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| Allied health assistant interview guide |
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# Introduction

This interview guide can help you prepare and run interviews for allied health assistant (AHA) or therapy assistant (TA) roles. You can use this guide with the allied health assistant position description templates. These are available on the department’s [Victorian Allied Health Assistant Workforce Recommendation and Resources web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/allied-health-workforce/victorian-allied-health-assistant-workforce-recommendations-resources) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/allied-health-workforce/victorian-allied-health-assistant-workforce-recommendations-resources>.

The guide includes:

* overview of the interview and interview preparation processes
* sample interview questions and scenarios, with guidance
* example rating scale
* interview templates for panel members to use to record scores and notes.

The steps, structure and assessment rating scale apply to all grading levels.

Select questions that are in line with the level of allied health assistant being sought.

The questions in this guide are largely targeted for:

* Grade 2 allied health assistant or Level 1 therapy assistant
* Grade 3 allied health assistant or Level 2 therapy assistant.

Useful information for Grade 1 allied health assistant or allied health trainee interview questions is in:

* the skills ready definition in the *Victorian Allied Health Assistant Workforce Recommendations*
* *Registered training organisation (RTO) pre-training review*.

Both of these are available on the department’s [Victorian Allied Health Assistant Workforce Recommendation and Resources web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/allied-health-workforce/victorian-allied-health-assistant-workforce-recommendations-resources) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/allied-health-workforce/victorian-allied-health-assistant-workforce-recommendations-resources>.

Adapt the interview template to suit your workplace’s needs. You can edit or add questions and scenarios relevant to your sector and workplace.

To help you decide which behavioural questions are suitable:

* refer to the *Victorian allied health assistant workforce recommendations*.
* Example behavioural interviewing questions are in resource kit 3 of the Allied health: credentialing, competency and capability framework. The kit is available on the [department’s Credentialing, competency and capability framework web page](credentialing%2C%20competency%20and%20capability%20framework) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/allied-health-workforce/credentialling-competency-and-capability-framework>.

To ensure candidates are responding to new questions, update the questions regularly.

# Interview preparation and interview processes

## Interview preparation steps

**Step 1: Set up interview panel:**

* Include allied health assistants on the panel where possible.
* Ensure panellists understand allied health assistant roles and grading.

**Step 2: Plan for interviews:**

* This may include things like panel roles, question order, room or virtual bookings.

**Step 3: Organise documents:**

* Get copies of any documents needed, like resumés or position descriptions.

**Step 4: Arrange adjustments:**

* Prepare any adjustments needed for candidates’ accessibility, adaptive, supportive, equal opportunity or cultural needs.
* This may include adapting the format or duration of interview, allowing a support person to be present or altering interview panel make up where appropriate.

## Interview steps

**Step 1: Introduction:**

* Welcome and introduce the panel, including names and positions.
* Describe the workplace or service.
* Describe the role or position and confirm that the candidate has read the position description and is aware of roles and responsibilities.
* Provide an overview of the interview process and format:
	+ primarily behavioural and situational questions
	+ responses may include both verbal and written examples
	+ ‘We will each ask a couple of questions and take notes’
	+ ‘You can ask us to repeat the question’
* Questions from candidate at this stage?

**Step 2: Assessment questions:**

* Ask the interview questions
* Make notes or comments for each response
* Score the candidate using the 5-point rating scale for each question
* At the end of the interview questions, invite the candidate to ask the panel any questions
* Any other relevant questions from the interview panel (current annual leave plans, any accessibility, supportive or cultural needs for the role)

**Step 3: Next steps and conclusion:**

* Requirements to see qualification-relevant documents.
* Confirm the candidate’s referees’ contact details and check any documents relevant to the position.
* Describe terms for offers of employment (such as subject to police check, provider registration with NDIS)
* Explain the next steps that follow the interview.
* Thank the candidate for their time and interest in the position.

## Interview assessment rating scale

The STAR method (situation, task, action, result) for behavioural-based interviewing uses questions aligned to the role’s core competencies and key result areas. Candidates are asked to give specific examples from their experiences. The elements of the STAR method are summarised in **Table 1**.

Assess candidates using the 5-point rating scale in **Table 2**.

