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PRD: LevelUpHub

Fall 2025

List all students who **actively** worked on this PRD Report:

1. Name: Hardik Paresh Dave
2. Name: Harsh Raval
3. Name: Krishna Sai Sumanth Pasupuleti
4. Name: Aikaterini Anagnostou
5. Name: Vishaal Koushic

Vision

For the tech companies based in the Massachusetts state that spend \$15 to 25K onboarding fresh graduates who take usually around 4 - 6 months to reach full productivity, LevelUpHub is a project collaboration platform that will enable employers to evaluate and train early career interns/employees through real projects and Agile workflows even before hiring. Unlike those traditional resumes filtering and GitHub projects evaluation, LevelUpHub turns hiring into a data driven decision reducing onboarding time from months to days while helping students build verified portfolios.

Motivation

It's common knowledge right now that breaking into tech is not easy anymore. Even the brightest students struggle to prove that they can actually do once they step outside the classroom. They take online courses, build tutorial projects and also polish their LinkedIn profiles yet most recruiters still question if those skills actually hold up in real world work. On the other side companies keep spending thousands of dollars on training fresh graduates who take months to reach full productivity. That is where the gap lies between students who need a chance to prove themselves and employers who need proof before taking a chance.

Customer Segments

Buyer Segment Profile (Students/Early Career Seekers):

Demographics	Key Behaviors	Attitudes
• Age: 18-28 years old	• Spends 10 to 15 hrs weekly	• Frustrated by "experience"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education: Undergraduate juniors/seniors, graduate students (MS programs in CS, Data Science, Analytics), recent graduates (0-2 years post-graduation) Location: Boston metro area universities (Northeastern, BU, Wentworth, MIT, Harvard) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on building portfolios (class projects, online tutorials) • Use LinkedIn, GitHub, and personal websites to showcase work • Very heavily rely on job description breakdown to guide their skill development plan • Actively seek portfolio building opportunities that are free to access as cost barrier for platforms is significant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "required" even for entry-level positions • Are skeptical of online certifications and tutorial projects being valued by employers • Motivated by direct hiring pathways • Value portfolio credentials and company connections over immediate monetary compensation
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Evidence Collected:

Research Design: Conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with students across buyer segments using open-ended questions about portfolio building, skill development, and job preparation effectiveness.

Sample Composition:



Key Findings:

- 60% primarily rely on the class projects or online tutorials for their portfolios
- 80% identify internships as the most valuable for job success
- 75% choose skills from the job postings instead of doing strategic planning
- Multiple respondents mentioned platforms like Forage are "not viewed as legitimate work" by recruiters nowadays

User Persona – Student**Name: Matthew****Occupation: Graduate Student****Age: 27****Short Bio/History**

- Graduate student in CS program
- Age: 24
- Part-time TA (on-campus)
- Lives in Boston, MA (shared housing)
- Wants portfolio-worthy projects and real experience

**Motivations**

- To know how business problems are solved using the things he is learning in class
- Wants to upgrade resume with real-world projects and not just coursework
- Looking for short remote-friendly engagements (20-30 hours per week)
- Seeking clear guidance, scope and iterative feedback for portfolio building
- Some compensation in form of coupons or Amazon Vouchers

Goals

- To publish actual verified project artifacts to portfolio
- To earn skill badges (Python/SQL/PM) tied to rubrics
- To convert project performance into interview shortlists
- Use standard language & tools (Python, JAVA, C++, GitHub, JIRA, Tableau, etc)

Frustrations

- Course assignments with unmotivated classmates
- Ambiguity as to what tech stacks he should learn more deeply
- Difficulty validating legitimate opportunities
- Confusion as to what are the actual impacts of what he is learning from class

Behaviors and Personality

- Allocates 10 to 12 hrs per week for skill and building portfolios for interview prep
- Takes active participation in MOOCs, hackathons and learns quickly
- Uses GitHub routinely and comfortable with Colab
- Prefers structured rubrics and milestone reviews
- Detail-oriented, clear communicator

Quote: "Well, if I can get to learn from real business problems and simultaneously build my portfolio right during my studies, I'm all in."

Seller Segment Profile (Companies/Employers):

Demographics	Key Behaviors	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation size: 50-1,000 people (SMEs and mid-market tech companies) • Industry: IT, software engineering, data analytics, cyber security, product management • Location: Boston area • Revenue: \$5M-\$500M annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-board 5-20 new grads / coops per year • Invest \$15-25K in onboarding/training per new graduate hire • Utilize multiple recruiting platforms (Handshake, LinkedIn, university career fairs) • Struggle to judge candidates by resumes and interviews alone • Look for low-risk ways to assess talent before making a full-time hiring decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated with the Theory-vs-Execution Gap in grad students these days • Skeptical of all the portfolio projects (can't verify) • Try before you hire for hiring decisions • Investment to be made in the development of talent as long as ROI is evident • Sharing real work with students in secure manner

Evidence Collected:

Research Approach: Conducted 5 semi-structured interviews with Hiring Managers, Recruiters and Technical Leads through structured questions onboarding costs, competency assessment challenges and project-based evaluation approaches.

Sample Composition:

- 2 tech recruiters
- 3 hiring managers / technical leads

Key Findings:

- 100% reported that it would take 3-6 months and cost \$15-25K to achieve graduate productivity.
- 70% for theory-vs-execution gap as the topmost challenge in hiring.
- 60% find it difficult to validate portfolio work authenticity
- All expressed will to share “safe” projects (dashboards, data cleaning steps, or API development with dummy content)

User Persona – Recruiter (SMB)**Name: Ava****Occupation: People Ops / Recruiter (SMB)****Age: 34****Short Bio / Company Context**

- Recruiter at SMB (120+ people), Campus/early career pipeline owner
- Hiring volume usually 8-12/year
- Managers are tight on budget and hands-on but time poor.
- Uses ATS/Candidate Management tools
- KPIs: time to fill, quality-of-hire, conversion from intern, manager satisfaction

**Motivations**

- See candidates work in our tools pre-offer to reduce mis-hires.
- Create a repeatable, fair early-career process that scales yearly.
- Increase brand reach at local and non-target schools.
- Broaden and diversify the pipeline.

Goals

- Shortlist candidates with proven execution (scope, build, test, ship).
- Cut manager screening time by 30–40% while improving signal quality.
- Standardize NDAs/IP and stipend payments with minimal legal lift.
- Convert top interns to FTE at 60%+ within 3–6 months.

Frustrations

- Résumé-first screening and generic take-homes don't predict on-job performance.
- Managers spend weeks onboarding new grads to Git/Jira/PR reviews.
- Ad-hoc projects cause IP/approval friction; payments are manual.
- Inconsistent interview scoring; hard to compare candidates fairly.
- Limited brand awareness; weak engagement from non-target schools.

Behaviors & Personality

- Pragmatic and metrics-driven; maintains a scorecard and hiring rubric.
- Allocates 5–7 hrs/week to early-career recruiting during peak months.
- Coordinates closely with Eng/Product leads; prefers async reviews over panels.
- Builds dashboards for weekly funnel reporting to leadership.

Success Metrics (What 'Good' Looks Like)

- Time-to-offer < 30 days and interview to offer ratio < 3:1.
- Intern-to-FTE conversion ≥ 60%, time to first ship ≤ 3 weeks.
- Manager satisfaction ≥ 4.5/5 post-ramp and 12-month retention ≥ 90%.

Quote: "If I can get to see how a candidate actually solves problems in our workflow before an offer, I'll hire faster with fewer surprises."

Early Adopters vs. Mainstream Users:

Early Adopters (Year 1):

- Tech-forward universities that already have experiential learning or opening question-type programs (Northeastern co-op culture)
- Students already in the process of building a portfolio (active on GitHub, have a personal site)
- Boston tech startups and SMBs with >200 employees seeking on-demand talent
- Companies who are already leveraging platforms such as Parker Dewey or Riipen (demonstrated willingness to experiment)

Mainstream Users (Year 2-3):

- Traditional schools that don't have robust co-op programs
- Non-technical majors looking to pick up tech skills
- Companies with established hiring processes that are neither large nor small (200-1,000 employees)
- Students outside your Boston metro area (expansion to New England)

Key Difference: Early adopters have the attitude and are used to platform-based work, with EXISTING portfolio/ project management rituals. The main stream user needs hand holding, structured onboarding and proven ROI before adoption.

Unmet Needs

Students (Buyer Segment)

- **Practical competency signal**

Hypothesis: Undergrad / MS students have hard time showing hands on ability as their portfolio is full of tutorials/class assignments which are not verifiable or differentiable by recruiter.

Evidence: 60% of students interviewed mention class project/tutorials; repeated quotes about "Simulations aren't real work"; around 80% say internships is the only signal that

matters.

- **Prolonged job search timelines**

Hypothesis: The recent graduate job search is longer for technical roles because they don't have good, accredited projects for prospective employers to believe in, and it pressures them towards being judged on GPA and personal interview.

Evidence: Graduates (like Daren, 22; Jay, 28) reported that internships were “the main way to get an interview”; personal projects had “limited impact.”

- **Limited access to authentic work**

Hypothesis: It's too hard for students from all backgrounds to get good, real-work experience; Paid internships are rare and often require work authorization, while unpaid internships don't have credibility

Evidence: 80% of students have no access to internships/hands-on experience; Parker Dewey is reaching 20-100K students while Handshake reaches 15M; international students report barriers to authorization; large market demand for universally poolable portfolio needs.

Companies (Seller Segment)

- **Onboarding productivity loss**

Hypothesis: When a company brings in a brand new graduate, work slows and money leaks for a long stretch. A seasoned newcomer works at half speed for two or three months - a fresh diploma holder needs four to six. Both groups still learn the code, the routines and the subject matter plus a senior teammate must stop real work to guide them.

Evidence: Every employer we spoke to said, “We wait three to six months before the hire adds full value.” At a \$70 000 salary, four months of half output wastes about \$11 500 of paid time and that figure leaves out the \$15 000 - \$25 000 spent on onboarding and the hours the mentor loses. A JP Morgan manager put it plainly: “Our new graduates need two or three months before they hit basic productivity.”

- **High-risk, résumé-first decisions**

Hypothesis: Because managers never watch the candidate do the actual job, they lean on résumés but also short interviews. Those tools skip the clues that show skill, teamwork and problem-solving - the wrong people slip through and training drags on.

Evidence: Roughly seven out of ten employers said, “We see a gap between what applicants claim as well as what they deliver.” Recruiters complained, “We cannot tell who really wrote the code” and “We struggle to separate talkers from doers.”

- **Inefficient early-talent pipeline**

Hypothesis: Small and mid-size tech firms have no cheap, low risk method to let a prospect work on a live task before the offer letter. They either gamble on an expensive

hire who will need four to six months to ramp up or they keep the seat empty.

Evidence: Employers asked aloud for “try-before-hire” setups. They offered “safe” side projects they would share with candidates proving they want a test drive with less commitment. That wish matches what small company recruiters say they lack.

