

Interview Questions to Ask a Penetration Tester| Xobin [Downloaded]

We at Xobin reached out to over 70+ Hiring teams to curate the best interview questions. We didn't stop there.

We went ahead to understand what type of answers differentiated the top candidate from the rest. Here is what we've got for you.

Role-specific skills to look for: Knowledge of exploits and vulnerabilities, scripting/coding(Python, Powershell, Golang, Bash), operating systems, networking, and network protocols, and common pen test and application security tools.

Soft skills to look for: communication skills, curiosity, attention to detail, report writing, and problem-solving.

Pro Tip: Always screen before your interview. Use [Online Assessment to screen applicants for a Penetration Tester](#) position before blocking your time for an in-person interview.

Compilation of Penetration Tester Questions

Role-Based Interview Questions to ask a Penetration Tester



What is a penetration test?

Purpose of the question: This question can be asked to assess how well a candidate understands the concept of penetration testing.

What to listen for in candidate response: Listen for the specific definition which defines penetration testing. Top candidates would explain the meaning in relation to the position they are interviewing for.



What are the different types of attackers?

Purpose of the question: By asking this question, the interviewer can assess the candidate's knowledge of the different kinds of threats they may require to deal with.

What to listen for in candidate response: Listen if the candidate can list out and explain a different kind of hackers.



What is the OSI?

Purpose of the question: As working knowledge of operating systems is necessary for this function, hence this question can be asked to test the candidate's understanding of the same.

Purpose of the question: Top candidates would explain what is OSI and its layer.



What is a firewall?

Purpose of the question: This question can be asked to gauge the candidate's experience level in cybersecurity applications.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would explain what is firewall and explain how it may be used for large-scale organizations.



What's the difference between a threat, vulnerability, and risk?

Purpose of the question: Knowledge of basics like risk, vulnerability, threat, exposure, etc. is crucial for every security professional.

What to listen for in candidate response: Listen for the specific terms which explain these three.



Can you define privilege escalation?

Purpose of the question: This question is designed to understand the candidate's knowledge of the common terms used in penetration testing.

What to listen for in candidate response: An ideal candidate would define privilege escalation and provide few examples for the same.



What is a common misconfiguration of FTP and SMB?

Purpose of the question: This question can be asked to gauge the candidate's knowledge of the common techniques and attacks

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would list out the misconfiguration for both FTP and SMB and would explain what do they authenticate to the servers.



What are the different types of SQL injection and how to prevent it?

Purpose of the question: This question can be asked to understand how much the candidate knows about web application vulnerabilities and attacks.

What to listen for in candidate response: Listen if the candidate can list out all the different types of SQL injection and prevention methods.



What tool would you use to perform a port scan?

Purpose of the question: By asking this question, the interviewer can test if the candidate has experience and knowledge of the common penetrating tools.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would explain the reason for choosing a particular tool.



How would you remotely access a service that can only be accessed from within an internal network?

Purpose of the question: This question can be asked to test a candidate's critical thinking in a particular situation.

What to listen for in candidate response: Firstly, here a candidate would explain what is port forwarding and then explain the same through an example.

Situational Interview Questions to ask Penetration Tester



What is the most complex issue you have faced in a project?

Purpose of the question: By asking this question the interviewer can test the candidate's technical analysis, problem-solving, and troubleshooting skills.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would explain what were the problems they faced and how did they overcome them.



What are the interpersonal skills you have gained from your previous job as a Penetration Tester?

Purpose of the question: This question is designed to learn about what types of interpersonal traits a candidate has that could enhance their job capabilities at their company.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would show evidence of self-awareness, by discussing their previous experiences.



What is one of your proudest moments as a Penetration Tester so far?

Purpose of the question: This question is designed to understand and gain insight into how a candidate thinks and feels within the context of their field.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would describe what was achieved in the project and how does it stack up with what your company does.



How do you handle pressure if you are equipped with multiple tasks at a time?

Purpose of the question: This question is designed to test the candidate's management skills.

What to listen for in candidate response: Look for evidence of management qualities related to project planning and execution.



Is there any new technology that you have learned recently? And where did you imply them on?

Purpose of the question: Being updated with the latest trends in the market is a sign of a top candidate.

What to listen for in candidate response: Look for evidence of the understanding of the new trends in the candidate.



What challenges are you looking for in this position?

Purpose of the question: The question is designed to understand and determine what the candidates are looking for in their next job and whether they would be a good fit for the position being hired for.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would discuss how they would like to be able to effectively utilize their skills and experience if they were hired for the job.



Why do you want to work at our company as a Penetration Tester?

Purpose of the question: This question is designed to know what kind of information does the candidate has about your company culture and what has excited them to join

your organization.

What to listen for in candidate response: Listen for the detail about what has driven the candidate to work for your organization.



What does effective cybersecurity look like to you? How do you measure it?

Purpose of the question: Since software developers rely on a combination of technical knowledge and transferable skills to be successful. Therefore it is important for an applicant for this role to show the required skills.

What to listen for in candidate response: Look for evidence of the required skills for this job role.



What are your salary expectations?

Purpose of the question: This question is helps in understanding what the market is currently paying for certain qualifications, experience, and skills.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would give the range of salary they expect.



Do you have any questions for us?

Purpose of the question: The question is designed to know how interested the candidates are in your company.

What to listen for in candidate response: Top candidates would ask questions and show interested in the job and company-related details.

Start Optimizing your Penetration Tester Hiring today

Find and hire talent with confidence. If your candidate doesn't know the answer to the above questions and you're hiring for a Penetration Tester position, then they're obviously not a great fit.



Prepared and Curated by Xobin Team