Table : Elements of the STAR method

| Element | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Situation or task | Describe a specific, relevant situation the interviewee was in when carrying out the task. This gives interviewers background and context. |
| Task | Describe the task, including problems or challenges |
| Action | Outline the actions the interviewee took to respond to, resolve, or address the situation |
| Result | State the outcome or result that the interviewee achieved |

Table : Rating scale

| Rating | Meaning | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Does not meet expectations | * Question not answered
* Very poor communication skills or limited skills or experience
* No example given or completely irrelevant
* No STAR items addressed
* Not motivated or engaged
 |
| 2 | Partially meets expectations | * Question partially answered or some points covered
* Hypothetical reply – what they would do and not what they did
* Poor example given (not relevant or too long ago)
* Only some STAR items addressed
* Poor communication skills or limited skills or experience
 |
| 3 | Meets expectations | * Question answered
* Relevant specific example given
* All STAR items addressed
* Relevant skills and experience
 |
| 4 | Partially exceeds expectations | * Question answered well
* Detailed relevant example given
* All STAR items addressed
* Relevant skills and industry experience
 |
| 5 | Exceeds expectations | * Detailed, succinct response with excellent and relevant example
* All STAR items addressed
* Showed excellent skills and highly relevant industry or specialist experience
 |

# Interview template

## Interview details

| Question | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| Candidate’s name |  |
| Role or position |  |
| Department or location |  |
| Time and date |  |
| Interviewers |  |

## 1. Candidate’s interest in position and experience

### Guidance

Candidates should demonstrate their personal values as a part of this answer, which may include respectfulness, accountability, collaboration, resourcefulness and integrity.

**Expectations of Grade 1 AHA answer**:

* Likely little AHA experience but expresses desire to work in allied health and help people.
* Shows suitable communication skills and professional interest.
* May have prior work experience or relevant life experience and a willingness to learn.
* Expresses a commitment to complete AHA Certificate training.

**Expectations of Grade 2 AHA or Level 1 TA answer:**

* Likely little AHA or TA working experience but expresses desire to work in allied health and help people.
* Shows good communication skills and professional interest.
* May have prior work experience or relevant life experience.
* Ideally has a relevant qualification and associated placement experience, with a willingness to learn.

**Expectations of Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA answer:**

* Has 3 years or more full-time equivalent AHA or TA work experience.
* Ideally has technical skills, familiar consumer cohorts and can problem solve and work as a part of a team.
* Expresses desire to work in allied health and help people.
* Shows strong communication skills and professional interest.
* Prior work experience or relevant life experience.
* Ideally has relevant qualifications, associated placement experience or work experience as an AHA.
* Shows commitment to ongoing learning and development.

### Question 1

Why does this position interest you? What skills and experience do you have that meet the requirements of this allied health assistant or therapy assistant position?

### Q1 response

| Interest and experience – notes |
| --- |
|  |

### Q1 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## 2. Behavioural skills scenario: scope of practice

### Guidance

Candidates should show:

* knowledge and accountability for their scope of practice
* respect for other team member roles.

The ideal candidate will show:

* they understand to escalate any change in therapy back to the delegating allied health professional
* clear understanding of role and scope of practice.

A Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA candidate should demonstrate lived experience of a similar scenario.

### Question 2

Create a question that suits the role. Delete the examples that are not relevant.

* The physiotherapist has asked you to review a 54-year-old patient following a right ankle ORIF. The physiotherapist reports that the patient can walk 20 metres with a PUF with supervision. They appear to be managing well. The patient tells you they have a step at home and would like to practice this task with you. What do you do and why?
* The occupational therapist has asked you to review a 16-year-old NDIS participant as part of his ongoing ADL skills development. The occupational therapist reports that the participant can sequence using existing cooking appliances with supervision. They appear to be managing well. The participant tells you they have a new recipe and a new device and would like to practice this task with you. What do you do and why?
* The speech pathologist has asked you to review a 92-year-old woman in a residential aged care facility. The speech pathologist reports the client is on mildly thick fluids independently. When you arrive, the client looks well. She points out new varieties she’d like to try with you that are labelled ‘slightly thick’. What do you do and why?
* The exercise physiologist has asked you to complete a prescribed EP gym program for a 49-year-old patient on the inpatient rehabilitation ward following left MCA stroke. The patient ambulates with supervision, no aid and is able to transfer on and off gym equipment with supervision. The patient notices a piece of equipment that is not included in his program. He tells you he has used this at a gym before hospital admission and would like to try it with you. What do you do and why?
* The dietitian has asked you to educate a patient on diverticulitis. This is following an admission secondary to diverticulitis. The patient asked more questions than is covered in the educational handouts and is being discharged from hospital today. What do you do and why?
* The speech pathologist has asked you to spend time at the home of an 8-year-old child who has Autism. The speech pathologist wants you to help them interact with siblings, with a focus on communication development to use 3 to 4 word utterances and commenting. While with the family, the participant’s mother asks you about a new communication board she bought online. She wants to try it while you are there. What do you do and why?

### Q2 response

| Element | Response notes |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Result** |  |

### Q2 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## 3. Behavioural skills scenario: risk and escalation

### Guidance

Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of personal accountability in giving consumer-centred care.

The ideal candidate will show:

* they understand to escalate any risk to the delegating allied health professional
* clear understanding of the possible consequences of not escalating risks.

The ideal Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA candidate should demonstrate lived experience of a similar situation.

### Question 3

Create a question that suits the role. Delete the examples that are not relevant.