Existing Solutions

Current Solutions Students Use:

1. **Online tutorial platforms** (YouTube, Codecademy, Coursera)
 - a. *Insufficiency:* No employer verification; every student does same projects; recruiters view as low-signal
 - b. *Evidence:* 32% of students rely on tutorials; multiple mentioned "recruiters don't value them"
2. **Forage job simulations**
 - a. *Insufficiency:* Simulated (not real) work; unpaid; self-paced with model answers (no authentic problem-solving)
 - b. *Evidence:* Daren (22): "Forage simulations were fine, but most recruiters don't view them as legitimate work"
3. **Class/course projects**
 - a. *Insufficiency:* Academically focused (not business-driven); no employer endorsement; identical across students
 - b. *Evidence:* 48% rely on class projects; employers mentioned difficulty differentiating candidates
4. **Traditional internships**
 - a. *Insufficiency:* Highly competitive (only 20% of students access); long commitment (full summer); often unpaid or low-paid
 - b. *Evidence:* 80% of students say internships most valuable, but limited availability creates access gap

Current Solutions Companies Use:

1. **Handshake (job board)**
 - a. *Insufficiency:* Resume-first approach; no project-based assessment; expensive (\$100-250K/year)
 - b. *Evidence:* Serves 1M employers but lacks experiential learning component
2. **Traditional internship programs**
 - a. *Insufficiency:* 3-6 month commitment; requires infrastructure; expensive to administer
 - b. *Evidence:* Employers cited \$15-25K onboarding costs as barrier

3. Take-home assessments

- a. *Insufficiency*: Single snapshot; no ongoing collaboration visibility; time-intensive to create and review
- b. *Evidence*: Recruiters mentioned using case studies but inconsistently

4. Riipen (curriculum-embedded projects)

- a. *Insufficiency*: Requires faculty adoption (slow); most projects unpaid (70%); tied to academic calendar
- b. *Evidence*: Only 700 universities vs. 4,000+ US institutions; our interviews showed students want flexibility outside coursework

Competitor Feature Matrix:

Features	Riipen	Forage	Parker Dewey	ProjectBoard (ISEF)	Handshake	LevelUpHub
Real project-based work with companies	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Simulated tasks (virtual job simulations)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Paid opportunities available	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Requires university/faculty dependency	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Open to anyone (no student enrollment required)	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Short-cycle projects (≤ 40 hours)	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Asynchronous / self-paced participation	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Direct try-before-hire funnel	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Produces portfolio-ready artifacts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Built-in plagiarism/portfolio	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓

tools						
Primarily a job board/application pipeline	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Real Agile workflow (standups, code reviews, sprints)	X	X	X	X	X	✓
GitHub PR verification	X	X	X	X	X	✓

Differentiation

Why LevelUpHub is Best Equipped:

1. **Team expertise in customer development** - Over 25 interviews were conducted across all customer segments which helped in identifying real pain points; the team demonstrated a strong ability to gather and synthesize market insights.
2. **Boston ecosystem access** - Being in one of the most densely university-company corridors in America (150+ tech companies, 50+ universities) the team members are very well connected and have direct access to target customers.
3. **Understanding of both sides** - While being students and going through the portfolio-building struggle, at the same time, conducting research on employer hiring challenges, we have real empathy for both segments.
4. **Academic grounding** - The DPDM coursework offers a well-organized method which is very helpful in product development, customer validation, and market analysis.
5. **Hybrid model insight** - Understanding that no current competitor is effectively combining paid work + open access + scale gives a very clear differentiation opportunity.

Why Now?

External Changes:

1. **Remote work has become standard (COVID)** - It is now possible to perform 90% of projects remotely, thus overcoming geographic differences and facilitating student-company collaboration on a distributed basis at a wider scale.
2. **AI development** - The present AI is capable of matching projects to students, providing accountability, and creating professional portfolios at a cost that was unheard of 3 years ago.
3. **Hiring difficulties for employers are becoming more and more serious** - Layoffs in the tech industry in the beginning of 2024 and 2025 have led to a more challenging hiring

environment. Employers therefore require a better systemic method of assessing "proven" junior talent since the competition for junior talent negatively affects us in the payment model of unpaid projects.

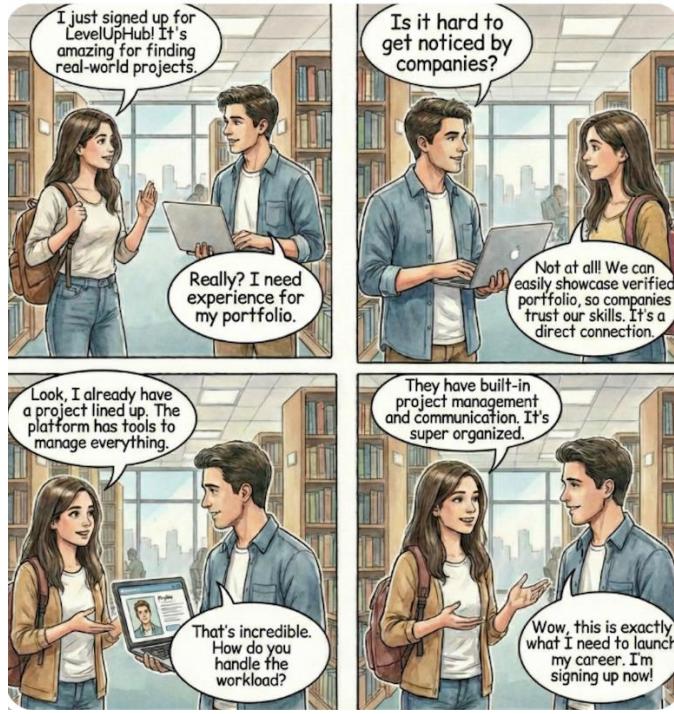
4. **Student loan crisis** - The average student loan debt is over \$37,000, thus it is very urgent to find ways of solving the problem of unpaid opportunities versus paid portfolio development opportunities.
5. **Government support for experiential learning** - The Career Ready Fund in Canada (funding Riipen at \$1-1.4K stipends) is a good example of the market being validated for paid work in student project work.

Internal Opportunities:

1. **Team composition** - All members of the team are graduate students who live through the same problem on a daily basis; Genuine recognition of the pain point
2. **Academic resources** - DPDM course a well-organized framework, faculty facilitation, and academic credibility to fasten the early stage of development
3. **Network access** - The connection of the team members with Vivek Nikam at the target companies, alumni network encouragement, and LinkedIn reach are the tools for customer pilots
4. **Timing with co-op cycles** - Initiating during Q1 2026 is in line with spring recruitment for co-op opportunities for students in the co-op cycle who will be actively looking for summer opportunities.

Verbal/Visual Walkthrough of Use Cases

Visual Storyboard: Student Version

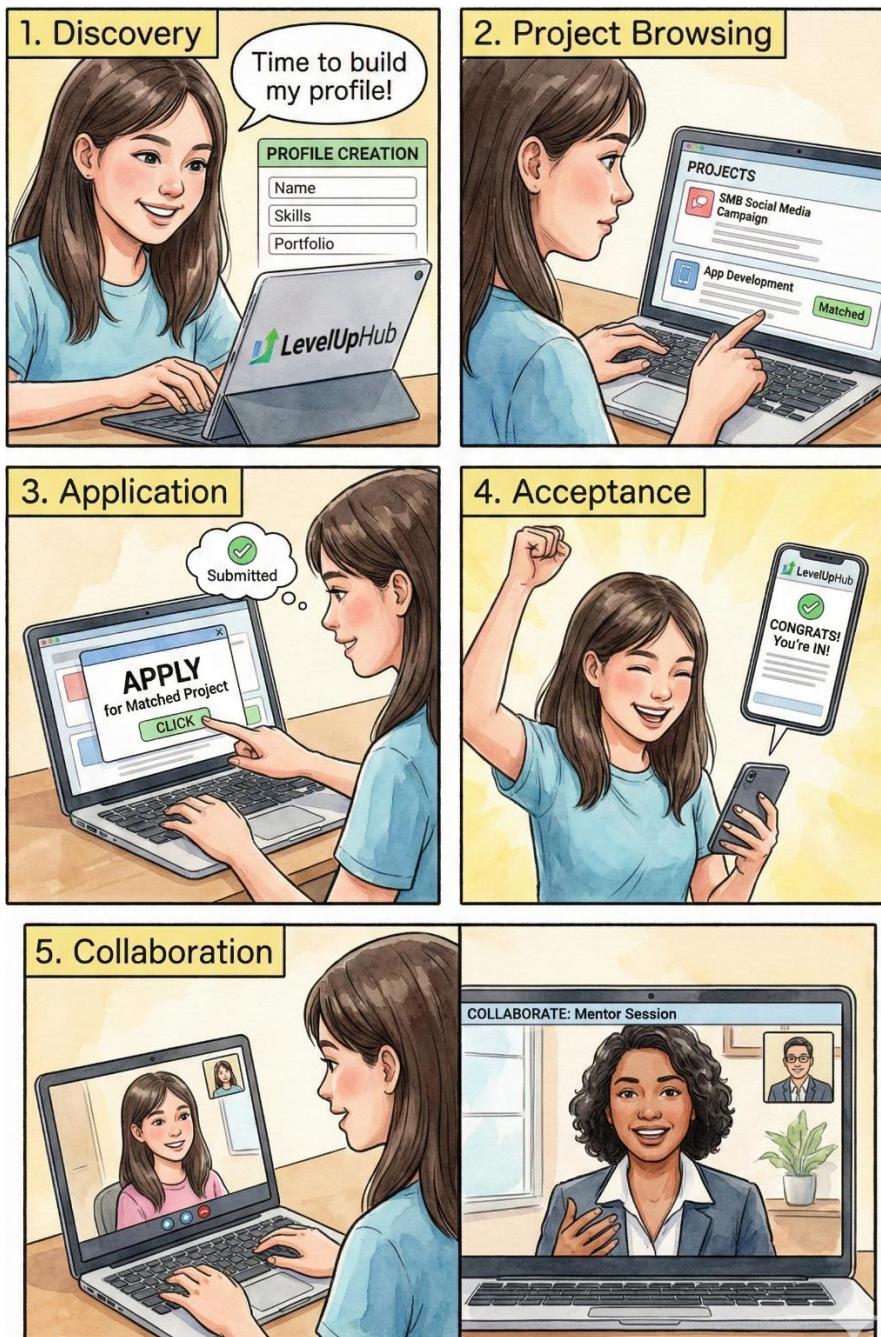


Visual Storyboard: Employer Version



USER CASES

Student Process Overview:



Student Step-to-step Breakdown:

1. Login Page: Allows users to sign in using their email and password or through their preferred

social login provider to access the platform

The screenshot shows a web browser window for 'LevelUpHub' at the URL <https://LevelUpHub/Login>. The page is titled 'Login'. It contains input fields for 'Email' and 'Password', a 'Remember Me' checkbox, and a 'Login' button. Below these are links for 'Forgot password?' and 'Sign In using your account with'. Two social media icons are visible: 'Google' and 'GitHub'.

2. Student Sign-Up Page: New student users create an account by entering basic login credentials or connecting through GitHub, Google, or LinkedIn

The screenshot shows a web browser window for 'A Web Page' at the URL <https://LevelUpHub/SignIn-Studen>. The page is titled 'Get started' and has a sub-tagline 'Join thousands building real-world experience'. It features a 'Get started quickly with:' section with icons for GitHub, Google, and LinkedIn. Below this are fields for 'Username Email*' containing 'student@universityname.edu' and 'Create Password*' containing 'Minimum 8 characters'. A 'Continue >' button is at the bottom, and a 'login' link is at the bottom right.

3. Student Profile Basics Page: Students enter personal and academic details (school, major, academic year, and graduation date) to help match them with appropriate projects.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "LevelUpHub" with the URL "https://LevelUpHub/Student-Login". The form contains the following fields:

- First Name *: Two input fields for first name.
- Last Name *: Two input fields for last name.
- University/College*: A dropdown menu.
- Major/Program* Graduation*: A dropdown menu for major, a date input field for graduation, and a calendar icon.
- Academic Year*: A dropdown menu with options: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate, and Phd.
- Work Authorisation*: A dropdown menu.

