

Hiring Q&A From Students

Luck plays a huge role, the more effort you put into applying the faster you'll get hired

Read the entire ad

Some ads list special requirements. The last place Matt worked had 7 instructions at the bottom of the ad which you had to follow. If you left out even 1 of them, you would not be considered.

I don't have a computer science degree, should I still apply?

Yes you should. There are very few companies in this area who would hire a developer based on a degree, simply because most developers do not have CS degrees. Furthermore, they primarily learned theory in school, and had to teach themselves how to code projects after they graduated or while they were in school on their own. So you can completely ignore the degree requirement. If you see a CS degree is required, this is another red flag that the ad was written by someone who does not know the actual job skill requirements.

Are they going to watch me code during the interview?

Usually not, but it all depends on the company. Most developers simply don't have time to sit with you the entire day to see how much you've memorized and how much you need to google. Some bigger tech companies and newer tech companies that want to act like the big guys might watch you code, but it's rare for one of our grads to go through that.

What kind of interview questions are they going to ask me?

These vary a lot. For example, one of our students was asked during an interview how many golf balls can you fit into a school bus? Questions like this might seem crazy, but they're trying to figure out how you think. For most companies, the biggest concern when hiring a front end developer is, are they smart enough to figure things out on their own? Because most of your job will be teaching yourself brand new things on a regular basis and applying that to their system. It's a lot of problem solving. So before an interview, prepare yourself for questions like this. Try taking an online IQ test to get your brain juices flowing.

What should I expect to be paid?

This completely depends on the company. The average salary for a front-end developer in the bay area is \$87,000. However, there are many companies that will offer you \$50,000, and other that will offer \$100,000+, even for your first job. It completely depends on the company. Even if you do end up starting low, after you get hired and work for a few months, it's much easier to transition to a higher paying job because you're now in the club.

What if I get hired but I'm not able to do the job?

I've never heard of this happening. If it did, then they didn't do a good job interviewing/testing you for the position and they don't sound like a company you should work for. The important thing to remember here is that it's never happened to a grad, ever.

When am I ready to start applying?

You actually could have been applying right when you started the class. Yes, that sounds like you'd be jumping the gun. But there are lots of companies out there who would love to hire a blank slate. This allows them to start you off with their way of thinking, before you ever get corrupted by other company cultures. We've had students hired as early as week 7, so what are you waiting for? Get out there and start talking with companies!

Does my portfolio need to be perfect before I apply?

Absolutely not, and there is no such thing as a perfect portfolio. It won't hurt for it to look good, but as I just mentioned above, you don't even need one to start applying. We've had students who have been hired before they even started their portfolio.

Should I even apply to google, facebook, amazon, and other big companies, or will they just laugh me out the door?

Firstly, no decent human being would ever laugh at your code. So get that crazy thought out of your head. I think applying for one of these companies makes sense if you can handle a long term interview process. Many of them do up to 10 interviews per hire, so it could take months. Many of them actually recommend that you take 6 weeks to prepare for the interview with them, that's 6 weeks full time. We've had a handful of students hired at big tech companies, most grads are hired at "smaller" companies, which still make millions, tens of millions, or hundreds of millions a year in revenue. They just don't have to jump through so many hoops.

What should I write if I have no experience developing?

Have you reached out to friends and family to see if they run a business that needs your new skill set? You could edit or create a website for them and be listed as their web developer. Now you have working experience, which will definitely go a long way when trying to get hired.

If you don't have any experience at all, be yourself. Plenty of companies want to start with a brand new developer so they don't have to unteach you all of the bad habits people pick up from other companies.

What should I wear to the interview?

Dress casual and clean.

Where should I start looking for a job?

The best place to start is always with friends and family. A lot of companies pay their employees a large amount, like thousands of dollars large, recruiting fees if they bring in someone who they hire. So jump on linkedin, facebook, or whatever is cool nowadays and start telling people you're looking for a front-end developer job, they could make thousands working to get you hired.

How many jobs do I need to apply for before I get hired?

As we mentioned before, luck plays a huge role. We've had a student who only applied to 1 company, which didn't even have an opening, but he got it because of how he presented himself and his good timing.

On average though, we've found that:

20 applications get you an phone interview

5 phone calls gets you an in person interview

2 in person interview gets you an offer

So you should try to apply to at least 200 jobs before you get hired. But there are outliers on both ends of this.

What if I apply but never hear back from any companies?

Then something is wrong with your portfolio, cover letter, linkedIn, resume, or a combination of them.

One of our students had this happen to him after he applied to 50 jobs. We looked at his materials and immediately saw that he misspelled Education at the top of his resume in huge font.

Another student listed that they were working at 3 different jobs, depending on whether you were looking at their linkedin, resume, or cover letter. That comes off as really shady, so they didn't get any interviews until after they fixed it.

Another student wrote an exceptionally boring cover letter and never got a phone call. After we fixed it they started getting interviews.

One student posted a video of himself DJing on the top of their portfolio, when we changed it to a video of him coding, he started getting calls.

We host events to make sure these get completed correctly so you don't hit the same pitfalls.

If you do apply to over 30 jobs and don't land a single interview, something might be wrong. Email Sam and Matt your resume, cover letter, portfolio, and linkedin URL for them to review, to see if they can find a problem.

What keywords can I use when searching for a job?

front end developer

html5

css3

JavaScript

jQuery

front-end

web developer

bootstrap

angular

UX

UI