

Intern Interview Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and consistency for interviews given to software engineering internship candidates at Workiva.

Standard Interview Timeline

1 hour to determine if the candidate is properly equipped both technically and behaviorally for a successful internship with any software team at Workiva.

2 minutes to introduce the interview

1. Explain the format of the interview.
 - a. We'll start by hearing a little more about your background, engineering experiences, and what brings you to an interview with Workiva.
 - b. Second, we'll ask you a few behavioral questions to learn about your experience working in groups and on projects.
 - c. Next, we'll give you some technical exercises to gauge your abilities in writing software.
 - d. Finally, we'll conclude with some time for you to ask us questions about Workiva, the internship, or anything else you are curious about.
2. Ask if the candidate has any clarifying logistical questions.
3. Introduce yourselves and what you do before asking the candidate to reciprocate.
4. **Please also ask where the candidate is located and if they are looking for an in-person experience.** The intention here is not to eliminate remote candidates or favor in-person; rather, we want to do our best to route candidates looking for an in-person experience to teams that might be able to facilitate that. Please record intern responses in your evaluation.

5 minutes for candidate introduction and followup questions

Ask the candidate to describe their background in engineering and what makes them interested in an internship with Workiva. Interviewers might reference a provided resume as a source for followup questions.

Overall, this segment of the interview should be kept brief to make time for behavioral and technical questions.

This portion of the interview is really meant to break the ice and help the candidate open up and feel comfortable in the interview. Try to keep initial questions light and welcoming.

Potential followup questions:

- What do you know about Workiva?
- What got you interested in engineering?
- Walk me through a project you're most proud of?
- What technologies are you most comfortable with?
- What technologies are you wanting to learn?
- When you are struggling with a problem you can't get past, what do you do next?

8 minutes for a brief behavioral evaluation

The following competencies will be included in your evaluation rubrics. Please ask one (or two if time permits) questions from each category to help you gauge the candidate's perceived level of competency.

Collaboration

Intended to gauge if the candidate share resources and work together with diverse groups of people.

Questions for the Candidate:

This role is going to be working in a team with a mix of roles, areas of expertise, and experience levels. With that in mind, tell me about a time you've been in a group setting and had to help address a disagreement on a technical issue?

If you were offered and accepted a position with Workiva, how might you ask your full-time teammates to help you be successful?

Tell me about a time you had to collaborate with a teammate you didn't get along with or who had differing viewpoints. How did you learn to work together? What was the outcome of the project.

Describe a situation where you had to work with someone from a different area of expertise. What challenges or obstacles did you face? How did you overcome them?

Talk about a your role in a group project. What was your role? How did you execute that role? What did you learn from that role?

Things to Consider:

Can the candidate collaborate effectively in a team environment?

Can they disagree and commit?

Can they work productively with those with differing viewpoints or opinions to reach a successful result?

Accountability

Intended to gauge if the candidate can take ownership for their successes and failures.

Questions for the Candidate:

Tell me about a time you received negative feedback on a project. How did you respond or react to that feedback?

Describe a time you tried to accomplish something but failed. What did you do? How did you make it right?

Describe a time you made a mistake. What did you learn from it?

Things to Consider:

Does the candidate take responsibility for their success and failure?

Do they follow through on their commitments and learn from their failures?

Do they acknowledge / value the contributions of their peers / team members?

35-40 minutes for live coding exercises

The interviewers should select a few coding problems to gauge the candidate's ability to **write** software effectively. The following exercises have been categorized by relative difficulty. An easy/moderate or no code question is often appropriate to relieve stress, but **an additional more difficult question is also suggested** for a more calibrated evaluation.

Templates for all of these prompts have been added to codeinterview.io for your convenience. If you don't already have codeinterview.io access please reach out Allison Zobel.

No Coding:

- [Fibonacci](#)*
- [Binary Search](#)
- [Square Root of X](#)
- [Palindromes](#)
- [Negative Number Count](#)

Easy Questions:

- [String Reversal](#)*
- [Largest and Smallest Sum](#)
- [Merge Sorted Arrays](#)
- [Autocomplete](#)
- [Integer Digits](#)

Moderate Questions:

- [Factorials](#)*
- [Array Target Sum](#)
- [Bracket Validator](#)
- [Diagonal Sums](#)
- [Common Divisor](#)
- [Reverse Words](#)
- [Merge Intervals](#)

Hard Questions:

- [Sudoku Validator](#)*
- [Connect Four](#)

Series Questions (multiple questions that build on each other):

- [Temperature Tracker](#)*
- [Route Problems](#)

** Recommended problems from each category*

The final evaluation rubric will include the following competencies you will need to consider:

Implementation Quality

Can the candidate produce high quality code (e.g. well organized, maintainable, and easy to understand)?

Algorithms and Data Structures

Can the candidate apply appropriate and performant algorithms and data structures to a given software problem?

Problem Solving

Can the candidate reason through an unfamiliar or unclear software problem and produce a solution, asking clarifying questions where appropriate?

Values Feedback

Does the candidate respond well to direction and feedback?

5-10 minutes for candidate questions

Encourage the candidate to ask some questions about the internship experience. This might be about Workiva, the internship program, your teams, etc. Ideally a candidate should demonstrate a sincere interest in what we do and how they might contribute and learn through an internship.

Immediately After

1. Fill out the evaluation form in Workday including the competency [rubrics](#).
 - a. Please note, interns aren't expected to score as highly as full-time or prolific engineers. Scores from 1-3 are understood to be typical for an intern candidate.
 2. **Consider what the candidate could do to improve in future interviews.** Please include helpful feedback in your written evaluation.
 3. The final Workday evaluation ratings are defined below. **Please evaluate the candidate for the whole of Workiva, not the particulars of your individual team.** If the candidate is generally a good fit for other teams but not for your own specifically please detail why in the written description but rate them appropriately for the whole of Workiva at the given role level.
- **3 - Recommend**, the candidate meets expectations for the role and would be a culture add. Want to hire for my own team and/or another team at Workiva.
 - **2 - Recommend with Reservations**, the candidate may meet expectations for the role and may be a culture add, but the interviewer identified an area that the hiring team should evaluate further. Please describe the reservation in your evaluation. The candidate may be a good addition to your team and/or another team after further evaluation.
 - **1 - Do Not Recommend**, the candidate does not meet expectations for the role and/or is not a culture add. They would NOT be a good addition to Workiva at the given role level.