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Data Science, Engineering

Interview Prep Guide

Content

Introduction

Hello there!

We're looking forward to learning how you'll envision the way people experience our products and bring that vision to life in a way that feels inspired, refined, and even magical! Use these slides as your guide to preparing for your interview at Google.

We can't wait to meet you!

What is a Data Scientist at Google?

The role of Data Scientist is critical to Google and is the heart of Engineering – it influences the strategy and direction of products that touch more than a billion people around the world. Data Scientists are hired across our organization and are key contributors to many flagship products, like Google Search, YouTube, Maps, Gmail, Android and many more! The list goes on! In this role, you'll develop methods for measuring and analyzing the quality of our products, who our users are, and what we can do to keep improving the Google experience.
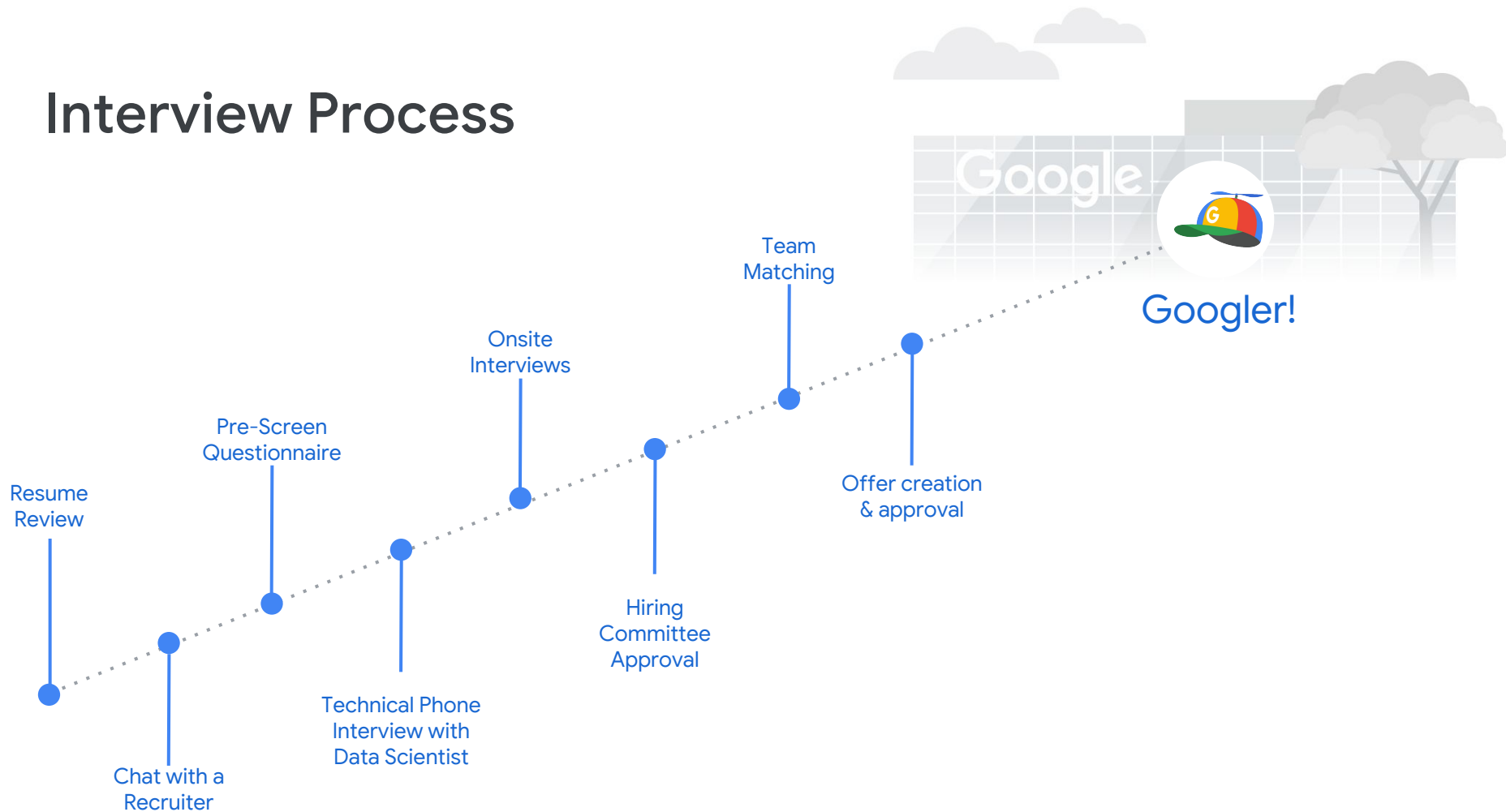
Interview Process

