

ROV Pilot interview questions

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What to expect

ROV Pilot interviews typically assess your technical knowledge of ROV systems, your ability to handle high-pressure scenarios, and your teamwork and safety mindset. You can expect a mix of process, behavioural, scenario, and technical questions, often delivered by a panel including an offshore supervisor or technical lead.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through a procedure, such as pre-dive checks or data reporting, to demonstrate your methodical approach.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that probe past experiences, teamwork, and how you handle challenges, using the STAR method.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations that test your judgement under pressure, such as equipment failure or unexpected subsea hazards.
- **Technical:** Questions about specific ROV systems, tools, and software you have used, to assess your hands-on expertise.
- **Safety:** Questions that focus on your understanding of safety regulations, risk assessment, and compliance in offshore operations.

The interview often starts with a brief introduction and overview of the role, followed by technical and scenario questions to assess your operational knowledge. Behavioural questions then explore your teamwork and problem-solving abilities. You may also be asked to complete a practical assessment or simulator exercise. The interview usually concludes with an opportunity for you to ask questions about the team, projects, or company culture.

1. Walk me through your pre-dive checks and how you ensure the ROV is ready for operation.

Why they ask

To assess your attention to detail, procedural knowledge, and understanding of safety-critical checks.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through: start with power and systems checks, then move to sensors and tooling, and finish with communication and documentation. Emphasise any specific checks you never skip.

Example answer

"Before every dive, I follow a standard checklist. First, I inspect the ROV visually for any damage or leaks, then I power up the system and run diagnostics on thrusters, cameras, and sonar. I check the manipulator and tooling to ensure they are functioning correctly. I also verify that the USBL tracking and communication systems are operational. Once all checks are complete, I confirm with the supervisor and dive team that we are ready to launch. I document everything in the dive log."

2. Tell me about a time you had to troubleshoot an ROV system malfunction during a dive. How did you handle it?

Why they ask

To evaluate your problem-solving skills and ability to stay calm under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Describe the malfunction, what you did step by step, and the outcome.

Example answer

"During a subsea inspection, the ROV's starboard thruster began responding intermittently. I immediately informed the supervisor and switched to backup control modes to maintain stability. I ran a diagnostic and identified a sensor error. I isolated the faulty thruster and continued the dive using the remaining thrusters, completing the critical inspection. After the dive, I worked with the maintenance team to replace the sensor, and we had no further issues."

3. You're piloting an ROV and the sonar picks up an unexpected obstruction near a subsea valve. What do you do?

Why they ask

To test your judgement, situational awareness, and adherence to safety protocols.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: assess the situation, decide on the safest course of action, act, and review.

Example answer

"First, I would slow the ROV and hold position at a safe distance. I would use the cameras and sonar to get a clearer picture of the obstruction and its proximity to the valve. I would then notify the supervisor and dive team of the potential hazard. If it's safe to proceed, I would carefully navigate around it, documenting it for the report. If there's any risk, I would abort the task and recommend a survey before continuing. Safety is always the priority."

4. Describe your experience with Schilling Robotics manipulators and how you've used them in intervention tasks.

Why they ask

To gauge your technical proficiency with specific tools and your ability to perform precise subsea work.

How to structure your answer

Use a technical explanation: describe the system, then give a specific example of a task you performed, and the outcome.

Example answer

"I have extensive experience with Schilling Robotics manipulators, using them for tasks like valve turning, cutting, and debris removal. In one intervention, I used the manipulator to clear a blockage in a subsea manifold. I carefully guided the tool to grasp and remove the debris, which restored flow and avoided a costly shutdown. I always ensure the manipulator is calibrated and tested before the dive."

5. How do you coordinate with dive teams and supervisors during complex operations?

Why they ask

To assess your teamwork, communication skills, and ability to follow offshore protocols.

How to structure your answer

Use a process-oriented approach: explain the communication channels, how you share information, and how you handle conflicting priorities.

Example answer

"I maintain constant communication with the supervisor and dive team via the intercom. Before each operation, we hold a briefing to clarify roles, objectives, and contingencies. During the dive, I provide regular updates on ROV position, system status, and any observations. If a dive team is in the water, I coordinate closely to avoid interference. I always confirm actions before executing them and ensure everyone is aware of the plan."

6. Offshore work involves long rotations and tight deadlines. How do you manage your time and stay focused under pressure?

Why they ask

To understand your resilience, time management, and ability to cope with the demands of offshore life.

How to structure your answer

Use a behavioural approach: describe your strategies, give an example of a high-pressure situation, and the result.

Example answer

"I thrive on the structure of offshore rotations. I plan my days carefully, prioritising tasks based on operational needs. During a particularly busy campaign, we had back-to-back dives with tight reporting deadlines. I set aside time after each dive to complete reports while the data was fresh, and I communicated with the team to ensure we stayed on schedule. I also make sure to rest properly during off-hours to maintain focus. As a result, we met all deadlines without compromising safety."