

Getting the Job



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When should students start preparing or planning for internship or job interviews?

- Always be conscious of what fields or jobs you might want to pursue after graduation. Companies are always searching for computer scientists and engineers. Most companies begin their hiring process early in the fall for both interns and full time jobs. Therefore, it is safe to have a good idea of what field you want to pursue after Sophomore year, so that you have time to prepare and pursue an internship in that field next fall.
- For both internships and full-time jobs, companies have comprehensive interviews that test your technical knowledge. If you don't want to pressure yourself, begin reviewing throughout the summer so that you are ready when interviews begin in the fall. Companies are eager to hire young engineers, so it is necessary to be ready as soon as the semester begins.

How should students prepare or plan for these interviews?

- The student should make sure to know and understand the position they are applying for as it can become confusing when one starts to apply to multiple companies and positions at the same time. It is always a good idea to look at information about the specific company and the current timeline that they might have so the student can get an idea about what the company is looking to develop and what markets they want to expand in.
- The student should do research about the specific position they are applying for to find what kind of knowledge they are expected to know. Using websites like GlassDoor or simply a Google search to find other people's experience when they interviewed for a given position and the types of questions that they could get asked at certain interviews.

- Study your past projects (both personal and class projects) very carefully. Companies are interested in what you're doing inside and outside of class, and they frequently ask about your projects because knowing how you work on larger projects is important. They also like to know how you overcame the challenges you've faced in these projects.

What resources should students consider? Books? Career Services? Student groups?

- The Career Center is a very valuable option for all ND students. In addition to advice on careers, internships, and interviews, they offer mock interviews. These can help shake off the nerves of interviews and fully prepare you for the real thing.
- There are many books detailing potential technical interview questions about computer and technical skills. *Cracking the Coding Interview* and *Programming Interviews Exposed* are great examples of this. Books like these give a broad review of core computer science concepts and provide example questions that interviewers might ask. In addition, websites such as GlassDoor offer actual interview questions that people have encountered for certain companies. Studying questions from these resources will get you in top shape to think quickly on your feet in an interview.

What extracurricular activities should students consider?

- All extracurricular activities are useful. Most companies want to see you have a genuine interest in anything, as the "culture" in most companies is important. That being said, computer science activities are much better. Join clubs that pertain to programming, join hackathons, participate in open source projects, or try being part of a startup.

- Companies love to see devotion to multiple athletic or musical groups for several hours each week. It shows how you can be a well-rounded person that can manage your time efficiently. In addition, being a leader of a group is a quality that will always put you higher up in a recruiter's mind.

How can students take advantage of networking and alumni relationships?

- In engineering, having contacts can be incredibly useful. Many companies won't hire you without some experience, regardless of what your grades are. So the question is how to get that first internship or job. The easiest way is to talk to people at events and get your name out there. This separates your face from the dozens of other applicants, and can give you a one-on-one interview. In addition, talking to people in a non-interview context is much less stressful than in an interview which allows you brag about yourself and "nerd" out more.
- People at small companies can find slots for you to intern at even when official deadlines have closed
- Alumni are always eager to hire students or graduates of their alma mater. The alumni network is a great resource on building connections for your job search.

How should students approach negotiations or contracts? Are there any pitfalls they should look out for?

- Negotiating isn't necessary, unless you feel that you won't be able to be stable with the current salary.
- If you do negotiate, try to ask for more than you actually are aiming for. Usually they will meet you part of the way.
- When negotiating, don't just ask for more. Prove that you are worth more than the salary you are given.

- Understand what other interns and people in the company are making. Do research on your company to make sure negotiating is the right way to go.

Anything else you wish you knew before you went through the whole process?

- You will have terrible interviews at first but it is alright. Any sort of experience will help you.
- Many interview questions are designed to be difficult or impossible. Questions are designed to see how you go about solving problems, not actual solutions to problems.
- While interviewing, talk constantly about what you're doing and why. Don't remain silent.
- Don't fall behind on following up with potential employers. Keep sending in applications and respond to every email you receive. The more interviews you have, the more likely the chance of getting an offer.
- If you put a skill, project, or experience on your résumé, you WILL be asked about it in interviews. Be prepared to explain each part of your résumé with the next interview to make you more confident.
- Start researching companies early. If you go to a career fair, research the companies that will be there so that, once you approach them at the event, you can talk about the company's goals and how you would fit in. Recruiters love to see potential candidates that are knowledgeable of their company.