

Hotel Receptionist interview questions

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What to expect

Hotel receptionist interviews focus on your ability to handle guests, juggle front desk tasks and use property management systems. Employers want to see that you can stay calm under pressure and represent the property professionally.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through a standard task, such as a check-in or a reservation change.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example from your past, often about handling a difficult guest or a busy period.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a hypothetical situation, like an overbooking or a maintenance issue, to test your judgement.
- **Technical:** Questions about property management systems, payment handling and front desk software.
- **Client-facing:** Questions that assess how you communicate with guests, including tone, empathy and problem resolution.

You might start with a brief phone screen, then an in-person or video interview with the front office manager or duty manager. Some hotels include a practical test, such as a role-play check-in or a short task in the property management system. You may also meet the general manager for a final conversation.

1. Walk me through your process for checking in a guest from arrival to room key.

Why they ask

This process question shows whether you understand the steps and can keep them smooth.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through works best. Start with the greeting, then confirm the booking, check identification, process payment or pre-authorisation, assign the room, explain key features like breakfast times and Wi-Fi, and hand over the key while inviting questions.

Example answer

"I greet the guest with a smile and use their name if I have it. I confirm the booking details, ask for identification and a credit card for pre-authorisation. While the payment processes, I assign a room that matches their request, then explain breakfast times, Wi-Fi access and checkout time. I hand over the key and ask if they need help with luggage or a restaurant booking. If the guest looks tired after a long trip, I keep it brief and let them know I am available if they need anything."

2. Tell me about a time you resolved a guest complaint.

Why they ask

This behavioural question reveals how you handle conflict and whether you take ownership.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Choose a real example where you listened, apologised, fixed the issue and followed up.

Example answer

"A guest complained that their room was next to the lift and they could not sleep. I apologised sincerely, checked availability and moved them to a quieter room on a higher floor. I helped them

move their luggage and offered a complimentary drink at the bar while housekeeping prepared the new room. I followed up the next morning to check they had slept well, and they thanked me for turning the stay around."

3. You have two guests arriving but only one room left due to a maintenance issue. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario question tests your judgement under pressure and your ability to find solutions without escalating.

How to structure your answer

Talk through your priorities: be honest, offer alternatives, and keep the guest informed. Mention calling nearby partner hotels, offering an upgrade or discount, and coordinating with maintenance for a quick fix.

Example answer

"I would first check if the maintenance issue can be resolved quickly, maybe by moving the guest to another room or swapping with a room that is ready. If not, I would apologise to both guests and explain the situation. I would call a nearby partner hotel to arrange a room for one guest, cover the cost if policy allows, and offer a voucher for a future stay. I would also let the maintenance team know so they can fix the room for the next arrival. Throughout, I would keep my tone calm and helpful."

4. Which property management systems have you used, and how comfortable are you learning a new one?

Why they ask

This technical question checks your practical readiness for the front desk.

How to structure your answer

Name the systems, then give a specific example of how you learned one quickly. Mention any transferable skills, like using Opera Cloud or Protel AIR.

Example answer

"I have used Opera Cloud and Protel AIR in previous roles, and I am comfortable with Booking.com extranet and Microsoft Excel. When I started at my last hotel, I had only used a different system, but I spent my first week practising check-ins and check-outs during quiet periods and asked my supervisor to review my work. Within a fortnight I was handling group bookings on my own. I find most property management systems share the same logic, so I pick them up quickly."

5. How do you handle a busy check-out period when several guests are waiting and the phone is ringing?

Why they ask

This question assesses your ability to prioritise and stay calm during peak times.

How to structure your answer

Describe a step-by-step approach: acknowledge waiting guests, answer the phone briefly if needed, triage tasks, and keep communication clear.

Example answer

"I would greet the guests in line and let them know I will be with them shortly. If the phone rings, I answer it quickly, take the caller's details and promise to call back if it is not urgent. I prioritise check-outs that are already in the system, process them efficiently and ask a colleague for backup if available. If someone has a simple request like a luggage store, I point them to the porter. I keep my voice calm and thank each guest for waiting."

6. Describe a time you coordinated with housekeeping to fix a room issue quickly.

Why they ask

This behavioural question looks at teamwork and your ability to get things done across departments.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Focus on the problem, your communication with housekeeping, and the outcome for the guest.

Example answer

"A guest called to say the air conditioning was not working. I checked the system and saw the room was marked as clean, so I called housekeeping to confirm. They had not noticed the fault. I arranged for a maintenance check and moved the guest to a new room within 20 minutes. I followed up with housekeeping to make sure the faulty room was taken out of service until fixed. The guest was relieved and left a positive comment about the quick response."