

2023
SOFTWARE
ENGINEERING
EDITION

The Ultimate Resume and Interview Guide

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FORAGE

If you're currently in your first, second or third year of university and planning on a career in software engineering, you should be thinking about applying for an internship to build your experience, expand your network and explore different career options before leaving school. It's important to start preparing for the interviews well before applications open – ideally around 3 months prior. This preparation should include updating your resume and LinkedIn profile, developing an understanding of the stages of the application process, practicing responses to common behavioral and technical interview questions and perhaps most importantly, networking with people in the industry.

This document provides a comprehensive guide for university students seeking to land an internship. It covers essential information for creating an impressive application, including tips for crafting a winning resume and LinkedIn profile. Additionally, it includes advice on networking, interviewing, and following up after an interview. By following this guide, you will increase your chances of landing an internship.

How should I prioritize my time to increase my chances of landing an internship?

Here are the actions you should take, in order:

1. Build a strong resume
2. Complete at least one program on the Forage platform
3. Add the program completion to "Certifications" on your resume and LinkedIn profile
4. Review list of jobs on [Forage tracker](#) and on company careers pages
5. Submit applications to Forage employer partners as soon as jobs are posted
6. Reach out to people working in the teams you want to be hired into and start building a relationship with them by asking for career advice or other questions about the industry
7. Leverage your experience completing Forage programs in your interviews

Building a strong resume

Your resume is a marketing tool to impress recruiters and get you through to the interview stages. Forage has put together a resume template here: [Forage's resume template](#). Make sure you review each piece of advice carefully and compare the template with your own resume.

What are recruiters looking for when they review your resume?

Recruiters want to verify that you're capable of learning new skills. As you're early in your career, you aren't expected to know everything. The main way recruiters verify your ability to learn is through your university GPA, awards, certifications and relevant coursework. Recruiters want to confirm that you're a results-oriented employee. They want to hire someone that is focused on achieving quantifiable results that drive the business forward. The main way recruiters verify this is through the quality of the bullet points in your professional experience section and through your projects and certifications (including Forage programs).

Formatting

1. Keep the length of your resume to one page only (check there is no blank space or notes on page 2 before saving)
2. Send your resume as a PDF. Applicant Tracking Systems that companies use to store candidate information find it easier to read a simple template in PDF format. Do not send your resume in doc, docx, png or jpeg format. This will also ensure your formatting is preserved. Save down the file as "Full Name – Resume"
3. Run your resume through a spelling and grammar checker
4. Ensure 'Education' is at the top of your resume. For recruiters, this is the most important section as your education and grades demonstrate your ability to learn new skills
5. Avoid using templates with columns or fancy fonts – keep to something simple and choose one font
6. Keep formatting consistent – use one font throughout the document and either use periods at the end of all of your sentences or none at all

Content

1. Remember your resume is a marketing tool, not an exhaustive list of tasks you have ever done in every job. You can leave off jobs or projects that would be irrelevant for a recruiter in your desired industry (e.g. part-time jobs you took in university to pay the bills)
2. At the top of your resume, include your LinkedIn profile. There is no need to include your residential address (at most you could include your city and state) or an 'objective' statement as this takes up valuable space
3. Under your 'Education' section, include your GPA, your expected graduation month and year and any 'relevant coursework' i.e. subjects you have completed. Remove your high school information
4. Under your 'Professional Experience' section, ensure the bullet points include data points or metrics, and talk about the impact you had on the business or on the team – don't just list responsibilities or tasks. Add how long you have stayed in a particular role e.g. February 2020 to June 2022. Tailor this section to the job by including keywords from the position you are applying for. Only include experience in this section where you signed an employment contract (not examples where you simply 'participated' or you are a 'member'). Do not include Forage programs in this section. Use past tense for roles you have completed and present tense for roles where you are still working
5. Under your 'Skills' section, there is no need to include 'soft skills' or 'interpersonal skills'; include only 'technical skills' and list them in order of proficiency. Avoid including Microsoft Office as this is assumed knowledge (the exception being Excel if you are going for a role in financial services, but include your level of proficiency ideally as measured by a certification).
6. Add any examples of leadership experience, e.g. if you have been part of a society or group on campus, a treasurer or a president of a club, or volunteered with an organization or within your community
7. No need to include references/referees – the recruiter will request this from you if required

- For international students, make it clear which type of visa you have so the recruiter doesn't need to reach out to ask you

How to leverage completion of a Forage program

After completing a program on the Forage platform, there are several key actions you should take to maximize the benefits of your accomplishment, including adding the program to your resume and LinkedIn profile, sharing your completion achievement as a post on LinkedIn, including the certificate in your job applications and using your experience and learnings in an interview.

