

Veterinary medicine mock interview

A third circuit, weighted towards the hard parts of the job.

MOCK INTERVIEW 3 MMI CIRCUIT 7 STATIONS 7 MINUTES PER STATION

BEFORE YOU START

How to run this mock

- 1 Set up seven stations, one room or clearly separated space each, with a door card from the back of this pack on the door and one interviewer holding the matching station page.
- 2 Run students round in order: 7 minutes in the station, 2 minutes to move on. Seven students fit in one 63 minute circuit, twenty one if you start three at different points.
- 3 Interviewers mark all four domains at every station on the 1 to 4 scale, and write one line of evidence before the next student comes in, while it is still fresh.
- 4 Collect the station pages, copy the marks onto the scoring summary, and give every student one strength and one thing to work on. The debrief is the part that changes results.

MARKED THE SAME WAY AT EVERY STATION

The four scoring domains

M Motivation and insight

Knows what the work involves beyond animals: early starts, hard graft, money and death.

- 1 Loves animals, and has looked no further.
- 4 Personal, tested, honest about the hard parts.

C Communication

Explains and listens well to an owner or farmer who is worried, rushed or short of money.

- 1 Speaks only about the animal.
- 4 Clear and kind, and hears what is unsaid.

R Reflection and self awareness

Learns from experience rather than listing it, and knows how they react when it is hard.

- 1 Lists the experience, learns nothing.
- 4 Says what changed, and what still needs work.

V Professional values and ethics

Holds animal welfare, the owner's circumstances and public health together.

- 1 Picks one side, ignores who else it hits.
- 4 Weighs welfare against what is possible.

MOTIVATION FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE

Which part of the work do you expect to find hardest, and what have you seen that makes you say so?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What would you do about it, rather than hope it gets easier?
- Is there a part you expect to find easy that others might not?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Names something specific and credible, rather than a weakness chosen because it sounds good.
- Grounds it in something they have seen or done, not only in what they imagine the job to be.
- Has thought about how they would manage it, in habits and support rather than willpower.
- Does not pretend the rest of the job is easy, or overclaim about how well they would cope.
- Answers the whole question, including the part about evidence, without needing both follow ups.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

This station rewards honesty, and a safe rehearsed answer rarely survives the first follow up. Mark self knowledge rather than the size of the difficulty they choose to name.

MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

	Little evidence	Some evidence	Clear evidence	Strong evidence
Motivation and insight	1	2	3	4
Communication	1	2	3	4
Reflection and self awareness	1	2	3	4
Professional values and ethics	1	2	3	4

EVIDENCE: ONE LINE, IN THEIR WORDS, BEFORE THE NEXT STUDENT COMES IN

WORK EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION

Describe a difficult conversation you watched between someone at work and the person in front of them, in a practice, a yard, a kennel or a shop. What did you take from it?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What made it difficult, and who was finding it hard?
- What did the person doing the talking do that you would copy?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- One occasion described closely enough that they were clearly watching rather than recalling a general impression.
- Says what made it difficult: money, bad news, a complaint, or somebody who was not listening.
- Notices small things, such as the pace, the pauses, the words avoided and where the person stood.
- Says what they would copy and what they would do differently, with a reason for both.
- Keeps the owner or customer anonymous, which is the quiet test in any work experience answer.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

A yard, a kennel, a rescue centre or a supermarket counter all work here, so a student with no veterinary placement can score full marks. Mark what they noticed, not where they were.

