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Google SWE Interview Process and Timeline?

F FXgj23
May 11

Can someone provide insights on Google interview process and typical timeline for SWE? Thank you in advance.

Google SWE Interview Software Engineering

Questions

1. How's the overall process of SWE interview at Google? Can you tell me the typical timeline?
50 words minimum.

1 Answer

J JOfb16 Google
May 12

+ Ask

1. How's the overall process of SWE interview at Google? Can you tell me the typical timeline?

The interview process starts with a recruiter reviewing a person's background to decide if it's worth interviewing them, and also what level they should be considered for. This is a process that I don't have any insight into as a SWE. (One thing to note, though, is that this is the only step where a candidate's resume really matters. Beyond this step, interviewers do theoretically have the ability to view a candidate's resume, but it's not supposed to

influence the ratings we give, so a lot of interviewers don't even bother reading it).

The next step is a phone interview. When the phone interview is scheduled, the recruiter will send the candidate a link to a shared Google doc which will be used for the interview. When the interview happens, a SWE will call the candidate on the phone, and ask them one or more algorithms questions, which the candidate should code a solution to in the Google doc. (Typically it's just one question).

The phone interview is scheduled to be 45 minutes long, and interviewers are supposed to leave around 10 minutes for the candidate to ask questions at the end, so there's usually roughly 35 minutes to solve the coding question(s). Interviewers typically like to ask questions where the optimal solution is feasible to reach within the allotted time, although there is no hard rule about this.

After the phone interview, the interviewer will submit an interview rating which consists of:

An overall rating for the candidate, which is one of: strong no hire, no hire, lean no hire, lean hire, hire, strong hire.

A short explanation for the overall rating

A 4-point rating & short explanation for each of a few categories like "coding skills", "comprehension and communication", etc. (These changed pretty recently for SWEs, and are slightly different for intern interviews, so I don't remember the exact categories).

Optionally, a 4-point rating & short explanation for more personality-related categories that measure aspects of leadership or "googleyness", which historically most interviewers leave blank. There's recently been a push to be more deliberate about evaluating these, but I'm not aware of the details yet.

A longer document with notes on how the whole interview went

The timeline for an interviewer to submit this feedback is less than 2 business days in most cases.

After a recruiter receives the feedback from the phone interview, they will decide whether or not to bring the candidate for onsite interviews. (Or, rarely, they will schedule a second phone interview. From what I understand, this mostly happens because the first interviewer screwed up somehow, and isn't really anything to worry about). I don't have insight into how long recruiters usually take at this step.

When a candidate comes for an onsite interview, a candidate will usually be scheduled for 4 interviews plus a "lunch interview". Usually two interviews, then lunch, then the last two. The only major differences between onsite and phone interviews are that onsites happen on a whiteboard, and interviewers more often use the full 45 minutes to ask the interview questions, since candidates have time to ask their lunch interviewer questions. Onsites are also somewhat more likely to have 2 (easier) questions, instead of just 1, since there is more time. The lunch interviewer does not rate the candidate, and is just there to make small talk and answer questions (though I think this might be different for different roles or something? In any case, it wouldn't be kept a secret if the candidate was being evaluated during lunch).

The onsite interviewers submit the same style of feedback as phone interviewers. After they have all submitted feedback, the recruiter will decide whether or not to refer the candidate to a hiring committee. A candidate with very little or no positive feedback usually is outright rejected, but with mixed feedback or better usually go to the hiring committee. I've never been on a hiring committee, so I don't know a lot about what happens at this point, but the high-level summary is that the committee will review all of the phone and onsite interviewers' feedback and use that to issue a hire/no hire decision. Hiring committees might also recommend a hire, but at a lower level than the candidate was evaluated for. Candidates often

don't hear back about the hiring committee decision for at least 2 weeks.

Past the point of the hiring committee recommendation, I'm not sure what the usual timeline is.

If the committee recommends a hire, then at that point the recruiter will schedule "fit calls" with managers from a few teams, to see if there's mutual interest between the candidate and that manager. (Sometimes this step may happen before the onsite interviews, instead. I don't know what determines this). Fit calls are pretty unstructured, and not really fail-able, in the sense that even if none of the teams you talk to are interested, the recruiter will likely just schedule you with more teams (this may be less true if the fit calls happen before onsite interviews). That said, getting an offer is dependent on matching with a team, so candidates should try to ask good questions and be personable.

After matching with a team, a candidate will get an offer. I don't know how the offer amount is determined.

F FXgj23 ★★★★★

This advice was well structured and helped me do well in my phone interview. Having this information before prepped me psychologically. It definitely adds a confidence factor. As far as the phone interview, there were some curve balls but I think I handled myself well. Waiting on the next phase. Let's hope I get some good news!

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