Add your Forage program to your resume under Certifications

Sara Roberts - Resume

CONTACT DETAILS

EDUCATION

WORK EXPERIENCE

CERTIFICATIONS

JPMorgan Software Engineering Virtual Experience Program on Forage - August 2022
Used Perspective data visualization software and Python to monitor stock price trends and create trading strategies.

Use this template:

[Insert Company Name] Virtual Experience Program on Forage - [Month and Year of Completion]
[Insert detail on what you did and the skills you learned]

Example:

BCG Strategy Consulting Virtual Experience Program on Forage - July 2022
Conducted market research, consumer needs analysis and data analysis to create a client recommendation.

Do not include the program under 'Work Experience' or 'Employment history'

Add your Forage program to your LinkedIn profile under "Licences and Certifications"

Select 'Add licenses & certifications'

Add to profile

Core

Recommended

Completing these sections will increase your credibility and give you access to more opportunities

Add featured

Add licenses & certifications

Add courses

Add recommendations

Do not include the program under 'Experience' or 'Employment history'

Complete the fields using your certificate - make sure you reference "on Forage"!

Add license or certification

* Includes required

Name*
[Ex: Microsoft certified network associate security] **Name of the program + on Forage**

Issuing organization*
[Ex: Microsoft] **Organization that created the program**

☒ This credential does not expire

Issue date
Month Year

Expiration date
Month Year

Credential ID
Insert your Unique Enrolment Verification Code*

Credential URL
Insert your Certificate URL

*Verification code can be found in the fine print at the bottom of your certificate

Show your work!

Licenses & certifications

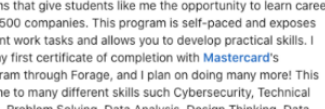
Agile Virtual Experience Participant on Forage
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
Issued May 2022 - No Expiration Date
Show credential

Marketing Virtual Experience Participant on Forage
Lyft
Issued Mar 2022 - No Expiration Date
Show credential

Share your Forage program completion achievement on your LinkedIn profile

Mia Barbieri • 2nd
Student at University of Georgia - Terry College of Busi...

The **University of Georgia** has presented me with the amazing opportunity of **Forage**. Forage is a platform that provides students with virtual work experience programs that give students like me the opportunity to learn career skills from Fortune 500 companies. This program is self-paced and exposes you to many different work tasks and allows you to develop practical skills. I recently received my first certificate of completion with **Mastercard's** Cybersecurity program through Forage, and I plan on doing many more! This program exposed me to many different skills such as Cybersecurity, Technical Security awareness, Problem Solving, Data Analysis, Design Thinking, Data Presentation and more!




Mike Power and 36 others

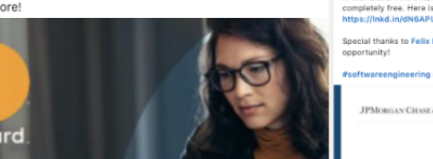
9 comments · 1 repos

Share on LinkedIn

Recruiters love to see and engage with students who've completed their programs on LinkedIn

Tag @theforage and the company





Add your Forage program certificates to your job applications

Some application process flows for internship and full time roles have an 'additional attachments' section where you can upload PDF files in support of your application. This is a chance for you to attach evidence of your Forage program completion by uploading the certificate you received. This will draw the recruiter's attention to the extra effort you've put in to understand the type of work you expect to undertake as an entry-level software engineer.