MARK ALL FOUR DOMAINS

	Little evidence	Some evidence	Clear evidence	Strong evidence
Motivation and insight	1	2	3	4
Communication	1	2	3	4
Reflection and self awareness	1	2	3	4
Professional values and ethics	1	2	3	4

EVIDENCE: ONE LINE, IN THEIR WORDS, BEFORE THE NEXT STUDENT COMES IN

ETHICAL REASONING

Some dogs are bred for a flat face, or another feature that causes them health problems. Where does the responsibility for that sit, and what should a vet do about it?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Should a vet refuse to treat or to breed from animals like that?
- Who would have to be persuaded for anything to change: owners, breeders or buyers?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Understands the basic problem: a feature people find appealing can make the animal's daily life harder.
- Spreads responsibility sensibly across breeders, buyers, breed societies and the vets who treat the results.
- Sees the vet's part as honest conversation and advice, not only as surgery after the fact.
- Avoids simply blaming owners, most of whom chose the animal without knowing any of this.
- Reaches a view and defends it, while accepting the people involved are not villains.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

No veterinary knowledge is needed and no breed needs naming. Mark whether the student can see a welfare problem created by ordinary people making ordinary choices, and still discuss it without contempt.

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Professional values and ethics	1	2	3	4

EVIDENCE: ONE LINE, IN THEIR WORDS, BEFORE THE NEXT STUDENT COMES IN

THE PROFESSION AND THE PUBLIC

Poor mental health and burnout are known problems in the veterinary profession. Why do you think that is, and what would help you stay well in it?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Which of those pressures do you think would affect you most?
- Who would you actually tell if you were struggling?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Names real pressures: long hours, being on call, money conversations, complaints, working alone, and ending lives as part of the job.
- Talks about it soberly, without either dismissing it or dramatising it.
- Has concrete things they already do to stay well, rather than intentions for the future.
- Names a person or a route they would genuinely use, rather than saying they would ask for help in general.
- Sees it as something the profession and the employer share, not only a personal failing.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Keep this station factual and calm. If a student discloses something about their own health, thank them, do not probe, and make sure a member of staff is available to them afterwards.

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COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAY

A friend is about to buy a puppy from a seller who will not let them see the mother. Speak to them now.

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- What if they said the deposit was already paid?
- Would you say anything different if it were a stranger asking you?

BRIEF FOR THE PERSON PLAYING THE PART

Your part	You are the candidate's friend and you have wanted this puppy for months. You are meeting the seller in a car park tomorrow and you have already sent a deposit. You get defensive if lectured, but you will answer a fair question.
Open with	He says the mother is at his other house. Everybody does it that way, surely.
If handled well	Agree to ask to see the mother, and to walk away tomorrow if you are not allowed to.
If handled badly	Say they are spoiling it, and that the deposit has gone anyway so there is no point.

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Asks what they already know about the seller before advising them.
- Explains plainly why seeing the mother matters, without lecturing.
- Takes the friend's excitement seriously rather than dismissing it.
- Offers something practical: questions to ask, or walking away.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

One person marks, one plays the friend from the brief. Mark whether they can change someone's mind without making them defensive.

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DATA AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Look at the table. What does it suggest about lameness in these herds, and what would you check before drawing a conclusion?

LAMENESS AND AVERAGE MILK YIELD IN FOUR DAIRY HERDS, ONE MONTH

Herd	Cows	Lame (%)	Litres per cow per day
A	180	6	29
B	240	14	24
C	95	4	31
D	310	21	21

These figures are invented for this exercise. They are not data from any real farm or herd and should not be quoted as such.

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Which herd would you want to visit first?
- What would you want to see that this table does not show?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Reads both columns together rather than ranking the herds on yield alone.
- Spots that the herds with more lame cows are also producing less milk on average.
- Says the link could run either way, or be caused by something the table does not show.
- Notices the herds are different sizes, so a percentage and a head count tell different stories.
- Raises the welfare point as well as the business one, without being asked to.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Print this station page so the candidate can see the table. No farming knowledge is needed: lame simply means the cow is limping. Mark the reasoning, and whether welfare is mentioned unprompted.

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PERSONAL INSIGHT

What do you do when an animal or a person in front of you will not calm down, and nothing you try is working?

IF THEY STALL OR FINISH EARLY, YOU MAY ASK

- Tell us about a time that actually happened to you.
- How do you know when to stop and hand it to somebody else?

