

# **INTERVIEW PREPARATION: ROLE PLAY**

## **INDUSTRY COLLABORATION AWARD**

Read this in conjunction with the [official Victorian Training Award resources](#).

These interview questions are prompts so that a shortlisted candidate can practice thinking on their feet and responding to interview questions.

There is not a script to follow for a right or wrong answer. The goal is to encourage candidates to consider the key themes of a question, and to develop the skills and confidence to respond confidently and clearly with a *good* answer.

A good answer is comprehensive – it shows that the teacher/trainer understands their impact and can connect their experiences and activities to broader contexts. That might include vocational education principles, the local community, government policy, the industry challenges, the TAFE institute's strategy, student cohorts, peers and colleagues, and the workplace specifics.

Candidates should demonstrate, with examples, that their excellence is making a difference – not by chance – but because their work is underpinned by engagement, intent and outstanding practice.

### **WHO & WHAT**

It's likely that someone from industry will be on this panel, as well as professionals from the VET sector, and perhaps government bureaucrats as well.

The representative from TAFE institute (the person/s being interviewed) should be connected to or deeply familiar with this project, and also the strategic context of industry engagement. They need to have a capacity for informed conversations about the collaboration, not to just reel off marketing 'spin'.

Think about the three Ls. Leadership, learnings and legacy are good themes to have in mind when discussing industry collaboration projects and their impact.

### **HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE**

Sample questions have been mapped against the category criteria. There are prompt points underneath each question. You can make up other questions too.

*Individual practice:* write questions on cards, set a timer and answer out loud. Encourage the candidate to record responses on a device to listen back.

*One-to-one practice:* Encourage a peer or colleague to ask the candidate questions and provide constructive feedback about the content and delivery style.

*Mock panel:* Set up two-three people in a panel scenario to engage in conversation and ask the candidate practice questions.

Remember that this resource is a guide only – it's not a perfect answer script to follow. There's inevitably many ways to answer a question and a range of 'good answer' topics to canvass.

Candidates should think widely and answer honestly. This resource and the role play exercises are designed to help people practice thinking that way, so they can respond confidently when the real interview comes around.

## **FEEDBACK**

Encourage the candidate to provide responses that are both broad and specific.

Use the prompt bullet points to check their answer content or use the points as a guide to ask follow up questions. The latter can highlight gaps, and encourage the candidate to dig a little deeper to respond.

In addition to reviewing 'what' they said in the practice run, try to provide supportive feedback on 'how' the candidate answered.

For example, did they respond with clarity, composure and confidence? Did they fidget, look 'panellists' in the eye or could they slow down their talking pace? What might improve their delivery? Did it feel like they believed in what they were saying?

### **Warm up question:**

#### **Q. Can you outline the background to this collaboration?**

- Be clear and succinct about the origins
- Explain 'why' this collaboration happened
- Outline the problem that this project aimed to solve
- Tell the judges who that problem or opportunity was initially identified
- Detail who came together to make this happen.

#### **Q. What will happen if you win this award?**

- Consider how the TAFE and organisation will leverage the accolade, public platform and promotional opportunity – for yourselves and bigger picture.
- Articulate how the prize money might be put to good use, and what it might enable that supports future collaboration, development or best practice.

## **Criterion 1: Outstanding practice of the collaboration**

Describe the extent to which the collaboration goes above and beyond standard practice in training and skills development. For example, you may consider:

- an example of training excellence
- what unique, exemplary or innovative aspects have been implemented
- any e-learning initiatives in your program
- transformation in the lives of participants
- the contribution the training makes to the advancement of the industry and community in which it operates.