At the bottom left is a "Back" button, and at the bottom right is a "Continue" button.

4. Skills, Interests and Availability Page: Students connect GitHub and indicate their technical skills, preferred project types and weekly availability to tailor personalized project recommendations.

A Web Page

← → ↻ https://

 Connect GitHub Account
Required to verify coding experience Connect

Technical Skills* (minimum 3)
Type a skill and press Enter
Add atleast 3 technical skills

Project Interests*

 Frontend	 Backend
 Mobile	 Data/ML

Weekly Availability*
Hours per week

5 hrs 20 hrs 40 hrs

Back Continue

5. Optional Resume/Portfolio Page: Students can upload a resume to link to their LinkedIn/portfolio to strengthen their profile before completing the registration.

A Web Page

← → ⌂ https://

Resume (Optional)

We'll parse it to auto-fill your profile

LinkedIn (Optional)

Portfolio (Optional)

Timezone*

6. Project Calendar for Student:

LevelUpHub

← → ⌂ https://LevelUpHub/student-calendar

LevelUpHub

- [Dashboard](#)
- [Browse Project](#)
- [My Project](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Profile](#)
- [Performance](#)
- [Message](#)
- [Skills](#)
- [Settings](#)

Project calendar

Track your meeting, deadlines and reviews

November 2025						
DECEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

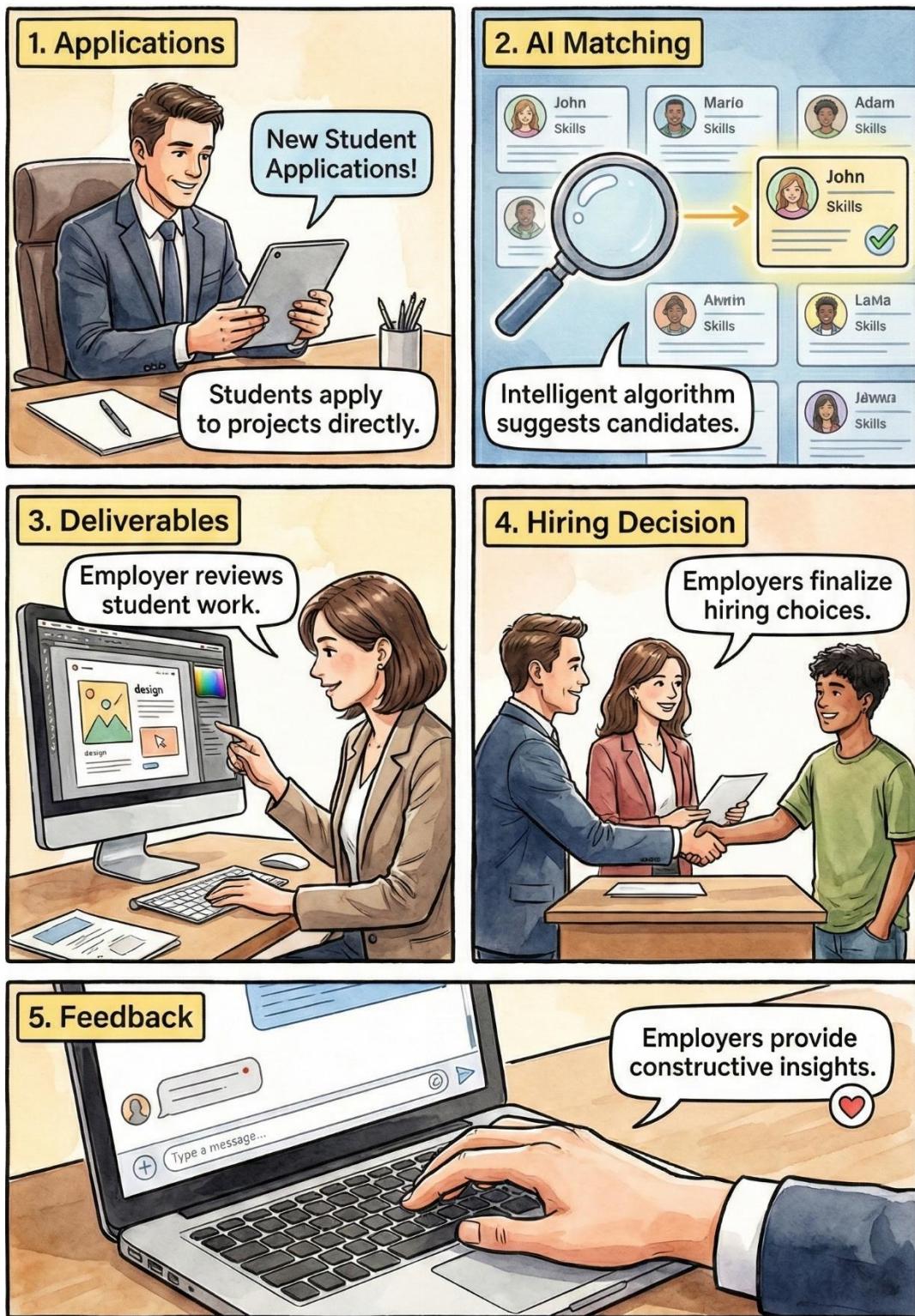
Events for 11/5/2025

Weekly Stand-up Meeting
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

All Upcoming Events

Weekly Stand-up Meeting
2025-11-02 · 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
Deliverable: Phase 1 Completion
2025-11-05 · 5:00 PM
Cde Review Session
2025-11-03 · 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Brainstorming: Feature Idea
2025-11-04 · 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
1-on-1 Manager Review
2025-11-06 · 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Employer Process Overview



Employer Step-to-step Breakdown:

1. Employer Sign-Up Page: New student users create an account by entering basic login credentials or connecting through GitHub, Google, or LinkedIn

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled 'A Web Page' with the URL <https://LevelUpHub/SignIn-Company>. The main heading is 'Get started' with the subtext 'Join thousands building real-world experience'. Below this is a form titled 'Get started quickly with:' containing three social media connection options: GitHub, Google, and LinkedIn. The form then asks for user information: 'Username Email*' with the value 'you@company.com', 'Job Title*' with the value 'e.g., IT Engineering Manager', and 'Create Password*' with the value 'Minimum 8 characters'. At the bottom of the form is a 'Continue >' button and a link 'Already have an account? [login](#)'.

2. Registration Page: Companies/Employers provide basic organization details (industry, website, team size, location) to set up their employer profile.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled 'LevelUpHub' with the URL <https://>. The form begins with 'Company Name*' and a text input field. Next is 'Company Website' with the value 'https://company.com'. 'Industry*' is listed with a dropdown menu. 'Engineering Team Size*' has two rows of three buttons each: Row 1 contains '1-10 Startup', '501-1000 Growing', and '11-50 Scale-up'; Row 2 contains '201-500 Mid-Size', '501-1000 Large', and '501-1000 Enterprise'. Below these is 'Headquarters Location' with the value 'e.g., Boston, MA'. At the bottom are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons.

3. Tech Stack and Practices Page: Employers select their tech stack, collaboration tools, and preferred development practices to aid in matching with students who fit their environment.

A Web Page
https://

Tech Stack*

<input type="checkbox"/> JavaScript/TypeScript	<input type="checkbox"/> Python
<input type="checkbox"/> Java	<input type="checkbox"/> React/Vue/Angular
<input type="checkbox"/> Node.js	<input type="checkbox"/> AWS/GCP/Azure
<input type="checkbox"/> iOS/Android	<input type="checkbox"/> ML/AI

Development Tools & Platforms

 GitHub	 GitLab	 GitLab
 Slack	 Azure DevOps	 Jenkins

Development Practices

<input type="checkbox"/> Agile/Scrum	<input type="checkbox"/> CI/CD
<input type="checkbox"/> Code Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> Pair Programming
<input type="checkbox"/> Test-Driven Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Microservices

Buttons: Back, Continue

4. Hiring Needs and Fee Agreement Page: Employers outline hiring goals, onboarding challenges, and project types they will post, then confirm \$75/project platform fee to complete registration.

A Web Page

https://

Annual Engineering Hires*

Typical Onboarding Time

Biggest Hiring Challenges

Technical Skill gap Culture fit assesment

Long onboarding time Early Turnover

Finding qualified candidates Evaluating real skills

Project Types You'd Post

e.g., Frontend features, API development, bug fixes, data a

Platform Fee Agreement

LevelUpHub charges \$75 per project posted to maintain platform quality and provide student support.

I understand and agree to the \$75/project fee

Back Complete Registration

5. Student Dashboard: students view ongoing project progress, track performance and activity, earn skills badges, and receive new recommended projects to apply to.

The screenshot shows the LevelUpHub Student Dashboard interface. At the top, there's a header bar with the URL <https://LevelUpHub/student-dashboard>. The dashboard features a user profile for "Alex" from Northeastern University, showing a completion rate of 65% and a message "Keep Going".

Current Project: HR Portal UI change (Progress: 65%, 5 days left, Max Ver). Buttons include "Continue Working ->" and "Edit".

Metrics: Portfolio Views (127), Completed (4), Avg Rating (4.8), and Growth (+22%).

University Leaderboard: This Month

Rank	User	University	Points	Projects
1	Sara Chen	MIT	2,450 pts	12 projects
2	You	Northeastern	2,280 pts	10 projects
3	Mike Jhonson	Stanford	2,100 pts	9 projects
4	Emily Wang	Wentworth	1,950 pts	8 projects

Recommended for you:

- Tesla Energy**: Python API Performance Optimization (Advanced). Description: Optimize our REST API endpoints for 10x performance improvement. Implement caching, query optimization, and async processing. Button: Apply.

Recent Activity:

- Code Review Passed**: Your PR for TechCorp's authentication module received approval from 3 reviewers. (2 hours ago)
- New Message from DataFlow**: Engineering manager wants to discuss your API optimization approach. (5 hours ago)
- Skill Badge Earned**: You earned "React Performance Expert" badge after completing 5 React projects. (Yesterday)

At the bottom, there are navigation tabs: Dashboard (selected), Browse, Projects, Calendar, and Profile.

6. Student Project Browser: Students browse available real-world projects, filter them by skills or interests, and apply directly to the ones that best match their profile.

The screenshot shows the LevelUpHub Student Project Browser interface. At the top, there's a header with the URL <https://LevelUpHub/Student-browser>. Below the header, the main title is "Find Your Perfect Project Match" with the sub-instruction "Join real company workflows, build production code, and get hired". A search bar says "Search by skills, companies, or project type." and a "Search Project" button. To the right of the search bar is a dropdown menu set to "Best Match".

Filters: On the left, there are three sections: "Project Type" (Frontend Development, Backend Development, Full-Stack, Mobile Development), "Duration" (1 week or less, 2-4 weeks, 1-2 months, 3.4 months, 4+ months), and "Industry" (SaaS, FinTech, E-commerce, Entertainment, EdTech). The "Entertainment" checkbox is checked.

Projects Found: The main area displays 127 projects found, ordered by Best Match. Each project card includes the company name, weekly hours required, a match percentage, pay rate, and duration.

