Welder interview questions

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What to expect

Welder interviews mix practical trade checks with standard hiring questions. Employers want to confirm your ticket and process knowledge, but they're also weighing up how you handle safety, defects and site pressure, since welding is often high-stakes and hard to inspect once covered over.

- **Technical/process:** Checks your working knowledge of welding processes, equipment settings and reading technical drawings.
- **Safety:** Confirms you understand WHS obligations and site protocols specific to welding, such as fume extraction, fire risk and PPE.
- **Behavioural:** Past-experience questions about teamwork, problem solving and handling mistakes on the job.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical situations testing how you'd respond to a defect, a scheduling conflict or a safety issue in real time.

Most welder interviews open with a check of your ticket, qualifications and recent work history, move into technical and safety questions, then cover one or two behavioural or scenario questions, and close with a chance for you to ask about the equipment, project type and site conditions.

1. Talk me through how you'd plan and complete a weld on a structural joint from a set of drawings.

Why they ask

This tests whether you actually follow the blueprint-to-finished-weld process rather than just naming welding types.

How to structure your answer

Walk through it step by step in the order you'd actually do it on site: reading the drawing, selecting process and settings, preparing the surface, welding, then inspecting.

Example answer

“I'd start by reading the drawing to confirm joint type, weld symbol and any specified standard, usually AS 1554 for structural steel. Then I'd check material thickness to set my process, MIG for speed on thicker sections or TIG if it needs a cleaner finish. Before striking an arc I'd grind and clean the joint to remove mill scale or rust, then tack it in position and check alignment against the drawing. Once I'm happy with fit-up I'd run the weld, checking penetration and bead profile as I go, and finish with a visual inspection for undercut, porosity or cracking before calling it ready for sign-off.”

2. What safety protocols do you follow when welding in an enclosed space or near flammable materials?

Why they ask

Welding carries specific fire, fume and confined-space risks, and employers need to know you won't cut corners under time pressure.

How to structure your answer

Cover the specific hazards for this trade, then the controls you use for each, in plain practical terms.

Example answer

“For fume, I use local extraction or make sure ventilation is adequate before I start, and I wear the right respiratory PPE if extraction isn't enough. For fire risk I clear or shield any flammable material within range of sparks, keep a fire extinguisher nearby, and do a fire watch check after finishing in a confined area. In enclosed spaces I also confirm there's a permit if the site requires one, and I never

work alone in a confined space without someone knowing where I am."

3. Tell me about a time you found a defect in your own weld or someone else's, and what you did about it.

Why they ask

This is a direct behavioural check on honesty and quality standards, both critical since a hidden weld defect can be a structural risk.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"On a fabrication job I was welding a batch of brackets and noticed porosity in one weld during my own visual check. The task was to decide whether to pass it or flag it, knowing it would mean rework and a delay. I ground it back, re-welded it properly and logged what caused it, which turned out to be a contaminated consumable from a damp storage area. The result was the bracket passed inspection and we moved the welding consumables to a dry cabinet, which stopped the same issue happening on the rest of the batch."

4. If you're partway through a job and realise the specified weld procedure won't work for the material you've been given, what do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario checks judgement under pressure and whether you escalate properly rather than improvising outside your competency or the standard.

How to structure your answer

Set out the immediate action, who you'd involve, and how you'd protect the job's compliance and timeline.

Example answer

"I'd stop and not proceed on assumption, since welding to the wrong procedure can compromise structural integrity. I'd check the material certification against the weld procedure specification, and if there's a genuine mismatch I'd raise it with my supervisor or the site engineer straight away rather than guessing. If it needs a new WPS or engineer sign-off, I'd wait for that before continuing, even if it costs time, because a non-compliant weld is a bigger problem than a short delay."

5. How do you keep your welding equipment maintained and ready for use on site?

Why they ask

Equipment reliability affects both safety and productivity, and this checks day-to-day trade discipline rather than one-off knowledge.

How to structure your answer

Describe your routine checks and what you do when you find a fault.

Example answer

"I check leads and connections for wear before starting each shift, keep consumables like tips and liners replaced on schedule rather than waiting for failure, and store everything out of the weather when it's not in use. If I find a fault, like a damaged earth lead or a gas leak on a TIG torch, I tag it out and report it rather than working around it, since a faulty setup is both a safety risk and a quality risk."

6. This role sometimes involves fabrication and finishing as well as welding itself. How do you approach that side of the job?

Why they ask

Welders are often expected to grind, cut and finish work to a presentable standard, not just join metal, so this checks the breadth of your trade skills.

How to structure your answer

Give a brief walkthrough of your finishing process and how you judge when it's done to standard.

Example answer

“After welding I grind back any spatter or excess bead depending on the finish specified, then check edges and surfaces are smooth and safe to handle. If the piece needs to be paint-ready I'll finish to a standard the coating supplier specifies, and I always check the finished piece against the drawing tolerances before it goes to the next stage.”