### **Q. What tangible contribution does this training make to the industry partner/organisation?**

- Outline what has shifted or changed for the organisation, as a result of this training collaboration. Indicate what's better, improved or solved, and how you actually know this, how it's all been measured or proved.
- Articulate the journey from A to B and be clear about what happened as a result of this collaborative effort – it's not just about what you did, but about the impact of what that doing did.
- The contribution won't be just one thing; it could include boosted productivity, financial benefits, career pathways for individuals, improved workplace safety, enhanced market profile. Consider and articulate the full range of possibilities.
- Look at the word 'tangible' and make sure you provide real examples that then explain these contributions in depth. The words don't speak for themselves. You might have quantitative data and qualitative evaluations at hand. Perhaps there are anecdotes and stories from the project that can show the difference that has been made in real and concrete ways.
- Suggest what the situation would be for the organisation and its stakeholders (e.g. employees, customers, suppliers, peers, local community shareholders) if this collaboration had not happened.

### **Q. What role does the industry partner/organisation play in taking the training beyond 'standard practice'?**

- Outline the features or practices that demonstrate how this training differs from the way other industry organisations do things
- Explain what the industry organisation has committed to this project in terms of its time, resources and participation
- Detail the nuts and bolts of how the partner and TAFE interact so that the judges understand how the collaboration works and what is in place to facilitate the engagement – give them the 'how' and 'who' parts of story
- Include something about organisation's motivation so that it's not just what they do and how, but also why. This might point to underpinning values, strategy or an innovative approach to problem solving, for example.

- Show the judges how this industry collaboration is set apart from the usual ones. What makes this unique or excellent? It might be the level of investment, innovation, results or project structure. Explain with detail.

## **Criterion 2: Achievements of the collaboration for training**

Consider:

- the training outcomes achieved (including qualifications and skill sets awarded)
- improvements in the quality of learning and assessment
- the links in place for the creation of new or improved career pathways and opportunities
- a contribution to social equity, especially increasing the participation of people from groups under-represented in the industry or workplaces generally
- if the outcomes of the collaboration can be replicated or modelled for other industries.

### **Q. What sort of flow on effects from your industry collaboration would have an impact on other industries – in the same field and/or beyond?**

- Make a connection to the bigger picture of the broader vocational sector; to demonstrate that this project is not just a one-off isolated success story; that it has capacity to influence or inspire other practices
- Show how what you've learned or developed could be adopted by other organisations or sectors – it could be the training content, delivery materials, or a replicable model of collaboration, for example.
- Discuss the impact of what this collaborative training is and could be. Think about the ripple effects for individuals, for the organisation and its stakeholders, or industry counterparts. Consider how this can flow into a local community, target cohort, other TAFE clients, or what social goals in addresses.
- You could talk about impacts across time. There might be short term, immediate operational effects – the day to day impact of this collaboration; as well as medium and longer term, strategic flow on. Outline what might be realised in 12 months or even five years down the track as a result of this training project itself, and if its improvements are adopted by others.
- You might have evidence of some things already or you could talk about the potential scope - all informed by project objectives, the results seen so far, and the learnings or opportunities that were presented along the way. Some impacts might be at the personal transformation level, or they might be cohort specific statistics or industry wide developments.

### **Q. What do you think are some future career pathways and opportunities that have emerged from your collaboration?**

- Canvass formal and informal possibilities for those already connected – student employees, the organisation's workforce profile, or the career development for teachers and supervisors who developed the training.

- Share what's already been realised, indicate what's on track and suggest what's possible beyond the existing participants - you can use data or stories and anecdotes that add detail and meaning.
- Leverage proven results (e.g. completion rates, pathway enrolments, internal promotions, workforce retention, individual case studies) to show that future opportunities are emerging from the experience, evidence and evaluation.
- Demonstrate how this baseline project or the collaborative relationship could be expanded with additional options to grow capacity and capability. Talk about any possibilities that you've explored or plans, proposals or ideas that have emerged.
- Identify a range of opportunities for individuals, for target demographic groups, for the industry sector, for your TAFE organisation and its local community or other partners, and for the vocational sector more broadly.