- Python API Performance Optimization** (Tesla Energy): Weekly 20 hrs, 92% Match, \$750, 4 weeks. Description: Optimize our REST API endpoints for 10x performance improvement. Implement caching, query optimization, and async processing. **Apply** button.
- React Component Library Migration** (DataFlow Analytics): Weekly 15-20 hrs, 96% Match, \$500, 4 weeks. Description: Join our frontend team to migrate our design system from styled-components to Tailwind CSS. You'll work in daily standups, participate in code reviews. **Apply** button.
- React Native Shopping Cart Feature** (MobileFirst Inc): Weekly 25 hrs, 88% Match, \$400, 2 weeks. Description: Build a real-time shopping cart with offline sync capabilities. Integrate with GraphQL backend and implement smooth animations. Join our mobile team. **Apply** button.
- Video Player Component Suite** (StreamFlow Media): Weekly 20 hrs, 82% Match, \$550, 3 weeks. Description: Build a custom video player with HLS streaming, subtitles, and analytics integration. Create reusable React components with comprehensive documentation. **Apply** button.
- Kubernetes Monitoring Dashboard** (CloudScale Systems): Weekly 15 hrs, 79% Match, \$800, 6 weeks. Description: Optimize our REST API endpoints for 10x performance improvement. Implement caching, query optimization, and async processing. **Apply** button.

A "Load More Projects" button is located at the bottom of the project list.

7. Employer Talent Browser: Employers review matched student profiles, apply filters, and invite selected candidates to collaborate on projects

Discover Production-Ready Talent

Find students who have proven their skills through real projects and can contribute from Day 1

Search by skills, universities, or experience...

AI Smart Match

Get instant matches for your React Migration project based on skills, availability, and past performance.

Filters

Project Type

- Frontend Development
- Backend Development
- Full-Stack
- Mobile Development

Duration

- 1 week or less
- 2-4 weeks
- 1-2 months
- 3-4 months
- 4+ months

Industry

- SaaS
- FinTech
- E-commerce
- Entertainment
- EdTech

892 Students Match

Sara Chen Available Now

MIT Computer Science

12 PROJECTS 4.9 RATING 100% COMPLETION

Verified Skills: React, TypeScript, Node.js, Python, AWS

Completed TechCorp's API migration, Won "Best Code Quality" award, 20 hrs/week available

John Doe Available Now

Northwestern Information Systems

8 PROJECTS 4.8 RATING 100% COMPLETION

Verified Skills: React, TypeScript, CSS, Python, GCP

3 frontend projects completed, 50% faster than average, 25 hrs/week available

Mike Johnson In Project

Stanford - Computer Science - Senior

15 PROJECTS 4.9 RATING 95% COMPLETION

Verified Skills: Python, Django, Node.js, Docker, AWS

Currently with DataFlow Inc, 3x "Developer of the Week", Available in 1 week

Emily Wang Available Now

UC Berkeley - EECS - Senior

10 PROJECTS 4.7 RATING 90% COMPLETION

Verified Skills: React, Vue, Node.js, GraphQL, MongoDB

Full-stack developer, Seeking full-time for 2025, 30 hrs/week available

8. Employer Profile

The screenshot shows the LevelUpHub employer profile dashboard for Volta Energy. At the top, there's a header bar with the LevelUpHub logo, back and forward navigation buttons, and a search bar containing the URL <https://LevelUpHub/company-dashboard>. Below the header, the company name "Volta Energy" is displayed along with its "Premium Tier" status, a user icon with a red dot, and a link to "8 Active Projects - 247 Applicants". A large button labeled "+ Post New Project" is centered above a grid of four cards. The first card shows "247 Applicants" with a people icon. The second card shows a "Rating" of "4.8" with a star icon. The third card shows a "Pipeline" of "31" with a pipeline icon. The fourth card shows "8 Projects" with a folder icon. Below this grid, a section titled "Recomended for you" displays a "Demand Response Dashboard" with "42 applicants" and an "Active" button. Underneath, a section titled "★ Top Cadidates" lists "Sarah Martinez" from "Computer Science" with a "4.9" rating and a "View" button. At the bottom, a navigation bar includes links for "Dashboard" (which is highlighted in blue), "Talent", "Projects", "Calendar", and "Account".

9. Project Calendar for Employer

Events for 11/5/2025

- Team Stand-up Meeting**
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
Project: HR Portal UI change

All Upcoming Events

- Team Stand-up Meeting
2025-11-02 · 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
- Project Milestone Review
2025-11-05 · 5:00 PM
- Code Review with Students
2025-11-03 · 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
- Strategy Brainstorming
2025-11-04 · 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 1-on-1 with Alex (Student)
2025-11-06 · 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Detailed Design & Features Description

Design Principles

- Company-First Value Proposition:** Companies pay the fees, so platform UX and messaging must prioritize employer ROI, reduced hiring risk and eliminated productivity ramp. Student benefits are secondary (though critical for marketplace liquidity).
- Authenticity Over Simulation:** Every feature should facilitate real work, not simulated exercises. Students should work exactly like employees for project duration such as same tools, same processes, same standards.
- Verification as Core Differentiator:** The GitHub PR submission flow is the "killer feature." Companies review actual code contributions, eliminating doubt about whether students did the work themselves.
- Minimal Friction, Progressive Profiling:** Collect only essential information during signup. Build complete profiles through platform activity (completed projects, ratings, GitHub contributions) rather than lengthy forms.
- F1 Compliance by Design:** Prize-based compensation structure (not employment) ensures international students can participate legally. This is a feature, not a workaround.

Features/information architecture [draft]

Feature	Description	Priority
Student Registration	OAuth-based signup via GitHub and LinkedIn. Students connect their GitHub account to display verified code contributions (commits, PRs, repositories). LinkedIn integration imports education, skills, and work history. Students complete skill tagging (React, Python, etc.) and set availability calendar for project participation windows. Progressive profiling builds complete profiles through platform activity rather than lengthy upfront forms.	P0
Company Registration	Business verification through company email domain validation and LinkedIn company page confirmation. Companies set up team profiles including tech stack used, development tools (Jira, Slack, GitHub), and Agile methodology practiced. Admin users can invite additional team members (engineers, hiring managers) with role-based permissions. Verification process ensures legitimacy before project posting is enabled.	P0
Project Posting	Guided templates walk companies through scoping 4-6 week projects with clear deliverables. Companies define sprint structure (1-week or 2-week cycles), required skills, estimated hours, and evaluation criteria. Built-in prompts ensure projects include learning objectives and realistic timelines. Companies specify whether projects use real data, dummy data, or public datasets for security tiering. Preview mode shows how posting appears to students before publishing.	P0
Project Browsing	Students browse available projects with filters for skills (React, Python, SQL), duration (1-6 weeks), company size, and industry. AI-powered recommendations surface projects matching student skills and past performance. Each listing displays company rating, project description, tech stack, timeline, and match score. Saved projects and application history tracked in student dashboard.	P0
Application Flow	One-click apply using pre-built student profile. Students can add optional cover note explaining interest and relevant experience. Application automatically shares GitHub profile, skills, past project ratings, and availability. Real-time status tracking shows application stages (submitted, reviewed, accepted, rejected). Email and in-app notifications for status changes.	P0

AI Matching	Machine learning algorithm scores student-to-project fit based on skills match, past project ratings, GitHub activity, and availability alignment. Companies receive ranked candidate recommendations with match scores and reasoning. Algorithm improves over time using hiring outcome data. Target accuracy: 85% (students matched to projects receive 4+ star ratings). Fallback to manual matching for low-confidence scores.	P1
Project Workspace	Centralized hub for all project activity. Integrates external tools: Zoom links for standups, Slack channel invites, GitHub repository access, Jira/Asana board connections. Sprint timeline visualization shows milestones (kickoff, standups, PR deadline, review). Task checklist tracks deliverable completion. Document sharing for project briefs, design specs, and resources. Activity feed shows recent updates and communications.	P0
Sprint Tracking	Visual timeline displaying sprint progress with milestone markers. Standup log captures attendance and blocker reports. Task completion percentage updates as deliverables are checked off. Automated reminders sent before standups and deadlines. Early warning flags for at-risk projects (missed standups, no commits). Company mentors can add notes and feedback throughout sprint.	P1
PR Submission	Students submit GitHub Pull Request links as primary deliverable. Platform verifies PR exists and belongs to correct repository via GitHub API. Summary field captures work completed, challenges faced, and learnings. Submission timestamp recorded for deadline compliance. Companies review actual code diff, commit history, and review comments directly in GitHub. Verification badge confirms authentic code contribution.	P0
Rating System	Mutual ratings after project completion. Companies rate students on 5-star scale plus competency dimensions: code quality, communication, reliability, problem-solving, collaboration. Students rate experience: mentorship quality, project clarity, company responsiveness. Written feedback optional but encouraged. Ratings visible on profiles after both parties complete review (to ensure honesty). Appeals process for disputed ratings.	P0
Completion Badges	Verified credentials generated upon successful project completion. Badge displays company name, project title, skills demonstrated, rating received, and completion	P0

	date. Verification link confirms authenticity via platform. One-click export to LinkedIn adds badge to profile. Public portfolio page showcases all completed projects. QR code links to verification for resume inclusion.	
Company Analytics	Dashboard displaying hiring funnel metrics: projects posted, applications received, students selected, completions, and hires made. Candidate comparison tool shows side-by-side ratings and performance across multiple students. Conversion tracking measures time-to-hire and cost-per-hire vs. traditional recruiting. ROI calculator estimates savings from reduced onboarding time. Export reports for internal stakeholders.	P2
In-App Messaging	Direct communication between students and company mentors without sharing personal contact info. Threaded conversations organized by project. Notification preferences (email, push, in-app) configurable by user. Message history preserved for dispute resolution. Quick-reply templates for common responses. File sharing for documents and screenshots.	P2
Mobile App	Native iOS and Android apps optimized for standup participation. Push notifications for upcoming standups, messages, and deadlines. Quick status updates ("on track", "blocked", "need help") from mobile. Voice memo option for async standup updates when live attendance not possible. Lightweight interface focused on communication rather than full platform functionality.	P3

v1 aka Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

Minimum Viable Product Features

- **Student registration with GitHub OAuth:** Students sign up using GitHub credentials. Platform imports profile data, contribution history, and repository list to verify coding activity. Basic profile fields (name, university, graduation year) collected during onboarding.
- **Company registration with email verification:** Companies register using corporate email domain. Verification email confirms legitimate business. Basic company profile includes name, size, industry, and primary tech stack.
- **Project posting with guided templates:** Step-by-step form walks companies through project creation: title, description, required skills, duration (1-6 weeks), estimated hours,

and deliverables. Templates ensure consistent project quality and realistic scoping.

- **Project browsing with skill filters:** Students browse available projects filtered by programming languages, frameworks, duration, and company type. Search functionality and sorting by match score, deadline, or posting date.
- **Basic skill-based matching algorithm:** Rule-based matching scores students against project requirements using declared skills and GitHub language statistics. Top matches surfaced to companies with percentage fit scores.
- **Project workspace with external tool links:** Centralized project hub displaying timeline, deliverables checklist, and links to external tools (Zoom, Slack, GitHub repo, Jira board). Single location for all project resources.
- **PR submission flow:** Students submit GitHub PR URL as final deliverable. Text field captures work summary, challenges encountered, and hours spent. Platform validates PR link exists via GitHub API.
- **Rating system:** Post-project mutual ratings. Companies rate students on overall performance (5-star) plus specific competencies: code quality, communication, reliability, and collaboration. Students rate company mentorship and project clarity.
- **Completion badge generation:** Verified credential automatically generated upon successful completion. Displays company name, project title, skills used, rating received, and verification link. Downloadable as image for resumes.