Speak about the program in interviews

Typically during an interview, a hiring manager will ask you “why are you interested in this role?” or “why are you interested in working at [company name]?” This is the perfect opportunity to mention the fact you’ve invested 5–6 hours completing the software engineering program on the Forage platform, where you experienced the day in the life of a junior software engineer. You could say something like:

"I recently participated in [company name's] software engineering virtual experience program on the Forage platform and it was incredibly useful to understand what it might be like to be part of an engineering team at [company name], to [x, y and z] in a realistic context. My experience completing this program was validation for me that I really enjoy the typical work of a software engineer and would love to apply what I've learned in your team."

Recruiters look for candidates who...	How Forage has prepared you...	What you should say...
Show an interest in their company	You've spent several hours learning about how the company works - this shows you are interested!	I really enjoyed learning more about [company name]'s culture through the [program name]. These aspects stood out to me [insert what you liked].
Understand the job you are applying for	You've experienced a day on the job. You now know what the job involves and what you'll be doing.	I've done [program name] and I understand that as a [job name] I'll be working on [insert relevant tasks] and this excites me because [insert reason].

Are motivated to build your skills

You've completed real work tasks and gained relevant skills for the job - make it easy for recruiters to see this!

I've done [program name] and I've now practiced [these skills] which I know are important to succeed as a [job name] at your company.



Explainer on the interview process

Software engineering summer internship applications in the US often follow this process:

- Online application
- Online technical assessment (via HackerRank, HireVue or another provider)
- Live interview(s) covering behavioral and technical questions

It's often this process that provides candidates with an opportunity to showcase their technical skills and their passion for the company and role for which they applied.

Online application:

Tips for your online application have been covered in your exclusive content unlocked after completing task 1. As a reminder:

- Many companies open applications for software engineering internships open or near 1 August. Be sure to apply as close to the opening date as possible because applications are reviewed on a rolling basis (that means, the earlier you apply, the better your chances of landing a role).
- Some companies will ask you to select a preferred work location or multiple preferred locations in priority order. Selecting emerging tech hubs like Delaware, Florida, Ohio or Texas as your first preference can increase your chances of securing a role as they may be less competitive.
- Ensure you meet the eligibility requirements for the role prior to applying. Examples of common eligibility criteria include an expected graduation date between December 2024 and June 2026, meeting a minimum GPA threshold, computer science or related major, authorization to work in the United States without sponsorship. If you don't meet the eligibility requirements, you may find that your application is auto-rejected by a company's applicant tracking system.
- For insights on JPMorgan's application process specifically, have a look at their '[How We Hire](#)' page.

Technical assessment:

- After you complete and submit your application, it will go through an automated review to check that you are eligible for the role. If you are eligible, you may receive an invitation to complete an online technical assessment.
- You will generally have a deadline to undertake your technical assessment and once you start, you will usually have to complete the assessment in one sitting.
- Your application will not be reviewed by a recruiter until you have completed your technical assessment, so it is helpful if you complete it shortly after receiving it.
- The most common technical assessment is called HackerRank. To prepare for HackerRank, you should complete problems on LeetCode. You can search on LeetCode for example problems used by various

different companies (for example JPMorgan).

- It is common to feel unprepared for a technical assessment even after you have completed multiple practice problems on [LeetCode](#). This is normal, try not to worry about it. Successful candidates advised they aimed to solve a minimum of 1-2 problems per day, and up to 5 problems per day during the 2-4 weeks leading up to applications opening.
- Your aim should be to become:
 - Competent at completing 'Easy' level problems on LeetCode with any edge cases solved
 - Competent at attempting 'Medium' level problems on LeetCode. It is not a major issue if some edge cases remain unsolved
 - Familiar at completing LeetCode problems under time pressure.
- Enroll in the [Girls Who Code Technical Interview Prep program](#).