* You have been asked by the community occupational therapist to give a shower stool to a 76-year-old bariatric participant. They were recently discharged from an acute hospital admission after a collapse attributed to low blood pressure levels. During your session with the patient, she states that she falls in the shower and bathroom at home often and this is when her symptoms of low blood pressure come on. What do you do in this situation?
* You are the team’s multidisciplinary therapy assistant. You arrive at the participant’s house to complete a number of goal-based therapies with the participant. They take longer than usual to answer the door and don’t appear to be using their usual ankle foot orthosis. You note that their power chair for community access has two flat tyres. What do you do in this situation?
* You have been asked by the community social worker to complete a screening tool with an older adult client to help the social worker prepare a My Aged Care application. During the phone conversation, the client reports to you that they don’t always feel safe in their house as a neighbour often comes over and asks for food supplies from the client’s fridge or pantry. What do you do in this situation?
* The speech pathologist has asked you to complete a mealtime toleration review for a client in transitional care program. While observing the client, you notice a change in how their voice sounds. They have coughed multiple times during the session. What do you do?

### Q3 response

| Element | Response notes |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Result** |  |

### Q3 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## 4. Behavioural skills scenario: written comprehension

### Guidance

This question could be given as a verbal or a written task. That is, the candidate could answer verbally or write their answer using pen and paper.

In response to this question, the ideal candidate describes an attempt to encourage the patient, participant or client to take part in therapy while understanding the need to report back to the AHP if they continue to be uncooperative and reluctant to take part in the therapy.

In documenting the session, the ideal candidate describes the structure of their documentation or completes a written example which may include a subjective description of:

* the scenario
* what they observed
* an account of the actions they took
* their plan at the conclusion of the session, including providing feedback to the delegating AHP.

The ideal Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 Therapy Assistant candidate describes a similar situation they experienced. They may describe attempts to educate the patient, participant or client on the benefit of completing the therapy.

### Question 4

A [insert allied health profession] has asked you to complete a therapy session with a patient, participant or client. When you go to see them, they are uncooperative and reluctant to take part in the therapy. What do you do? How would you document the interaction?

### Q4 response

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Response notes |
| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Result** |  |

### Q4 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## 5. Student supervision (if relevant)

### Guidance

The ideal candidate’s answer will reflect on lived experience. This may include:

* having students observing them on single days
* being a co-supervisor for a placement block
* other relevant experiences.

The ideal Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA candidate will talk about other activities related to student supervision, which may include:

* leading student supervision
* coordinating student placements
* completing orientation activities
* giving timely and constructive feedback
* managing difficult feedback sessions
* liaising with both internal and external student coordinators
* completing individual RTO assessments and logbooks.

### Question 5

This role will involve taking part in or leading student placements. Can you tell me about a time you supervised students or were involved in educating people? How did you support students?

### Q5 response

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Response notes |
| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Result** |  |

### Q5 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## 6. Quality and service improvement (if relevant)

### Guidance

The ideal candidate’s answer will reflect on lived experience. This may include:

* discussing ideas with supervisors
* being involved in workplace activities to improve care or therapy services
* completing delegated tasks around quality and service improvement (like data collection).

The ideal Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA candidate will describe a time when they led quality and service improvement activities. This may include:

* identifying an opportunity for improvement in their workplace
* liaising with allied health professionals in their workplace
* trialling of new models of care
* developing new consumer or employee materials
* completing evaluation processes.

### Question 6

This role may involve quality or service improvement activities. Can you tell us about a time when you led or took part in a quality or service improvement activity?

### Q6 response

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Response notes |
| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Result** |  |

### Q6 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## 7. Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA-specific question

### Guidance

The ideal Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA candidate will reflect on their lived experience.

This may include:

* leadership experience in portfolio roles
* positions on working parties
* AHA clinical supervision
* leading supervision of students
* progressing ideas for quality or service improvement activities.

### Question 7

As a Grade 3 AHA or Level 2 TA, this role will involve being a leader to the AHA or TA team. Can you tell us about a time when you demonstrated leadership?

### Q7 response

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Element | Response notes |
| **Situation** |  |
| **Task** |  |
| **Action** |  |
| **Result** |  |

### Q7 rating

| Rating level | Assessment (mark with X) |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Does not meet expectations |  |
| 2: Partially meets expectations |  |
| 3: Meets expectations |  |
| 4: Partially exceeds expectations |  |
| 5: Exceeds expectations |  |

## Candidate’s questions

Invite the candidate to ask questions.

| Candidate’s questions – notes |
| --- |
|  |

## Candidate’s overall score

| Question | Rating |
| --- | --- |
| Question 1 |  |
| Question 2 |  |
| Question 3 |  |
| Question 4 |  |
| Question 5 |  |
| Question 6 |  |
| Question 7 |  |
| Total |  |

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