

Picture Framer interview questions

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What to expect

Picture Framer interviews usually combine a practical trade discussion with customer-facing scenarios. Employers want to see that you can measure accurately, handle different materials and explain conservation choices clearly.

- **Technical and materials:** Questions about framing materials, conservation principles and tools like FrameReady or a dry mount press.
- **Practical process:** Walk-throughs of how you measure, cut, assemble and finish a frame from start to end.
- **Client-facing:** Scenarios about advising customers, explaining options and handling budget concerns.
- **Quality and problem-solving:** How you avoid mistakes, fix errors and maintain a high standard of finish.
- **Safety and workshop:** Checks and habits around using mitre saws, dry mount presses and other workshop equipment.
- **Behavioural:** A past example of a time you managed a tricky job, a deadline or a customer issue.

Usually a single interview with the workshop owner or manager, often with a short practical task such as measuring a frame or cutting a mount. You might talk through a portfolio of previous work, discuss your experience with tools like FrameReady or EstLite, and answer scenario questions about customer requests or conservation issues.

1. Can you walk me through how you measure and cut a frame from a customer's artwork to a finished piece?

Why they ask

This shows whether you understand the full framing process and can work methodically.

How to structure your answer

Walk through the stages in order: take measurements, calculate frame and mount sizes, cut moulding and mat board, assemble, fit the artwork, and finish.

Example answer

"First I measure the artwork and confirm the visible area with the customer. I add the mount border, then calculate the frame opening and the moulding length, allowing for the rebate. I cut the mat board on the computerised mat cutter, then cut the moulding on the mitre saw, checking each corner for a tight fit. I join the corners, cut the glass and backing to size, then assemble the frame. I mount the artwork using archival hinging or a dry mount press if appropriate, fit it into the frame, and finish with a backing tape and hanging hardware. Finally I check the frame for square, clean the glass and present it to the customer."

2. A customer brings in a valuable but fragile artwork. How do you decide which mount board and glass to use?

Why they ask

Conservation judgement is a core part of picture framing, especially for artworks and objects.

How to structure your answer

Explain your decision-making: consider the artwork's condition, value and intended display, then choose conservation-grade materials and explain the trade-offs.

Example answer

"I would first examine the artwork and ask about its history and how it will be displayed. For a valuable or fragile piece, I would use acid-free mount board and UV-filtering glass to protect it from light and acid burn. I would avoid dry mounting and instead use archival hinging with Japanese paper and wheat starch paste. If the customer wants to keep the possibility of removing the artwork later, I would leave the mount reversible. I would explain that these materials preserve the artwork, and let the customer decide."

3. Tell me about a time you made a mistake on a frame, such as cutting a mount too small or damaging a moulding. What did you do?

Why they ask

This reveals how you handle errors, learn from them and communicate with customers.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Be honest, focus on the fix and what you changed afterwards.

Example answer

"I once cut a mount opening too small for a print because I misread the measurement. I noticed when I offered the artwork up. I apologised to the customer, cut a new mount straight away from the same board, and remeasured twice before cutting. The frame was completed on time and the customer never saw the error. After that I started writing measurements in two places and doing a dry fit before final assembly."

4. How do you explain conservation framing to a customer who is focused on cost?

Why they ask

Most framing work involves customer conversations, and you need to balance education with budget.

How to structure your answer

Show empathy, explain the benefits in plain language, offer options, and let the customer choose.

Example answer

"I would listen to their budget first and acknowledge that cost matters. Then I would explain what conservation framing does in simple terms: acid-free materials stop the artwork from yellowing, and UV glass reduces fading from sunlight. I would show them samples of standard and conservation materials so they can see the difference. If they still want a lower-cost option, I would suggest conservation materials for the mount and glass, but a simpler frame moulding, or vice versa. The goal is to give them enough information to make a choice they are happy with."

5. What is your process for quoting a framing job, from initial enquiry to final price?

Why they ask

Quoting and estimating is a practical skill that affects profitability and customer trust.

How to structure your answer

Walk through your quoting process: gather requirements, measure, check materials and labour, use software if available, present a clear quote.

Example answer

"When a customer enquires, I ask what they want framed and how they plan to display it. I measure the item, then discuss frame style, mount board and glass options. I check my stock or supplier prices for the moulding and materials, and estimate the labour time based on complexity. I use EstLite to calculate the price and produce a written quote that lists the materials and any conservation notes. I explain what is included and ask if they have any questions before they decide."

6. How do you manage your workflow when you have several custom frames due the same week?

Why they ask

Small workshops often have overlapping deadlines, so time management and prioritisation matter.

How to structure your answer

Explain how you prioritise, batch tasks, communicate and stay organised.

Example answer

"I start by listing all the jobs and their due dates, then break each one into stages. I batch similar tasks, like cutting all the moulding for several jobs at once, then cutting all the mounts. That saves setup time. I check my materials stock early so I can reorder if something is missing. For anything that might run late, I contact the customer as soon as I know, rather than waiting until the due date. At the end of each day I update my job list so I know exactly where I am the next morning."