### **Criterion 3: Training impacts of the collaboration**

Consider the benefits to the:

- employer or industry body and its employees
- organisations delivering nationally recognised training
- individuals involved in the collaboration
- community and/or region
- industry and/or industry sector
- relevant Training Authority and the broader TAFE and training sector
- improvements in the processes or procedures of all collaborating organisations.

#### **Q. How would you assess the capacity to scale up the impact of your industry collaboration – to other industries or other training providers?**

- Explain what is generic and replicable about this training program, project or collaboration model
- You might mention project challenges, processes or successes to demonstrate what's truly required to make a collaboration like this effective
- Talk about what your TAFE team has learned and what can be leveraged or put in place as a result of this collaboration, which could enable the project to be scaled up, expanded or replicated
- Outline any resource need or obstacles to be overcome, and suggest how these could be addressed to enable a scale-up to happen
- Demonstrate awareness of the industry and vocational sectors by reviewing their readiness to adopt the findings or models. Perhaps stakeholders are crying out for a new way to do something and this could fill a gap. Or maybe there are cultural changes, new policies or advocates needed to make progress.

**Q. Can you give us some examples of how you do and/or would measure the broad benefits of your collaboration to the wider community, industry and the VET sector?**

- The judges want hear that you've put effort into understanding the project's potential and influence, and that you recognise the reach
- Measurement can be formal and informal. It can also reflect macro or micro levels. An answer might refer to surveys, student feedback, demographic data, employee retention, economic forecasts, employment outcomes or wellbeing indicators. There could also be individual stories about transformation and change, opportunities that opened up, pathways taken, families supported, people inspired to enrol in VET...think big and small
- Define success for this project; consider duration and how you might track various impacts and flow on effects over time
- Talk about how this project could affect the reputation of the organisations, industries and communities it involves, and what that might lead to or inspire – this might include content and/or collaboration.
- You could mention elements of this project that could be adopted or replicated by others and articulate the potential benefits of cultural change or improved practices, for example.

**Criterion 4: Sustainability and future of the collaboration**

Consider:

- the potential for the collaboration to be sustained in the future
- the systems of quality improvement being utilised by the collaboration
- any performance evaluations of the collaboration that are in place and planned
- what ways the collaboration is contributing to environmental sustainability
- the capacity for the collaboration to be replicated
- any plans for expansion or adoption in other settings.

**Q. Does this collaboration have a future with the current partners and how do you see that happening in the future?**

- Identify what has been embedded into systems, practice or training that sustains the outputs or outcomes of this collaboration
- Be honest about what worked and what's been learned so far, and explain how you came to this understanding. Outline how the experiences will enable improvement, expansion or opportunities to develop this training relationship
- Discuss any conversations or agreements that demonstrate a commitment to future work the collaborating partner/s. Maybe things have progressed since you wrote the initial application, and you can now update the judges

- Even if this was a one-off project, explain how the experiences and collaborative relationships might foster new engagements or different projects down the track
- Perhaps this project empowered the organisation to self-sustain but there are other possible partners with whom collaboration is now possible. Maybe the original partner transitions to a ‘showcase relationship’ rather than a ‘working collaboration’. Talk about the relevant possibilities.

**Q. How would you enable the lessons from your collaboration to be shared more widely in both the industry and training sectors?**

- Show that you’ve reflected on and evaluated the project, and articulate some of the lessons. Tell the judges some of what worked and what did not, so they understand that industry peers or training stakeholders can benefit from your experience and expertise
- Talk about what is transferrable, and how sharing would help to achieve broader aims – by addressing government policy, social learning objectives or industry need, for example
- Identify the tangible materials that could be rolled out or shared. Perhaps there is a saleable ‘product’ that could be developed for wider distribution, or there are materials to freely share
- Discuss the ways you could share knowledge through conferences, industry forums or research publications. Explain how you might distribute the knowledge within your own TAFE and beyond to the vocational sector – whether that’s via professional development, training or templates
- You could flag how you’d make the most of the public platform and media profile as a winner of this training award.