills.

How to structure your answer

Provide a chronological walk-through covering selection, mating, pregnancy care, whelping, rearing, and placement.

Example answer

"I start by evaluating potential breeding pairs, looking at health tests, pedigree, and temperament. Once I decide on a pair, I plan the mating around the bitch's cycle. During pregnancy, I adjust her diet and exercise and monitor her health with vet checks. When whelping begins, I stay with her to assist if needed and ensure the puppies are delivered safely. After birth, I monitor the puppies daily, checking weight gain and development, and I start socialisation and enrichment activities. I keep detailed

records in BreedMate. When puppies are old enough, I screen potential buyers through interviews and home checks, and I provide a puppy pack with care instructions. I also stay in touch with buyers for support."

6. Describe a time you had to make a tough decision about an animal's health.

Why they ask

This reveals your decision-making, veterinary knowledge and willingness to put welfare first.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Emphasise the factors you weighed and the outcome.

Example answer

"Situation: One of my breeding bitches developed complications during whelping. Task: I had to decide whether to intervene or seek emergency veterinary help. Action: I assessed her condition and saw she was exhausted and struggling, so I called my vet immediately and prepared to transport her. While waiting, I kept her calm and monitored the puppy's position. Result: The vet performed a caesarean and saved both mother and puppies. It was a costly decision but the right one for their welfare. I learned to always have an emergency plan in place and to trust my instincts when something feels wrong."