Interview Process

We'd love to start learning about you! To do so, we use an interview process that helps us to get to know our candidates from many important perspectives. The estimated timeline for this process can range from 5 to 8 weeks. That said, sometimes the process can vary, so your interview process may not exactly match the one described here. But remember, being comfortable with ambiguity is a core Google trait!

Ready, set, go!

Interview Process

Resume
Review

Chat with a
Recruiter

Pre-Screen
Questionnaire

Technical Phone
Interview with
Data Scientist

Onsite
Interviews

Hiring
Committee
Approval

Team
Matching

Offer creation
& approval

Googler!

Resume Review

With so many Data Science teams vested in the process of hiring, you can expect 15 or more individuals to carefully evaluate your resume throughout your candidacy.

For some general tips on how to prepare a resume and help ensure that you're putting your best foot forward, check out Laszlo Bock's [Personal Formula for a Better Resume](#).
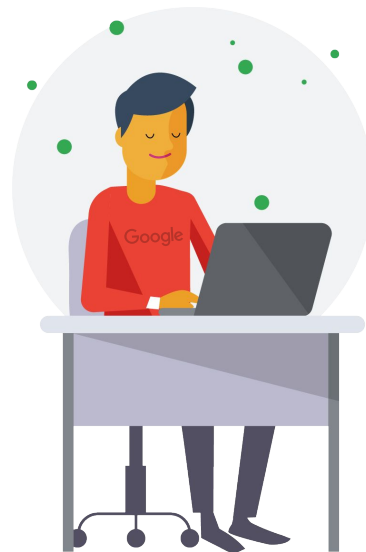
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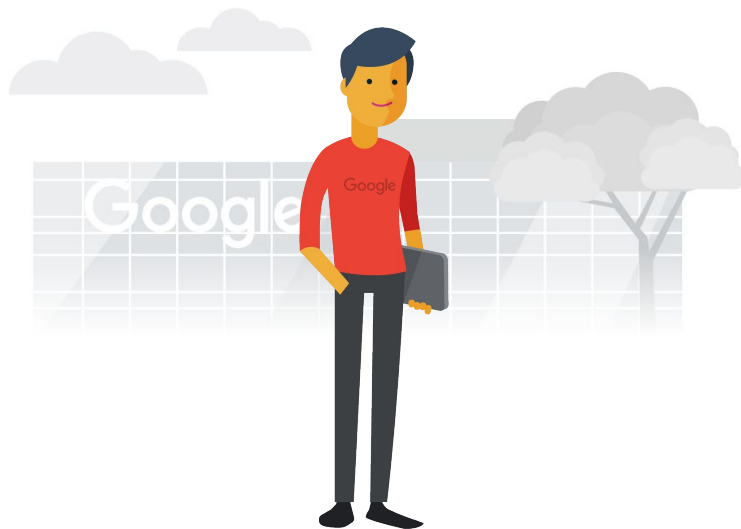
Recruiter Phone Chat

To kick things off, connect with a recruiter for 15 to 20 minutes to discuss your background and interests and how they align with the opportunity. Your recruiter will offer an overview of the hiring process for Data Science and touch on best practices. Feel free to ask questions around topics, like our company culture, benefits, location(s), hiring timeline, or anything that is important to you as you consider embarking on an opportunity at Google.