Version 1 Features

All the features listed above, as well as:

- **LinkedIn OAuth integration:** Alternative signup/login via LinkedIn. Imports professional profile including education, work history, and skills. Enables one-click badge export to LinkedIn profile after project completion.
- **AI-enhanced matching:** Machine learning model incorporates past project ratings, completion rates, and hiring outcomes to improve match accuracy. Students with strong track records prioritized for competitive projects.
- **Sprint timeline visualization:** Interactive Gantt-style view showing project phases: kickoff, development sprints, PR submission, and review periods. Milestone markers with countdown timers for upcoming deadlines.
- **Email notifications for milestones:** Automated emails for key events: application status changes, project acceptance, upcoming standups, PR deadline reminders, and rating requests. Configurable frequency preferences.
- **Basic company analytics:** Dashboard showing project metrics: applications received, completion rates, average ratings given, and time-to-fill. Simple funnel visualization from posting to completion.

Version 2 Features

All the features listed above, as well as:

- **Slack workspace integration:** Connect company Slack workspace to auto-create project channels. Standup reminders posted to channel. Activity notifications (PR submitted, review complete) pushed to Slack.
- **In-platform messaging:** Direct messaging between students and mentors without exchanging personal contact info. Threaded conversations, file attachments, and read receipts. Reduces dependency on external tools.
- **Advanced analytics dashboard:** Comprehensive metrics including hiring conversion rates, cost-per-hire comparisons, candidate performance benchmarking, and ROI calculations. Exportable reports for stakeholders.
- **Student portfolio public page:** Shareable public URL showcasing completed projects, badges earned, skills demonstrated, and aggregate ratings. Professional landing page for job applications and LinkedIn profiles.

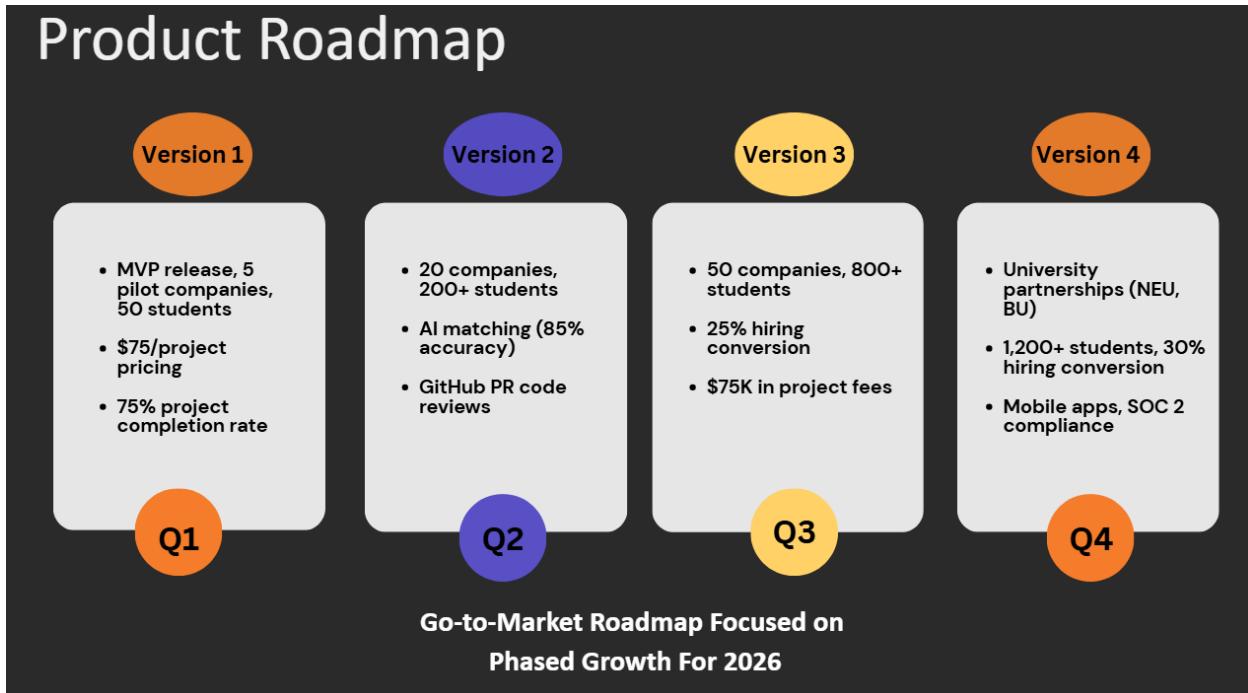
vNext

- **GitHub PR review integration:** View PR comments, code review feedback, and merge status directly within LevelUpHub. Eliminates context-switching to GitHub for companies reviewing student work.
- **Jira/Asana task sync:** Two-way sync between project workspace and company's existing project management tools. Tasks created in Jira/Asana appear in LevelUpHub; status updates sync automatically.
- **Company team collaboration:** Multiple company users can review same student. Shared evaluation notes, collaborative rating discussions, and consensus scoring before final rating submission.
- **Referral program for students:** Students earn rewards (bonus prize money, priority matching) for referring classmates who complete projects. Viral growth mechanism with tracked referral codes.
- **Premium company tiers with priority matching:** Paid tiers offering featured project listings, priority access to top-rated students, dedicated support, and advanced analytics. Tiered pricing based on hiring volume.
- **University career center dashboard:** Admin portal for career centers to track student participation, completion rates, and hiring outcomes. Aggregate reporting for university partnerships and program assessment.

v longterm

- **Mobile apps (iOS/Android):** Native mobile applications optimized for standup participation and on-the-go updates. Push notifications for upcoming standups, messages, and deadlines. Quick status updates and voice memo options for async communication when live attendance isn't possible.
- **Video introduction feature:** Students record short video introductions (60-90 seconds) showcasing personality, communication skills, and motivation. Companies review videos alongside profiles to assess culture fit before selection.
- **AI-powered project scoping assistant:** Intelligent assistant helps companies define realistic project scopes based on duration, complexity, and skill requirements. Suggests similar past projects and estimates completion likelihood based on historical data.
- **Enterprise API for HRIS integration:** RESTful API allowing large companies to integrate LevelUpHub with existing HR systems (Workday, Greenhouse, Lever). Automated candidate data transfer, hiring status sync, and reporting integration.
- **SOC 2 compliance certification:** Security audit and certification demonstrating enterprise-grade data protection practices. Required for partnerships with larger companies and universities with strict vendor requirements.
- **Success fee model:** Additional revenue stream charging companies a placement fee (percentage of first-year salary) when students are hired through the platform. Aligns platform incentives with hiring outcomes.
- **Regional expansion beyond Massachusetts:** Extend platform to additional US tech hubs including New York City, San Francisco Bay Area, Austin, and Seattle. Localized university partnerships and company outreach in each market.
- **International expansion:** Launch in UK (London) and EU markets facing similar graduate hiring challenges. Requires localization for GDPR compliance, local work authorization rules, and multi-currency prize distribution.

Roadmap / Timing



Scenarios for Service Introduction

Alpha (Q1): 5 hand-selected Boston SMB partners with existing relationships. Manual matching and high touch support. Goal: Validate workflow and gather feedback.

Beta (Q2): Expand to 20 companies via referrals and Boston tech community outreach. AI matching enabled. Goal: Test scalability and matching accuracy.

Full Launch (Q3): Open registration for Boston companies meeting size/industry criteria. Marketing push through university career centers. Goal: Prove hiring conversion metrics.

Alternatives Considered

- University-first launch (rejected: slower adoption, 6-12 month approval cycles)
- National launch (rejected: too broad, can't provide high-touch support needed for early validation)

After assembling the project team (initially composed of five founders from the DPDM program, with plans to hire two developers and a designer), the minimum viable product will be built and launched. The team will begin by defining the project scope using the feature plans herein, then specify a development timeline and KPIs.

After the MVP is launched, user experience feedback will be compiled in order to improve the design and validate the concept, and the team will start on the Version 2 features outlined herein,

assuming results from the MVP phase suggest moving forward. As Version 2 is built, the Northeastern and BU computer science student pools could be valuable resources for affordable testing, feedback, and freelance development work.

Key Milestones and Roll Out Plan

Internal demo - In the internal demo, use cases of potential customers will be built and tested. We will perform early testing (using Northeastern students as a resource) and plan product adjustments based on their early-stage feedback. The focus will be on validating core workflows: project posting, student application, sprint tracking, and PR submission flows.

Beta launch - During the beta phase we will continue to refine the customer experience for LevelUpHub users. The Northeastern LinkedIn, Facebook groups, as well as MBA Alumni network, can be utilized to build our user base. We will onboard 5 pilot companies and 50 students, targeting 10 completed projects with a 75% completion rate. Once substantial issues are resolved, we will prepare for the full launch by finalizing OAuth integrations and AI matching algorithms.

Full launch - Preparation for the full launch will require a website, PR campaign, university career center partnerships and a social media presence to build awareness, and full technical readiness (ensuring no downtime for early adopters). Target metrics include 20 active companies, 200+ students, and 40 projects per month with 15 companies posting active projects.

Scale phase - In the scale phase, we will focus on demonstrating hiring outcomes and expanding to institutional partners. Goals include reaching 50 active companies, 800+ students, achieving 25% hiring conversion rate, and collecting \$75K in project fees. Key features added will include productivity ramp metrics, verified portfolio badges, and company success dashboards.

Expansion phase - The expansion phase targets new regions and institutional partners. We will pursue Northeastern and BU formal partnerships, expand across New England, and add enterprise features like workflow customization and HRIS integration APIs. Target metrics include 75 companies, 1,200+ students, 30% hiring conversion, and 2 university partnerships live. Technical infrastructure will scale to microservices architecture with Kubernetes orchestration and SOC 2 compliance.

Metrics

Key Success Metrics

North Star Metric (Primary Indicator of Product Success)

Successful Project Matches

Definition: Number of student–company matches that lead to a completed project with a rating ≥ 4 stars.

Why: This metric captures the core value of LevelUpHub - *connecting students to meaningful, high-quality industry projects that deliver real outcomes for both sides.*

Target: 100 high-quality matches by Q3

Adoption Metrics (Are we growing?):

- Companies registered (target: 20 by Q2)
- Companies with active projects (target: 15 by Q2)
- Students registered (target: 200 by Q2)
- Students with completed profiles (target: 150 by Q2)

Engagement Metrics (Is it working?):

- Project completion rate: (completed projects / started projects) $\times 100$
 - Target: 75%
- Average time to first application: hours from project posting
 - Target: < 24 hours
- AI matching accuracy: % of matches receiving 4+ star ratings
 - Target: 85%

Outcome Metrics (Does it deliver value?):

- Hiring conversion rate: (students hired / students completed projects) $\times 100$
 - Target: 25% within 90 days of completion
- Company retention: % posting second project within 6 months
 - Target: 60%
- Student NPS: Net Promoter Score from post-project survey
 - Target: 50+

Log Data to Track

- Page views by section (project browse, applications, workspace)

- Time spent in project workspace
- GitHub PR submission timestamps
- Rating completion rates
- Feature usage (which integrations used most)

International

Current Plan: No expansion beyond Massachusetts planned for Year 1.

Rationale: Massachusetts market provides sufficient validation opportunity with concentration of universities (Northeastern, BU, MIT, Harvard, Wentworth, UMass Amherst, WPI, Worcester State) and tech companies across Boston, Cambridge, Worcester, and Springfield metros. Out-of-state expansion adds complexity without proportional value during validation phase.

