

Supervisor Interview Questions and Answers

A printable preparation guide with common questions, answer tips and the STAR method. From the BMC Training blog: bmc.net/blog

The STAR method: use it for every "Tell me about a time..." question	
Situation	Set the scene briefly: where, when, what was happening.
Task	Your responsibility or the goal you had to achieve.
Action	What <i>you</i> did, step by step. Use "I", not "we".
Result	The outcome, with numbers where possible, and what you learned.

1. About you and your motivation

Tell me about yourself and why you want this supervisor role.

Give a 60–90 second summary: current role, one or two results you are proud of, and why leading a team is the logical next step. Link your answer to this organisation's goals.

What does a good supervisor do?

Mention setting clear expectations, supporting and developing people, removing obstacles, holding the team accountable and communicating openly with both staff and management.

What are your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

Choose a strength relevant to the role (for example, staying calm under pressure) with evidence. For a weakness, pick a genuine development area and show what you are doing about it.

2. Leading and developing people

How would you describe your leadership style?

Describe an adaptable style: more direction for new or struggling staff, more autonomy for experienced people. Give one short example.

How do you motivate a team that is under pressure?

Explain priorities clearly, recognise effort, protect the team from avoidable work and keep spirits up with small wins. Use a STAR example.

How do you delegate work?

Match tasks to skills and development goals, agree the outcome and deadline, give authority to decide, and check in without micromanaging.

How do you give feedback to an employee?

Be timely, specific and private; focus on behaviour and impact, not personality; agree next steps and follow up.

3. Conflict and difficult situations

Tell me about a time you resolved a conflict between colleagues.

STAR: describe the issue, how you listened to both sides privately, how you found common ground or a fair rule, and the result.

How would you handle an employee who is consistently underperforming?

Find the cause first (skills, motivation, personal issues, unclear expectations), agree a clear improvement plan with dates, provide support, and escalate through HR if there is no progress.

What would you do if a team member challenged your decision in front of others?

Stay calm, acknowledge the point, offer to discuss it privately, then follow up one-to-one. Show you separate the issue from your ego.

How would you manage former peers who now report to you?

Address the change openly, set clear expectations for everyone, treat all team members consistently and avoid favouritism.

4. Results, planning and judgement

How do you prioritise when everything is urgent?

Clarify business impact and deadlines, agree priorities with your manager, communicate trade-offs to the team and stay flexible.

Describe a process you improved.

STAR with numbers: the problem, what you changed, how you involved the team and the measurable result (time saved, errors reduced).

How do you measure your team's performance?

Name a few relevant KPIs (output, quality, safety, customer feedback, attendance) and explain how you review them regularly with the team.

Tell me about a mistake you made and what you learned.

Pick a real but recoverable mistake, take ownership, explain how you fixed it and what you now do differently.

5. For first-time supervisors

You have no formal supervisory experience. Why should we choose you?

Use informal leadership evidence: training new starters, leading a project, covering for your manager, or resolving team issues. Show you have prepared for the role.

What will you do in your first 30 days?

Meet each team member, learn processes and metrics, understand your manager's priorities, and identify one or two quick improvements before making big changes.

6. Questions to ask the interviewer

What are the biggest challenges facing this team right now?

Shows you are already thinking about how to help.

How will success be measured in the first six months?

Clarifies expectations and shows a results focus.

What support and training is available for new supervisors?

Shows commitment to your own development.

Preparation checklist

- Research the organisation, its services and recent news.
- Re-read the job description and match each requirement to an example.
- Prepare five or six STAR stories covering leadership, conflict, results, change and a mistake.
- Practise answers aloud and keep each to about two minutes.
- Prepare two or three thoughtful questions for the interviewer.

Want to build these skills before your interview? BMC Training runs supervisory and management courses in London, Dubai, Istanbul and Kuala Lumpur: www.bmc.net/training/1/Management-and-Leadership