Pre-Screen Questionnaire

If the initial review of your resume and/or application is successful, you'll be asked by a recruiter to complete a written pre-screen questionnaire. The pre-screen covers a wide range of questions, from what your desired location(s) and timeline for a decision are to what data-analysis tools and techniques you've used in a particular data-science project. The more information you provide us up front, the better we'll be able to assess your skills and efficiently guide you through your application process. The completed questionnaire, alongside your resume, will be reviewed by hiring managers and hiring teams to establish if your background is a potential fit with our Data Scientist role and if we'd like to explore your fit further through a Google Hangout (video) interview.

Google

Google Hangout Interview

The Hangout (video) interview is 45 minutes to an hour long and is conducted by an experienced Data Scientist from one of our product areas. The interview will target your general quantitative analysis skills, and a Google Doc will be used to share any data tables or diagrams for the purposes of discussion or to document any problem-solving (e.g.: statistical coding) that you may be asked to do. Your interviewer will aim to better understand your role-related applied skills and problem-solving approach through a discussion of both hypothetical problems and the experience listed on your resume.

Tip: Avoid any technical issues that could hamper your experience or concentration by making sure the interview takes place in a quiet place and that you're using a computer with good Internet connection!
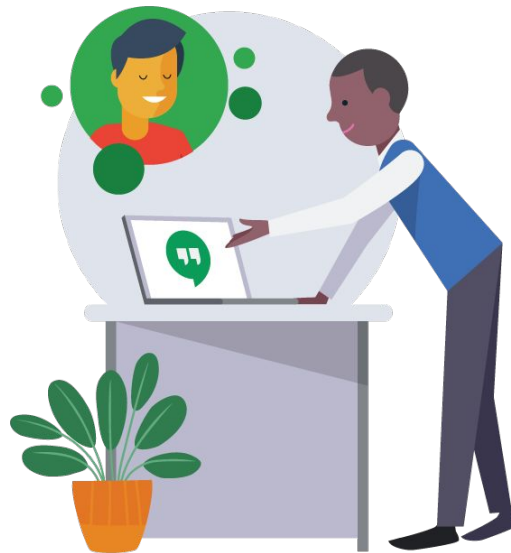
Onsite Interview

The onsite interview is conducted by four individual Data Scientists, from various product areas. With the time constraints of a Hangout interview, the onsite is designed to do a deeper dive into your role-related skills, including statistical knowledge, problem-solving, computation, and communication. We recommend you bring your laptop as you will be asked some technical questions via Google Docs. If you do not have a laptop, let your recruiter know and we will provide you with a Chromebook.

Tip: Always alert your interviewer(s) if you are asked the same question more than once, as candidates are expected to help preserve the integrity of the interview and avoid redundancy in questions!

