Financial Accountant interview questions

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What to expect

Financial accountant interviews test your technical knowledge of AASB and the Corporations Act, your comfort with reconciliations and month-end close, and how you work with auditors. You will also be asked about attention to detail and how you handle competing deadlines.

- **Technical:** Questions on AASB standards, tax compliance, financial statement preparation and the Corporations Act.
- **Process:** Walk-throughs of month-end close, reconciliation steps and how you keep the ledger clean.
- **Behavioural:** Examples of finding errors, working under pressure, or dealing with auditors and stakeholders.
- **Scenario:** What would you do if you found a discrepancy or missed accrual just before reporting or audit.

Usually two stages. First a phone or video screen with a recruiter or hiring manager covering your background and basic technical questions. Then a face-to-face or panel interview with the financial controller or CFO, including a practical exercise such as a reconciliation or interpretation of a set of accounts. Some employers include a short Excel test.

1. Walk me through your month-end close process.

Why they ask

This is a core process question. The interviewer wants to see that you understand the sequence, the controls and where errors typically creep in.

How to structure your answer

Give a chronological walk-through. Start with cut-off checks, then sub-ledger closes, reconciliations, accruals and review. Mention how you document and sign off each step.

> **Example answer**
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> *“I start by checking that all sub-ledgers are closed and interfaces have run, then I review the trial balance for unusual balances. Next I complete bank and general ledger reconciliations, post accruals and prepayments, and prepare the draft financial statements for review. I keep a checklist with timings so nothing is missed, and I flag any material variances to the financial controller before we lock the period.”*

2. Tell me about a time you found a significant error in a reconciliation. What did you do?

Why they ask

This tests attention to detail, problem solving and how you escalate and fix issues without hiding them.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Describe the situation, the task of reconciling the account, the action you took to investigate and correct, and the result including any process change.

> **Example answer**
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> *“I was reconciling a large supplier account and found a duplicate payment that had not been picked up. I traced it through the ledger, confirmed it with the vendor, and raised a credit note. I then added a duplicate invoice check to our payment run and documented the control so it would not happen again. The finance manager used that check in the next audit.”*

3. How do you ensure compliance with AASB when preparing financial statements?

Why they ask

Technical knowledge of Australian accounting standards is central to the role. The interviewer wants to hear how you stay current and apply the standards practically.

How to structure your answer

Explain your resources, how you apply a standard to a transaction, and how you confirm your treatment. Mention CA ANZ or CPA Australia guidance and the AASB website.

Example answer

"I start with the AASB standards and the relevant interpretations, then look at CA ANZ or CPA Australia guidance for practical application. For a new transaction, I document my reasoning and check it with the financial controller before posting. I also keep a checklist for year-end so each disclosure is covered, and I review any updated standards before the reporting cycle begins."

4. Imagine it is three days before the annual audit and you discover a material accrual was missed. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario tests judgement under pressure, escalation and how you handle a problem close to a deadline.

How to structure your answer

Show a calm, step-by-step approach: assess materiality, escalate promptly, correct the accounts, document the correction and communicate with the auditor.

Example answer

"I would first quantify the amount and assess whether it is material to the financial statements. Then I would tell the financial controller immediately, prepare the correcting journal with clear support, and update the relevant reconciliation. I would document why it was missed and what control will prevent it next time. If the audit has already started, I would inform the auditor and provide the corrected figures and explanation."

5. Describe a time you had to explain a complex accounting issue to a non-financial colleague.

Why they ask

Financial accountants often work with operations, sales or auditors who are not accountants. This tests your communication and stakeholder skills.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Focus on how you translated the technical detail into plain language and what the outcome was.

Example answer

"A project manager queried why a large invoice had been accrued rather than paid. I explained the matching principle in simple terms, showed how the expense related to their project this month, and walked through the journal so they could see the impact. They then used that understanding to time future invoices better, which reduced month-end surprises for both teams."

6. Why do you want to work as a financial accountant at this organisation?

Why they ask

Motivation and fit. The interviewer wants to know you understand the role and have a genuine reason for applying, not just any accounting job.

How to structure your answer

Link your skills to the role, mention something specific about the organisation, and show how this fits your career direction. Avoid generic praise.

Example answer

“I want to work here because the finance team is responsible for external reporting across a complex group, and that is the kind of technical work I enjoy. My experience with AASB statements and audit support means I can contribute from the first month-end. I am also keen to keep developing under a financial controller who values clean reconciliations and early sign-off.”