Live interview:

- After you submit your technical assessment, your application is sent to a recruiter (usually at your first preference location) for review. Unfortunately there is no specific timeline for your application to be reviewed because it differs based on the company you applied for, the role, the location and the timing of when you applied. So don't stress if you hear back quickly about some applications and slowly for others.
- If your application moves beyond this stage, you will typically receive an invitation to a live interview. Depending on the company, there may be multiple rounds of live interviews or you may have back to back live interviews on a single day. Some companies will do these interviews in-person and others will conduct the interviews over Zoom.
- This interview stage involves a mixture of behavioral questions and technical questions that give you an opportunity to demonstrate coding skills in real time (data structures and algorithms are common topics for the technical component and you may be asked questions about your personal projects).
 - When asked to code, don't jump straight into coding. First, explain your approach to the interviewer and then commence coding.
- Companies are looking for candidates that demonstrate knowledge of what they do in the tech space and are seeking candidates that show an interest in this. Talking about your participation in their virtual experience program (and specific parts that you enjoyed) is an amazing way to stand out.
- Across almost all companies, interviewers for both technical and behavioral sections tend to be very kind and make the environment as welcoming and inviting as possible. No need to stress, just try your best and to enjoy yourself.

How to prepare the content for your 'story'

- You will be asked to tell your story (likely multiple times) throughout the interview process. Make sure you prepare it! You may be asked this in various ways, e.g. talk me through your resume or tell me about yourself. This is an exceptional opportunity to make yourself memorable and build a connection with the interviewer.
- Introduce yourself (full name, what school you go to and where that school is, where you're from, what you're studying, anything else you'd like to add that might be interesting to the interviewer)
- If you know who you'll be interviewing with, make sure you research them! Check out their LinkedIn profile (where did they go to school? What kind of posts do they write or comment on? What are they following that you might have in common?) This is a great way to show interest in your interviewer and show you have thought about something to connect with them on.
- What sparked your interest in software engineering?
- How did you validate your interest in software engineering?
 - The best way to validate how you built your interest is through the software engineering programs on Forage. Go into detail about the tasks you completed, what tools you used, what were the key

insights or learnings you gained from doing it, how did it influence your decision to pursue software engineering?

- Why do you want to work for this particular company and team?
 - Be specific about why you are drawn to that organization in particular. This would be a great time to bring up alumni or other connections you've spoken to that have advocated for their firm.

Offer:

After completing the interview stage, you will be notified whether you have received an offer or not. Again, there is unfortunately no standard timeline, some may find out within a few days, whereas other candidates may find out weeks later

Other tips for preparing for the interview process

At the end of every interview you will be asked if you have any questions for the interviewer. Don't say 'no'. Prepare a list of ~8 questions in advance, just in case the interviewer answers your top 4 questions throughout the interview. Ask thoughtful questions that you genuinely want the answers to. Avoid asking very generic questions like "What is a day in the life at [company]"? Try to add your own spin to questions and potentially ask them about their strategic direction on an initiative, or a project they may have worked on that they would find interesting to tell you about. Make sure you write these questions down in your notepad in case you forget them towards the end of the interview, and jot down the responses after the interview so you have some content to individualize the thank you note.

Send a follow-up thank you email to your interviewers and include how and why you're excited you are for the opportunity to show your continued interest after the event. The content isn't vital but do send it shortly after the interview, i.e. within 1-2 days. Hiring decisions can be made quickly so you don't want to leave it too late.

Make sure you practice the responses to your questions with your school friends or your family in a 'mock interview' environment. You want your responses to sound natural and conversational, not like you are reading off a memorized script.

This might go without saying but for in-person events, make sure you are on time to all of the networking events and interviews, and confirm the dress code before attending if you are unsure.



Networking

Why network?

- Networking gives you a far better chance that your job applications will be looked at and you won't be ghosted.

How to network?

- Message thoughtfully on LinkedIn using your experience on Forage to break the ice. If you don't receive a response, find someone else to contact. Attend events if they're available, if not request 10 minute calls.

When to network?

- Start now! Campus recruiters start networking with students from their Freshman year. So whatever stage you're at, this should be your top priority.

We've put together a [Google Slides deck](#) and a [Loom video](#) on networking best practices!

Final words

Be patient and try not to stress! There is no hard and fast rule around how long the interview process will take for any one company. The timelines change year to year, week-to-week depending on internal deadlines and the macro environment. The best thing you can do in the early stages is to apply early, apply to a broad range of roles, apply to a large volume of companies, and consider which location you're applying to. The next best thing you can do is to arrive at the interviews having prepared sufficiently. We hope this guide has helped you build confidence before the software engineering interview process and helped you to understand exactly how you can best leverage your experience on Forage.

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