Google

Hiring Committee Review

Once your onsite interview is completed, your resume, completed pre-screen questionnaire, and full interview feedback will be objectively reviewed by a committee of trusted leaders within Data Science. If the committee comes to a consensus and offers a positive endorsement of your candidacy, your recruiter will discuss the final stretch of putting together an offer and getting the final offer approved.
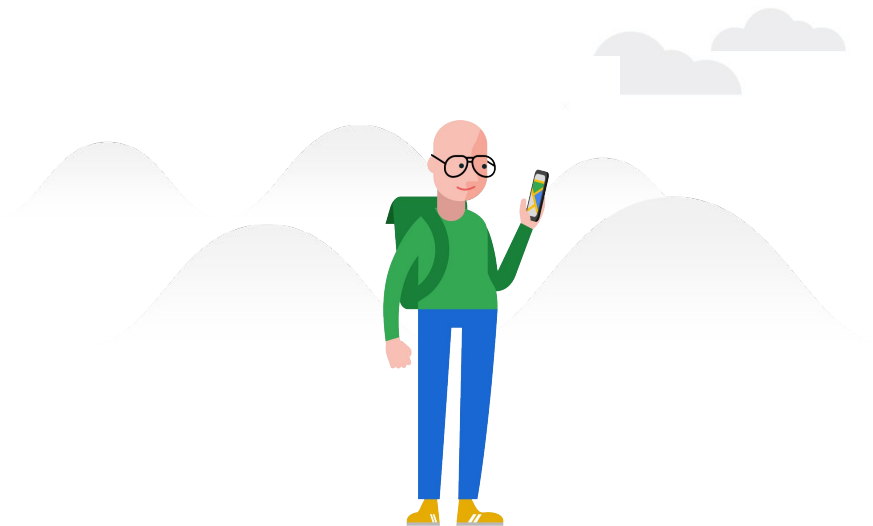
Finding a Team

Once the hiring committee has recommended you for an offer, your recruiter will work with you in identifying a team that best matches your skill set and interests. During this stage, we'll aim to crystallize your future role at Google by coordinating a phone call, Hangout or even a lunch on campus with your potential hiring manager, so you two can discuss how you fit into the big picture in concrete (and super exciting) terms!

Final Offer Approval

While the hiring committee recommends an offer, it's Google's executive committee that ultimately approves an offer. Final offer approval is contingent on the successful submission and completion of an offer packet. Work closely with your recruiter to ensure that the packet includes all of the information needed, as missing information will delay the decision-making process. The packet must include important details related to your professional journey so far, including your employment and compensation history; competing offer details (if applicable); your completed references; and a proposal for your Google offer. Once the offer is approved, your recruiter will verbally extend the offer and talk you through its various components and any questions you have, so you feel totally comfortable signing the official offer letter.

Google

How you'll be evaluated

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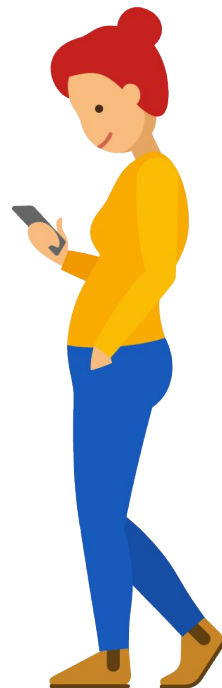
How you'll be evaluated

Technical

Interviewers will be looking equally at how you think through problems and what answers you give. Don't just focus on "what" but also on "how, why, and what else"?

Behavioral

Interviewers will also be looking at how you manage projects and relationships in a team or consultative environment.

Googleyness

Google is a super friendly and casual place. Leave the suit at home, and focus on being comfortable while brainstorming amongst your potential peers!

Don't forget

- Do you listen carefully and comprehend the question?
- Are the correct questions asked before proceeding? (important!)
- Are hints heard and heeded? You won't be penalized for needing hints.
- Are things assumed without first checking? (not good!)
- Are you slow to comprehend / solve problems? (not good!)
- Do you enjoy finding multiple solutions before choosing the best one?
- Are new ideas and methods of tackling a problem sought?
- Are you inventive and flexible in your solutions and open to new ideas?

Remember to be yourself!