WHAT A STRONG CANDIDATE COVERS: A LISTENING AID, NOT A MODEL ANSWER. DO NOT READ IT OUT.

- Describes what they actually do, in order, rather than describing how they would feel.
- Includes slowing down, lowering their own voice and changing the surroundings, rather than pushing harder.
- Knows their own limits and says when they would fetch someone more experienced.
- Honest that they do not always manage it, with an example that shows as much.
- Thinks about safety, their own and everybody else's, without being prompted.

NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Any setting counts: a frightened dog, a toddler, a customer or a younger sibling. Mark whether the student can describe a method rather than a mood.

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Scoring summary

One row per student. Copy each mark across from the station sheets, then total the row. Every station is marked out of 16, so the circuit totals 112.

M Motivation and insight C Communication R Reflection and self awareness V Professional values and ethics

[illegible]

THE SCALE, AT EVERY STATION

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Little evidence | Barely addressed, or addressed in a way that raises a concern. Would need substantial work before a real interview. |
| 2 | Some evidence | Touched on it, but thinly or only when prompted. The material is there and the answer is not. |
| 3 | Clear evidence | Covered it well and unprompted. The kind of answer that does the candidate no harm at a real interview. |
| 4 | Strong evidence | Covered it with insight and specifics, and made the interviewer want to hear more. Rare, and should stay rare. |

Briefing for interviewers

Read this once before the circuit starts. It takes about three minutes, and it is the difference between a mock that flatters everyone and one that tells a student something they can act on.

You do not need to be a vet to interview

You are not judging veterinary knowledge. You are judging whether a seventeen year old can think out loud, listen, reflect honestly and hold the animal, the owner and the cost in mind at the same time. Everything you need is on your station page, and the four domains mean the same thing at every station in the circuit.

Before the circuit starts

- Read your station page twice, including the two follow up prompts, and check the door card outside matches your station.
- Have the page, a pen and a watch or a phone timer in front of you. Someone will call the changeover, but keep your own eye on the time.
- Decide with the coordinator who calls time if you are running the role play station, because that station needs two people.

Running your station

- Ask the question exactly as written, so every student gets the same station.
- Then stop talking. Let a silence run for a good five seconds before you prompt: thinking time is not a fault.
- Use a follow up only if the candidate has stalled or has finished early. Two prompts is the maximum.
- Do not teach, correct or react. Nodding along warmly to one student and sitting stony faced with the next is the most common way a circuit becomes unfair.
- Keep the listening aid beside you, not in front of the candidate. It is there to help you hear a thin answer, and it is not a checklist to tick off or read aloud.

Marking

- Mark all four domains, every time, even at a station that leans on two of them. A candidate who communicates beautifully and says nothing can score 4 and 1 on the same answer.
- Mark immediately, before the next student walks in. Marks written at the end of the afternoon are memories of the strongest and the weakest, and nothing in between.
- Write one line of evidence per student, in their words if you can. That line is what makes the debrief useful, and it is the part students remember.
- Use the whole scale. If everyone gets a 3, the circuit has told the student nothing.

Afterwards

- Hand your station pages to the coordinator with every mark and evidence line filled in.
- Flag anything that worried you, for example a student who was very distressed or an answer that raised a safeguarding concern, to the member of staff running the day rather than to the student.
- If you can stay for ten minutes, the students get far more from hearing one strength and one improvement from you directly than from a score.

**Which part of the
work do you
expect to find
hardest, and what
have you seen that
makes you say so?**

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

Describe a difficult conversation you watched between someone at work and the person in front of them, in a practice, a yard, a kennel or a shop. What did you take from it?

Take a moment to think before you answer. The interviewer may ask you more.

Some dogs are bred for a flat face, or another feature that causes them health problems. Where does the responsibility for that sit, and what should a vet do about it?

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Poor mental health and burnout are known problems in the veterinary profession. Why do you think that is, and what would help you stay well in it?

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What does it
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