

Police Prosecutor interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Police Prosecutor roles typically assess your legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and ability to manage a busy caseload within a police prosecuting team.

- **Process questions:** These ask you to explain how you handle core tasks such as preparing a brief of evidence or managing a caseload.
- **Behavioural questions:** These probe past experiences, often using 'tell me about a time' prompts to assess how you have handled negotiations, conflicts, or ethical dilemmas.
- **Scenario questions:** These present hypothetical situations, such as a reluctant witness or a weak brief, to test your judgement and problem-solving under pressure.
- **Technical questions:** These test your knowledge of criminal law, evidence, and procedure, often by asking you to explain elements of an offence or the application of a legal principle.
- **Ethical questions:** These explore your understanding of prosecutorial duties, such as disclosure obligations and fair trial principles.
- **Client-facing questions:** These assess how you interact with victims, witnesses, and police officers, focusing on communication and empathy.

The interview is usually a panel format with a senior prosecutor and a police representative. It may include a written exercise or a practical scenario. Questions typically move from process and technical knowledge to behavioural and scenario-based prompts, ending with an opportunity for you to ask questions.

1. Walk us through how you prepare a brief of evidence for a contested hearing.

Why they ask

This process question assesses your organisational skills, legal knowledge, and understanding of court requirements.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through: start with reviewing the brief, checking elements and sufficiency, identifying gaps, then preparing case theory, organising evidence, and drafting submissions. Mention witness preparation and disclosure.

Example answer

"First, I review the brief from the investigating officer, checking that the elements of the offence are made out and that the evidence is sufficient. I identify any gaps and request further enquiries. Then I develop a case theory, organise the evidence into a logical sequence, and prepare submissions. I also brief witnesses and ensure all disclosure obligations are met before the hearing."

2. Tell me about a time you had to negotiate a guilty plea with a defence lawyer in a complex matter.

Why they ask

This behavioural question assesses your negotiation skills, legal judgement, and ability to achieve efficient outcomes.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Be specific about the complexity, what you aimed to achieve, how you negotiated, and the outcome.

Example answer

"In a matter involving conflicting witness statements, I assessed the strength of the evidence and identified weaknesses. I discussed possible resolutions with the defence lawyer and offered to proceed on a lesser charge that reflected the criminality. The plea was accepted, saving court resources and securing a conviction."

3. You are presented with a brief where the main witness is reluctant to testify. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario question tests your judgement under pressure, victim sensitivity, and knowledge of procedural options.

How to structure your answer

Outline a judgement-under-pressure approach: first understand the witness's concerns, explain support available, then assess legal options such as witness summons or using the statement under relevant evidence law, and keep the officer informed.

Example answer

"I would first speak with the witness to understand their concerns and explain the process and support services available. If they remain reluctant, I would consider whether their evidence is essential and explore other evidence. I might apply for a witness summons or, depending on the jurisdiction, seek to use their statement under the relevant Evidence Act provision. I would also keep the officer in charge informed."

4. What are the elements of common assault that you must prove?

Why they ask

This technical question tests your knowledge of criminal law and your ability to explain legal concepts clearly.

How to structure your answer

Provide a structured legal explanation: list the elements, then briefly explain each. Show you can apply the law to facts.

Example answer

"For common assault, the elements are: first, an act or omission that causes another person to apprehend immediate unlawful violence; second, the act was intentional or reckless; third, without lawful excuse. I would explain each element and how they apply to the facts of the case."

5. How would you handle a situation where you discover the investigating officer has not disclosed relevant evidence?

Why they ask

This ethical question assesses your understanding of prosecutorial duties and integrity.

How to structure your answer

Focus on principles and process: acknowledge the duty to disclose, outline immediate steps, and mention consequences of non-disclosure.

Example answer

"I have a duty to disclose all relevant evidence, including material that might undermine the prosecution case. I would immediately inform my supervisor, ensure the evidence is disclosed to the defence, and advise the officer on their obligations. Failing to disclose could lead to a miscarriage of justice and professional consequences."

6. How do you support victims and witnesses throughout the prosecution process?

Why they ask

This client-facing question assesses your communication skills and victim-centred approach.

How to structure your answer

Describe a victim-centred approach: keeping them informed, explaining the process, referring to support services, and preparing them for court.

Example answer

"I ensure they are kept informed of court dates and outcomes, explain the process in plain language, and refer them to victim support services. I also prepare them for giving evidence and address any concerns they may have."