Bring your whole self to Google and don't be afraid to let your personality show. There's no one kind of Googler, so we're always looking for people who can bring new perspectives and life experiences to our teams. If you're looking for a place that values your curiosity, passion and desire to learn, or if you're seeking colleagues who are big thinkers eager to take on fresh challenges as a team, then you're a future Googler.
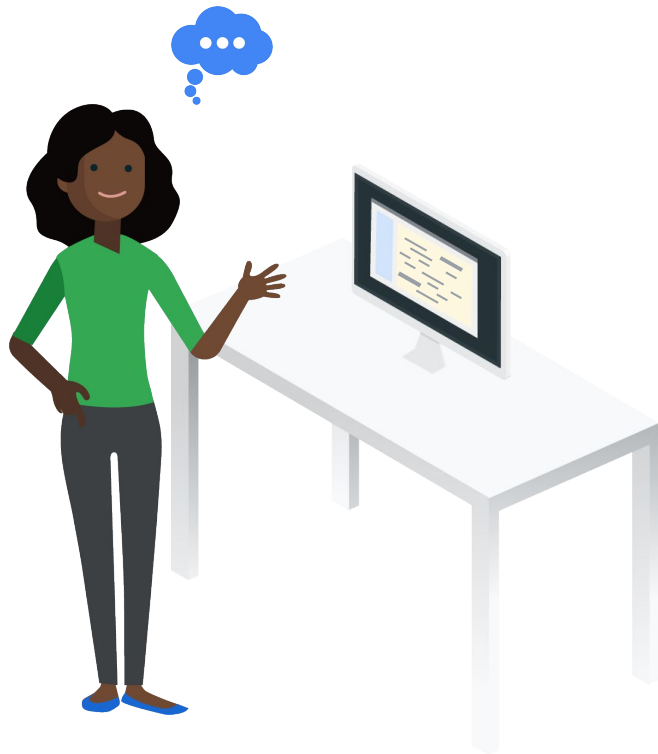
Areas of Evaluation

Google

Applied Statistical Knowledge

Interviews will typically target basic statistical concepts, so you'll want to brush up on your understanding of major methodologies and theories. Be prepared to dive into subjects like, probability, hypothesis testing, modeling, experimentation, regression, etc. Related topics listed on your resume - basic or advanced - will naturally incite interest from your interviewers and are fair game for discussion.

Tip: Remember that at Google, it's all about user data. Keeping user experience at the forefront of your solutions will often work to your advantage!

While demonstrating your knowledge of methods and theories is important, so is translating that knowledge into practical solutions. To that end, interviews will focus on your intuition with data and how you convert real-world problems into statistical models. You'll be asked to generate sensible insights from sets of data and refine under-specific issues with minimal guidance.

Data Intuition

Computational Skills

Since this is an analyst position and not a software engineering one, the interview will not include heavy algorithms or complex coding. Knowledge and experience with at least one statistical programming language (e.g. R) and familiarity with scripting languages (e.g. Python) or data querying language (e.g. SQL) is required.

As you solve a problem, talk through your logic. Even if your code / syntax may not be perfect, verbalizing your thought process can sometimes be just as valuable. You will be working on coding exercises with your interviewer via a shared Google Doc. Be sure to bring a laptop or let your recruiter know you need a Chromebook.

Throughout your interviews, don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions - actually, make it a point! Put your consultant's cap on and try to figure out what the problem is and approach a solution as if you were dealing with a client. Think about how you'd convey your statistical or other quantitative expertise to someone who isn't familiar with the subject matter. Your ideas should be easy to understand, no matter the audience!

Google looks for people who don't just do their job but go beyond the usual duties to create something great. If you're passionate about Google, show us by asking questions and demonstrating how you can contribute to our culture of creativity and collaboration!

Communication & Googleyness

Recommended Reading

Recommended Reading

- [Statistics and Big Data at Google](#)
  - Tim Hesterberg, Senior Statistician, Google shares insights into Big Data
- [The Unofficial Google Data Science Blog](#)
  - This blog is the work of some data scientists at Google who wish to bring out stories of interest to data scientists outside of Google.
- [How We Hire](#)
  - Google's official guide to our hiring process
- [Getting Into Google](#)
  - Inside information and tips into Google's recruiting process
- [Data Scientist - #1 Job in 2017](#)
  - Glassdoor ranks Data Scientist as the #1 job in 2017

Create
Design
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Good luck!!
We're rooting for you!