Future Considerations (Year 2+):

Market	Opportunity	Challenges
NYC	Large tech market, similar university density	Higher competition, higher CAC
SF Bay Area	Tech hub, strong startup culture	Remote-first may reduce location value
UK (London)	Similar graduate hiring challenges	GDPR compliance, work authorization differences
EU	Large market, strong student populations	Multi-language support, varying regulations

Projected Costs

Role	Hourly Rate
Full Stack Engineer	\$45/hr
Backend Integration Engineer	\$50/hr
UI/UX Designer	\$35/hr
QA Tester	\$32/hr
Business Analyst	\$32/hr
Ops and Infrastructure	\$30/hr
Product Manager	\$45/hr
Marketing Specialist	\$25/hr

- **Total Monthly Estimated Cost:** \$46,040
- **Total Yearly Estimated Cost:** \$552,480

Operational Needs

Area	Lead	Responsibilities
Student Success & University Partnerships	Aikaterini Anagnostou & Krishna Sai Sumanth	Student onboarding, support, managing university relationships, and ambassador programs.
Employer Acquisition & Onboarding	Vishaal Koushic	Sourcing and onboarding SMBs, scoping pilot projects, and driving renewals.
Platform Architecture & Security	Hardik Dave	Managing integrations, CI/CD, and data security protocols.
Ongoing Needs	Harsh Raval	Community support, conflict resolution, and legal counsel for compliance.

Addressing Caveats/risks

The new risks identified are the following:

- Inconsistent or low-quality project submissions
- Code review bottleneck
- Time zone coordination
- Prize distribution complexity
- Student Matching
- Data Privacy
- Platform Reliability

Risk	Description	Possible Mitigants
Student adoption	Students may prefer traditional internships over platform projects	LevelUpHub events should lead to more job offers; the accessibility aspect (open to all versus competitive internships) has to be highlighted, and placement results should be tracked and shared.

Company security concerns	Companies hesitant to share real codebase with unvetted students due to IP risks	Firstly, different levels of project types (public dummy real data) need to be figured out; NDA protocols should be detailed; and, dual quality control (platform + company oversight) should be established.
Cold start problem/Employer Adoption	Need students to attract companies, but need projects to attract students	Before the public launch, find 10, 15 pilot companies that are already willing to post 30, 50 projects; through university partnerships, recruit the first 100 students; and, if there is a need, provide the money for the initial projects.
Quality control at scale	Students may abandon projects; companies may provide inadequate mentorship	Some of the features to be implemented are: quality checks and completion tracking powered by AI, a reputation score that limits future access, conflict resolution platform support, and progress milestones with automated check, ins.
Legal compliance	Student work classification unclear (contractor vs. employee vs. educational)	Formulate clear Terms of Service that protect the platform from employment, related liabilities; take advice from employment lawyers; set the work as an "educational competition" with prizes; and, work with universities to provide compliance guidance.
Third-party tool dependencies	Platform relies on external dev tools for repos, sprints, communication, CI/CD pipelines	Not relying on only one source. Have alternative API connections ready, integrate several tools (instead of being locked with just one); and, think about creating small, lightweight native

		versions of your most important workflows.
University partnerships	Academic institutions slow to adopt (6–12-month approval cycles)	Two, channel model: curriculum, embedded tier (demonstrates demand to universities) + direct, to, student tier (rapid adoption); use student momentum to start institutional collaborations
Competitive response	Established platforms could copy features or undercut pricing	Fast time to market, concentration on the Boston market, the formation of network effects (proprietary matching data), distinctive business alliances, and improved AI matching as a differentiator. Establish value through real-spring project opportunities
Inconsistent or low-quality project submissions	Student deliverables may vary significantly in clarity, depth, or professionalism	Provide clear project briefs and structured templates. Implement GitHub-based submission checks to ensure project completeness and version integrity to ensure employer trust.
Code review bottleneck	Company engineers delay PR reviews	SLA requirements (48-hour review). Automated reminders. Escalation to company admin.
Timezone coordination	International students struggle with standup times	Flexible scheduling. Async standup option (written updates). Clear expectations during project setup.
Prize distribution complexity	Tax implications of prize payments	Partner with payment processor handling 1099s. Clear prize rules. Limit to US-based payments initially.
Student Matching	Poor alignment and ineffective matching between student skills and employer project needs	Implement skill-tag matching to improve accuracy. Require manual approval for employers posting projects

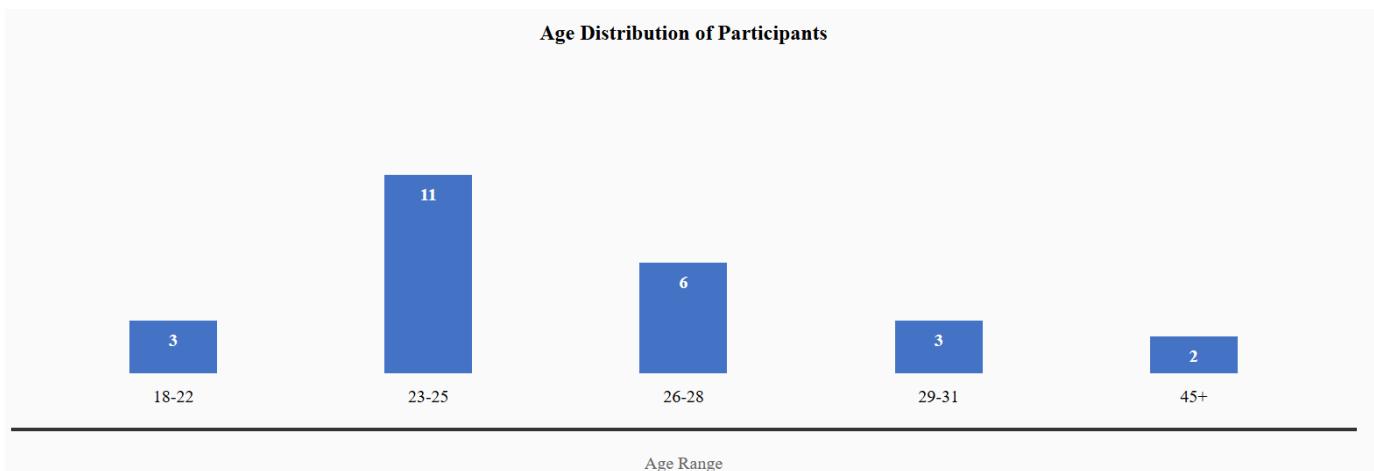
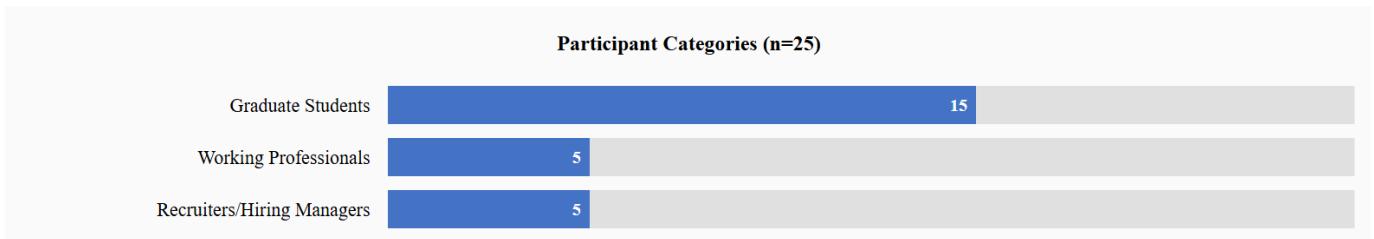
		to ensure clarity of expectations.
Data Privacy	Unauthorized access or misuse of user data introduces exposure risks	Use OAuth-secured access to authenticate users securely. Encrypt all user data to protect personal information and project submissions.
Platform Reliability	Platform outages, system instability, bugs or unreliable features may damage user trust and reduce engagement	Maintain continuous QA cycles to detect issues early. Perform active system monitoring and regular updates to ensure platform stability.

Appendix

1. Applicant Survey Results

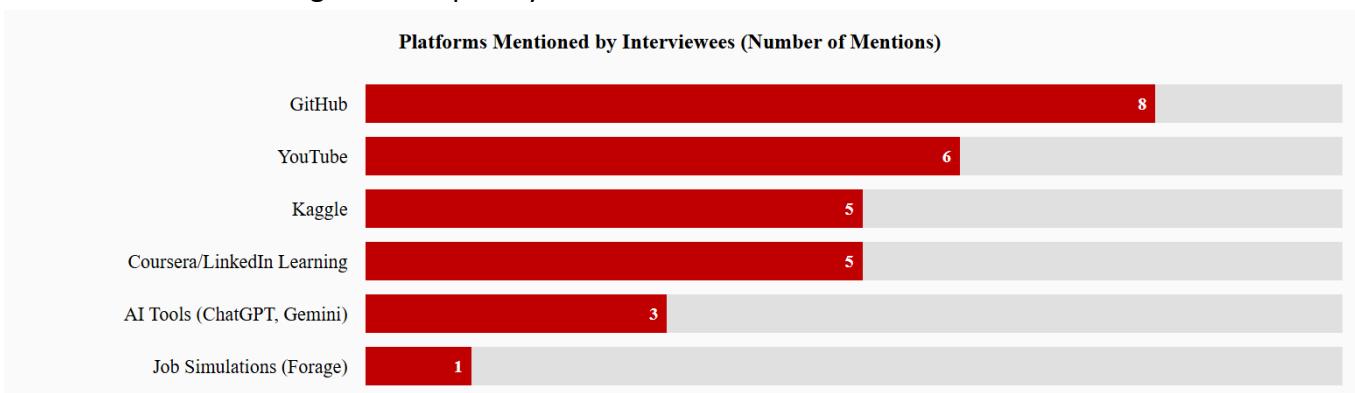
1. Interview Participant Demographics

Out of 25 interview participants, 60% were graduate students, 20% were working professionals, and 20% were recruiters or hiring managers.



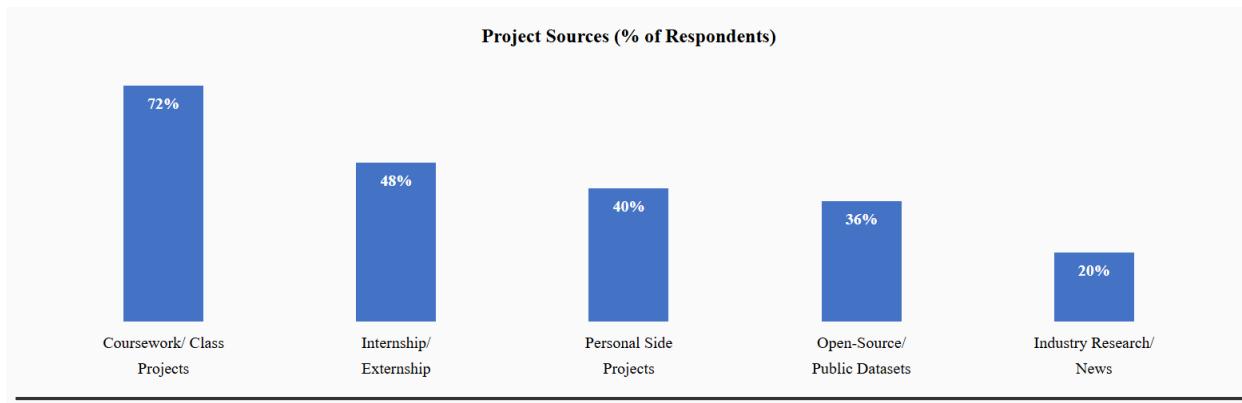
2. Platforms & Resources Used for Project Development

When asked about platforms and resources for building practical projects, participants mentioned the following most frequently:



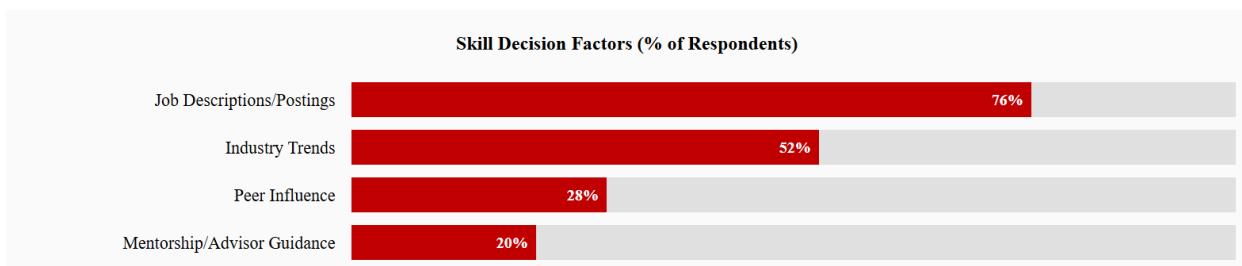
3. How Students Find Portfolio Projects

Percentage of student respondents who mentioned each project source:



4. Factors Influencing Skill Pursuit Decisions

What influences students when deciding which skills are worth pursuing:



5. Recruiter/Employer Insights

Onboarding Costs and Timeline

Metric	Finding
Time to Basic Productivity	2-3 months
Time to Full Independence	3-6 months (up to 1 year)
Average Onboarding Investment	\$15,000 - \$25,000 per hire

Challenges Recruiters Face in Assessing Candidates:

- Distinguishing theoretical knowledge from practical application ability
- Verifying who actually did the work on collaborative projects
- Filtering candidates who can discuss theory vs. those who can execute
- Assessing soft skills like communication and adaptability

6. Key Themes from Respondents

On Platform Limitations:

"Kaggle has been useful mainly for reference... it feels more like a competition versus real-life work."

— Shlok, Age 26, MS Applied Data Science, Boston University

"I went through Forage job simulations. They were fine... but most recruiters don't view them as legitimate work."

— Daren, Age 22, CS Graduate, Wentworth Institute of Technology

On Experience Value:

"Recruiters seemed to show more interest in externship experience compared to my coursework projects."

— Shlok, Age 26, MS Applied Data Science, Boston University

"My intern experience was the most impactful factor."

— Jay, Age 28, Software Engineer, ServiceNow

On Recruiter Challenges:

"The toughest part is determining who really did the work themselves."

— Anita, Age 47, Technical Recruiter, Bowdoin Group

"The main challenge for me is filtering those who can just discuss theory from those who can really execute because most of the resumes look the same."

— Victoria, Age 29, Talent Recruiter

On Project Preparation Benefits:

"By learning all the skill sets (SQL, Python, Databricks, Tableau, etc.) and implementing them in a project has really helped me in my interviews."

— Jayesh, Age 24, CPS Analytics Graduate Student

"That hands-on prep gave me the confidence to explain my projects clearly in interviews and also helped me ramp up faster once I started the job."

— Vishal, Age 23, Network Engineer, Arista

7. Recommended Pre-Onboarding Projects (from Recruiters)

Types of projects recruiters suggested for demonstrating job readiness:

Project Type	Purpose
Dashboard Building	Tests data visualization and analytical thinking
Data Cleaning with Dummy Datasets	Evaluates practical data handling skills safely
API Development with Authentication	Demonstrates technical and structural thinking
Case Studies/Take-Home Assignments	Shows problem-solving in business contexts
Cross-Functional Collaboration Projects	Assesses communication and teamwork abilities

8. Questions Asked to Students:

1. Walk me through how you typically find and complete a project for your portfolio.
2. What experiences have you had trying different platforms or resources to build practical projects and what factors influence your choice when deciding which skills are worth pursuing?
3. Describe your previous experience where you worked hard on a job preparation by learning the necessary skills, developing projects and how helpful was that to your interview/job.

9. Questions Asked to Recruiters:

1. What are the overall costs (time, money, resources) of bringing a new graduate hire to full productivity?
2. How do you identify high-potential students/candidates early and what are the major challenges you face when assessing their competency?
3. What types of projects could you share with students to work on so they can demonstrate job readiness before onboarding them, while addressing your security concerns?

2..Use Case Mock-Ups

1. Login Page: Allows users to sign in using their email and password or through their preferred social login provider to access the platform

The login page is titled "Login". It features two input fields for "Email" and "Password", a "Remember Me" checkbox, a "Login" button, and a "Forgot password?" link. Below these, a horizontal line with "OR" in the center separates the basic login from social login options. It includes three buttons for "Facebook", "Google", and "GitHub". The URL in the browser bar is https://LevelUpHub/Login.

2. Student Sign-Up Page: New student users create an account by entering basic login credentials or connecting through GitHub, Google, or LinkedIn

The sign-up page is titled "Get started" and includes the subtext "Join thousands building real-world experience". It features a section titled "Get started quickly with:" containing "GitHub", "Google", and "LinkedIn" social login buttons. Below this are fields for "Username Email*" (containing student@universityname.edu) and "Create Password*" (containing Minimum 8 characters). A "Continue >" button is at the bottom, and a link "Already have an account? [login](#)" is at the very bottom. The URL in the browser bar is https://LevelUpHub/SignIn-Student.

3. Student Profile Basics Page: Students enter personal and academic details (school, major, academic year, and graduation date) to help match them with appropriate projects.

The screenshot shows a web browser window for 'LevelUpHub' with a URL bar containing 'https://'. The main content area displays a form for entering student profile information:

- First Name *** and **Last Name*** fields, each with a text input box.
- University/College*** dropdown menu.
- Major/Program*** dropdown menu and **Graduation*** date input field with a calendar icon.
- Academic Year*** section with checkboxes for Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate, and Phd.
- Work Authorisation*** dropdown menu.
- Back** and **Continue** buttons at the bottom.

4. Skills, Interests and Availability Page: Students connect GitHub and indicate their technical skills, preferred project types and weekly availability to tailor personalized project recommendations.

A Web Page

← → ⌂ https://

 Connect GitHub Account
Required to verify coding experience Connect

Technical Skills* (minimum 3)
Type a skill and press Enter
Add atleast 3 technical skills

Project Interests*

 Frontend	 Backend
 Mobile	 Data/ML

Weekly Availability*
Hours per week

5 hrs 20 hrs 40 hrs

Back Continue

5. Optional Resume/Portfolio Page: Students can upload a resume to link to their LinkedIn/portfolio to strengthen their profile before completing the registration.

A Web Page

← → C https://

Resume (Optional)

We'll parse it to auto-fill your profile

LinkedIn (Optional)

Portfolio (Optional)

Timezone*

6. Employer Registration Page: Companies/Employers provide basic organization details (industry, website, team size, location) to set up their employer profile.

The screenshot shows a web browser window for 'LevelUpHub'. The URL bar contains 'https://'. The main content area displays a form for employer registration:

- Company Name***: An input field.
- Company Website**: An input field containing 'https://company.com'.
- Industry***: A dropdown menu.
- Engineering Team Size***: A grid of six boxes:
 - 1-10 Startup
 - 501-1000 Growing
 - 11-50 Scale-up
 - 201-500 Mid-Size
 - 501-1000 Large
 - 501-1000 Enterprise
- Headquarters Location**: An input field containing 'e.g., Boston, MA'.
- Back** and **Continue** buttons at the bottom.

7. Employer Tech Stack and Practices Page: Employers select their tech stack, collaboration tools, and preferred development practices to aid in matching with students who fit their environment.

A Web Page https://

Tech Stack*

<input type="checkbox"/> JavaScript/TypeScript	<input type="checkbox"/> Python
<input type="checkbox"/> Java	<input type="checkbox"/> React/Vue/Angular
<input type="checkbox"/> Node.js	<input type="checkbox"/> AWS/GCP/Azure
<input type="checkbox"/> iOS/Android	<input type="checkbox"/> ML/AI

Development Tools & Platforms

 GitHub	 GitLab	 GitLab
 Slack	 Azure DevOps	 Jenkins

Development Practices

<input type="checkbox"/> Agile/Scrum	<input type="checkbox"/> CI/CD
<input type="checkbox"/> Code Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> Pair Programming
<input type="checkbox"/> Test-Driven Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Microservices

[Back](#) [Continue](#)

8. Employer Hiring Needs and Fee Agreement Page: Employers outline hiring goals, onboarding challenges, and project types they will post, then confirm \$75/project platform fee to complete registration.

A Web Page

https://

Annual Engineering Hires*

Typical Onboarding Time

Biggest Hiring Challenges

Technical Skill gap Culture fit assessment

Long onboarding time Early Turnover

Finding qualified candidates Evaluating real skills

Project Types You'd Post

e.g., Frontend features, API development, bug fixes, data a

Platform Fee Agreement

LevelUpHub charges \$75 per project posted to maintain platform quality and provide student support.

I understand and agree to the \$75/project fee

Back Complete Registration

9. Student Dashboard: students view ongoing project progress, track performance and activity, earn skills badges, and receive new recommended projects to apply to.

The dashboard is titled "LevelUpHub" and shows the URL "https://LevelUpHub/student-dashboard". It features a user profile for "Alex" from "Northwestern University" with a completion status of "65% complete" and "1 week left".

Current Project: HR Portal UI change (Progress: 65%, 5 days left). Includes a "Max View" button and a "Continue Working" button.

Metrics: Portfolio Views (127), Avg Rating (4.8), and Growth (+22%).

University Leaderboard (This Month):

Rank	User	Points	Projects
1	Sara Chen (MIT)	2,450 pts	12 projects
2	You (Northwestern)	2,280 pts	10 projects
3	Mike Johnson (Stanford)	2,100 pts	9 projects
4	Emily Wang (Harvard)	1,950 pts	8 projects

Recommended for you:

- Task Energy:** Python API Performance Optimization (Advanced) - "Optimize our REST API endpoints for high performance improvement. Implement caching, query optimization, and asynchronous execution." Includes an "Apply" button.

Recent Activity:

- Code Review Passed: PR for TechCrunch authentication module received approval from 3 reviewers (2 hours ago)
- New Message from DataFlow: Engineering manager wants to discuss your API optimization approach (5 hours ago)
- Skill Badge Earned: You earned 'React Performance Expert' badge after completing 5 React projects (Yesterday)

Navigation tabs at the bottom: Dashboard (selected), Groups, Projects, Calendar, Profile.

10. Student Project Browser: Students browse available real-world projects, filter them by skills or interests, and apply directly to the ones that best match their profile.

The screenshot shows the 'Find Your Perfect Project Match' page on the LevelUpHub website. On the left, there are three sections for filtering: 'Project Type' (Frontend Development, Backend Development checked), 'Duration' (3.4 months checked), and 'Industry' (Entertainment checked). The main area displays '127 projects Found' with a dropdown set to 'Best Match'. Four projects are listed:

- Python API Performance Optimization** by Tesla Energy (Weekly 20 hrs, 92% Match, \$750, 4 weeks) - Description: Optimize our REST API endpoints for 10x performance improvement. Implement caching, query optimization, and asynchronous processing. **Apply**
- React Component Library Migration** by DataFlow Analytics (Weekly 15-20 hrs, 95% Match, \$500, 4 weeks) - Description: Join our frontend team to migrate our design system from styled-components to Tailwind CSS. You'll work in daily standups, participate in code reviews. **Apply**
- React Native Shopping Cart Feature** by MobileFirst Inc. (Weekly 25 hrs, 88% Match, \$400, 2 weeks) - Description: Build a real-time shopping cart with offline sync capabilities. Integrate with GraphQL backend and implement smooth animations. Join our mobile team. **Apply**
- Video Player Component Suite** by StreamFlow Media (Weekly 20 hrs, 82% Match, \$550, 3 weeks) - Description: Build a custom video player with HLS streaming, subtitles, and analytics integration. Create reusable React components with comprehensive documentation. **Apply**
- Kubernetes Monitoring Dashboard** by CloudScale Systems (Weekly 15 hrs, 79% Match, \$800, 6 weeks) - Description: Optimize our REST API endpoints for 10x performance improvement. Implement caching, query optimization, and asynchronous processing. **Apply**

A 'Load More Projects' button is at the bottom right.

11. Employer Talent Browser: Employers review matched student profiles, apply filters, and invite selected candidates to collaborate on projects

The screenshot shows the LevelUpHub Employer Talent Browser interface. At the top, it says "Discover Production-Ready Talent" and "Find students who have proven their skills through real projects and can contribute from Day 1". Below this is a search bar with placeholder text "Search by skills, universities, or experience..." and a "Search Project" button.

AI Smart Match

An instant match for your Read Migration, based on skills, availability, and past performance.

Filters (Clear All)

- Project Type:**
 Frontend Development
 Backend Development
 Full-Stack
 Mobile Development
- Duration:**
 1 week or less
 2-4 weeks
 1-2 months
 3-4 months
 4+ months
- Industry:**
 SaaS
 FinTech
 E-commerce
 Entertainment
 EdTech

892 Students Match

Sara Chen Available Now
MIT Computer Science

12 PROJECTS 4.9 RATING 100% COMPLETION

verified Skills: React, TypeScript, Node.js, Python, AWS

Completed TechCorp's API migration, Won "Great Code Quality" award, 20 hrs/week available

John Doe Available Now
Northeastern Information Systems

8 PROJECTS 4.8 RATING 100% COMPLETION

verified Skills: React, TypeScript, CSS, Python, GCP

2 frontend projects completed, 50% faster than average, 25 hrs/week available

Mike Johnson In Progress
Stanford Computer Science - Senior

15 PROJECTS 4.9 RATING 95% COMPLETION

verified Skills: Python, Django, Node.js, Docker, AWS

Currently with DataPine Inc., Selected "Developer of the Week", Available in 1 week

Emily Wang Available Now
UC Berkeley EECS - Senior

10 PROJECTS 4.7 RATING 90% COMPLETION

verified Skills: React, Vue, Node.js, GraphQL, MongoDB

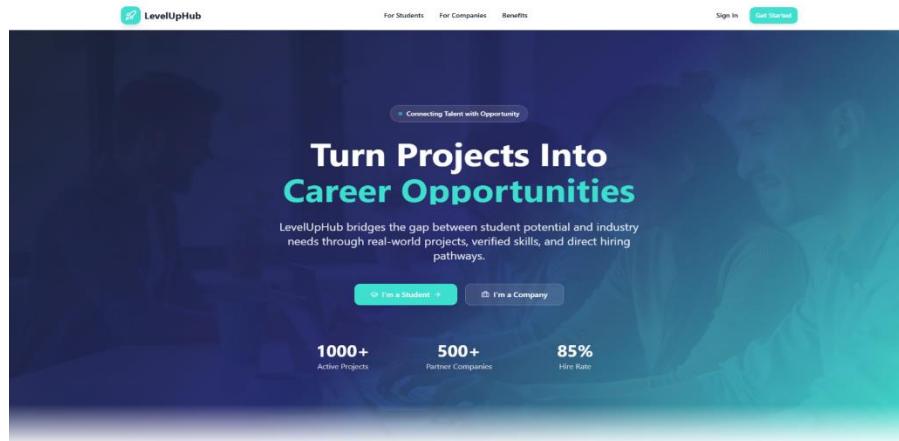
Full-stack developer, Seeking full-time for 2025, 30 hrs/week available

Buttons: View Profile, Invite

Load More Projects

3. Hi-Fidelity Product Prototype

1. Landing Page



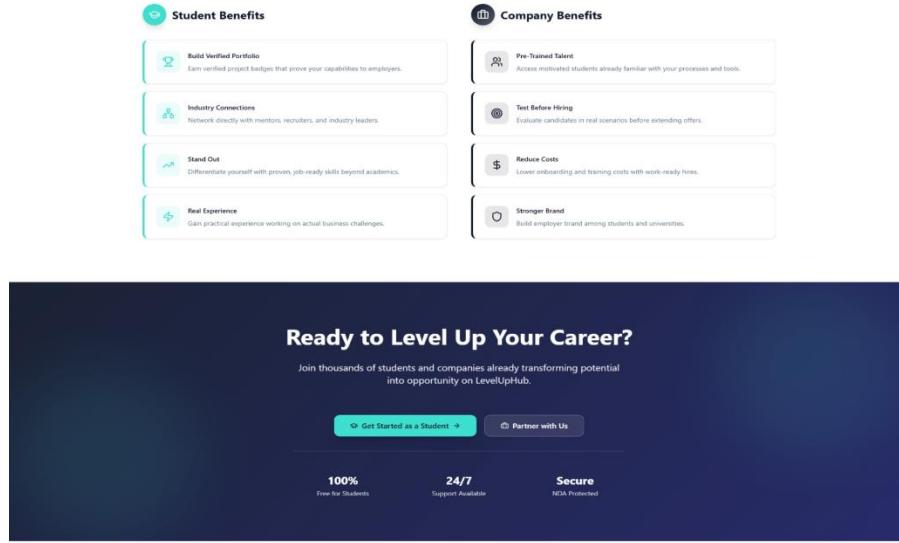
How It Works

A seamless journey from learning to earning, connecting students with their dream careers



Why Choose LevelUpHub?

Transforming how students and companies connect, collaborate, and grow together



2. Students Process Overview Page

Your Path to Career Success

Follow these 9 steps to transform your potential into opportunity. From profile creation to your dream job offer.

A. Onboarding → Profile

B. Discover → Match

C. Apply

D. Shortlist & Assessment

E. Match & Kickoff

F. Execute (Collaborate & Deliver)

G. Submit & Review

H. Feedback → Verification

I. Hiring Fast-Track

Ready to Start Your Journey?

Join thousands of students who have successfully launched their careers through LevelUpHub.

Create Your Profile

For Students: Create Projects, Create Profile, Success Stories, Resources.

For Companies: Post Project, Find Talent, Pricing, Biosphere.

Company: About Us, Contact, Privacy, Terms.

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3. Employer Process Overview Page

From Project to Perfect Hire

Follow these 7 steps to discover, evaluate, and hire pre-trained talent who already understand your workflow and culture.

A. Org Setup

Status: **ORG_CREATED**

YOUR ACTIONS

- Company profile and incident details
- User profiles and role assignments
- Legal documentation (NDAs/P agreements)
- Preferred roles and skill requirements
- ATS/HRIS system integration

PLATFORM SUPPORT

- Verify company profile
- Assign user roles (Admin, Mentor, Reviewer)
- Set up legal framework
- Configure integration endpoints
- Create employer dashboard

B. Post Project (Scoping Wizard)

Status: **DRAFT - OPEN**

YOUR ACTIONS

- Define project lead and business contact
- Export project scope and milestones
- Project constraints and requirements
- Data access and tools needed
- Difficulty level and estimated hours
- Project budget
- Membership bandwidth available
- Compensation (paid/unpaid)

PLATFORM SUPPORT

- Assess project scope and feasibility
- Check project access requirements
- Generate template Statement of Work
- Auto-tag required skills
- Flag potential risk areas
- Publish to project marketplace

C. Sourcing & Screening

Status: **OPEN - SHORTLISTING**

YOUR ACTIONS

- Review ranked candidate profiles
- Filter by verified badges and skills
- Apply filters and sort results
- Apply diversity and school filters
- Request mini-assessments
- Create shortlist

PLATFORM SUPPORT

- Rank candidates by Fit Score
- Highlight verified badges and projects
- Track application funnel
- Enable diversity metrics
- Generate assessment prompts
- Track application funnel

D. Match & Kickoff

Status: **SHORTLISTING - MATCHED - ACTIVE**

YOUR ACTIONS

- Set project offers with start dates
- Assign dedicated mentors
- Set communication preferences
- Define check-in schedule

PLATFORM SUPPORT

- Set up project workspace
- Create repository from template
- Configure access controls
- Generate milestone schedule
- Set up communication channels
- Send calendar invitations
- Initialize tracking dashboard

E. Execution Oversight

Status: **ACTIVE**

YOUR ACTIONS

- Review delivery dashboard
- Provide timely feedback on PIs
- Schedule regular check-ins
- Address blocker and questions
- Track milestone completion

PLATFORM SUPPORT

- Display Velocity and PI cadence
- Show task pass rates and quality metrics
- Generate performance charts
- Send SLA alerts for delays
- Monitor for idle periods (>72h)
- Flag scope creep
- Run data leak monitor
- Generate weekly snapshots

F. Review & Closeout

Status: **ACTIVE - UNDER_REVIEW - CLOSED**

YOUR ACTIONS

- Review final deliverable
- Score evaluation rubric
- Rate Impact and Accuracy
- Review Retention
- Evaluate Communication
- Review Ownership and Initiative

PLATFORM SUPPORT

- Auto-generate Final Report
- Publish final badge to student
- Compile retrospective insights
- Update project history
- Calculate satisfaction metrics
- Archive project artifacts

G. Hiring Pipeline

Fast track top performers to interviews and extend offers

For Students

For Companies

Benefits

Deliverables

Success Metrics

Sign In **Get Started**

Ready to Transform Your Hiring?

Join leading companies who are building stronger teams through project-based evaluation.

Post Your First Project →

LevelUpHub

Connecting student potential with industry opportunity through real-world projects.

For Students

- Browse Projects
- Create Profile
- Success Stories
- Resources

For Companies

- Post Projects
- Find Talent
- Pricing
- Enterprise

Company

- About Us
- Contact
- Privacy
- Terms

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3. Project Page

The screenshot shows the Voltus Energy Project Page. At the top, it displays "8 Active Projects" and "247 Applicants". Below this, there are four key metrics: "247 Applicants", "8 Projects", "31 Pipeline", and a "4.8 Rating". A "Post New Project" button is located at the top right. The main content area includes sections for "Active Projects" (Demand Response Dashboard and Energy Storage Optimization), "Top Candidates" (HR and Sarah Martinez), and navigation links for Dashboard, Talent, Projects, Calendar, and Account.

The screenshot shows the LevelUpHub Project Management Calendar page. It features a sidebar with options like Dashboard, Post Project, Active Projects (selected), Calendar, Talent Pool, Applications, Interviews, Analytics, Billing, and Settings. The main area shows a November 2025 calendar and a detailed view for November 2nd. The detailed view includes an event for "Team Stand-up Meeting" from 9:00 AM to 9:30 AM on the Demand Response Dashboard. Below this, a list of "All Upcoming Events" is shown, including "Project Milestone Review", "Code Review with Students", "Strategy Brainstorming", "1-on-1 with Alex (Student)", "Weekly Team Sync", "Sprint Planning Session", and "Final Deliverable Check". The Voltus Energy logo is visible in the top right corner.