

Karat Backend Engineering Interview Guide



Welcome! We're excited to have you in the Engineering interview process with Atlassian.

To ensure you are adequately prepared for your Karat interview, we have partnered with Karat to build this guide with all you need to know for this interview.

Who is Karat?

Karat is an independent company that leads technical interviews. Their mission is to unlock opportunity in tech. Over the last decade, Karat has built products and services that further their mission to make technical interviews fair, predictable, and enjoyable.

Your Karat interview will be conducted by a Karat certified Interview Engineer – a professional software developer (just like you!). They have a lot of experience leading technical interviews, so they're well-practiced at helping you show your best skills and are up to date with Atlassian's expectations and best practices.

Scheduling your interview

What happens before my interview?

The first step is scheduling your Karat interview. Karat offers a lot of flexibility in scheduling. You can schedule your interview at a time that works for you – whether it be over the weekend, in the

evening, or over lunch. Use the link in your Karat invitation to access the online scheduling system and let Karat know what time works best for you. Alternatively, your Atlassian recruiter can also help schedule your Karat interview.

What if I need an adjustment/accommodation for the interview process?

We have you covered. As you're scheduling your Karat interview, please be sure to tick this box in your scheduling form and Karat will reach out to discuss this with you. To adhere to privacy requirements, Atlassian and Karat will not share information about accommodation or adjustments requests. Please also share this request with atlassian-accomodations@atlassian.com and let your Atlassian recruiter know.

What happens next?

Once your interview is scheduled, we recommend taking some time preparing for the interview. If you have any questions around the process or requirements for the Karat interview, please reach out to your Atlassian recruiter for support.

Prepping your setup

Do I need to do anything specific with my equipment or space before the interview?

Yes. For the interview, you'll want to make sure you have:

EQUIPMENT

- ☐ A **computer** for the interview, not a phone or tablet. We'll expect you to be able to type things as part of the interview, and having a **real keyboard** is essential.
- ☐ **Headphones**, which will make it easier for you and the interviewer to hear each other without echo or background noise.
- ☐ It's also ideal to have a computer with a **camera** so your interviewer can see you. Being able to read your facial expressions helps our interview engineers know when you might need help so we can support you during the interview.

If you don't have all this equipment that's okay, but at a minimum you will need a computer, and be set up to communicate your skills with the interviewer.

LOCATION

- **Take the interview from a quiet place** where you can work without interruptions.
- Ideally, **choose a place where you're comfortable** with limited distractions.
- Consider resources like **libraries and community centers**, which often have rooms you can reserve (free of charge) for a short period of time, if finding a quiet place is hard.

Should my preparations include any practice questions?

If you haven't solved interview-style questions lately, we recommend warming up those skills. There are many online sites where you can practice short technical questions. You don't need to solve super-hard problems, or memorize which algorithms to use in specific situations. The best practice problems are ones where you don't know the answer immediately, but can figure out how to get started within 5-10 minutes of thinking about it.

HOT TIP: Karat has an online coding environment, Karat Studio, which you can use to practice some of the coding questions. This is the same environment you will be using for your interview so we highly recommend trying this out before your interview. It will give you a good sense of what to expect on the day. Karat will share a link to the interview dashboard once your interview is scheduled - which connects you to Karat Studio.

What should I do right before the interview?

Once the interview time is close, prepare your space! Set up a little bit early, so you're not in a rush at the start time. We recommend:

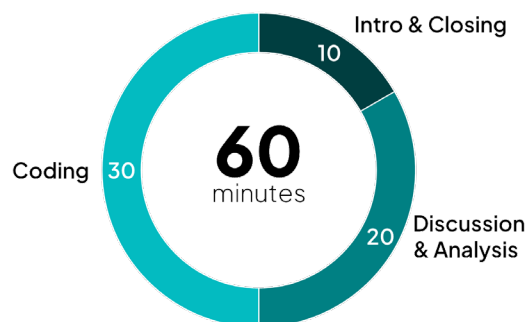
- ☐ Ensuring your computer is plugged in or its battery has enough of a charge to run a video call for the entire interview.
- ☐ Closing any programs that might push notifications to your computer and create distractions during the interview.
- ☐ Making sure your tools are set up so you can communicate clearly.
- ☐ Silencing your phone and reminding anyone who might interrupt you that you'll be busy.
- ☐ Using a restroom if you need to and having some water close by. You'll be talking a lot and it can dry out your throat.

Interviewing with Karat

What will my interview be like?

Your interview will be an hour long, and will have three major sections:

- A brief introduction
- 20 minutes of discussion questions
- 30 minutes of programming questions



Every Karat interview is unique. While this is what we have planned for you, there's a small chance that your interview will follow a slightly different format if this isn't your first time interviewing with Karat. Karat does this to make sure they don't ask you the same questions a second time.

What is the introduction like?

Your introduction will be brief and will comprise these steps:

- You'll join Karat's video call and shared coding environment from your browser at the scheduled time.
- You and your Karat interviewer will both introduce yourselves briefly, and they'll check in with you to make sure you're ready to begin.
- Your Karat interviewer will be there throughout the process to help and answer any questions you have.

If you are using assistive technology, or have requested support from a sign language interpreter, please make sure that your Karat interviewer is aware.

How will the discussion questions work?

After the introduction, you'll spend about ten minutes on some questions about system design. These will be short discussions about scenarios that are intended to help you show some of the breadth of your knowledge.

We're looking for brief explanations that demonstrate your understanding of the topics we're discussing. We might ask about a scenario like:

- We are building a system that will process log data from a large number of services running in multiple data centers. These logs will be streamed to a central server, and when certain messages appear in the log, it will send a message to another service to alert our developers that something is wrong. What concerns do you have with this system?

These questions do not have a single right answer; there are usually multiple factors in each scenario that are noteworthy, and your Karat interviewer will have a brief conversation with you about your thoughts.

What if I don't know the answers or can't understand the question?

It's okay to skip some of them. You don't need to get every single question right to advance in the interview process - your answers help us understand which topics you have more experience with. If you don't understand the question it's ok to ask the Karat interviewer to reframe or rephrase it.

Your Karat interviewer may also ask you to move on quickly in this section. Since we're looking at breadth instead of depth here, it's more important to give basic answers to many questions than to go deep on any particular question.

How will the programming questions work?

You'll spend the last part of the interview working through one or more coding scenarios in Karat Studio, Karat's shared coding environment. **These scenarios are designed to let you show your capabilities without needing a lot of up-front information about any specific domain.** Karat has multiple problems, so you can expect to spend the full duration of your interview writing code to solve them. If you finish a problem, Karat will give you another so you can showcase more skills.

When it comes to coding scenarios, what should I focus on?

During the coding scenarios, Karat will ask you to start by thinking about how you plan to solve the problem, and then explaining it to your Karat interviewer. This lets the Karat interviewer make sure they have explained the problem properly and understand your plan for how your code will solve it.

When it comes to writing and running code, what should I expect?

Once you've described your approach, you'll write and run code in Karat's shared editor to implement your solution. Your Karat interviewer will provide some test cases as part of the problem description. You can run your code as often as you want, and use the coding environment to help you debug. Once you have a working solution, your Karat interviewer will also ask you to describe its time and space complexity.

Evaluating performance

When I write and run code, what are you evaluating?

Karat has spent a ton of time calibrating with Atlassian Engineers to ensure our expectations are aligned. Based on alignment discussions, Karat will be looking for working code that solves the problem your Karat interviewer gave you. **The most important thing Karat will be evaluating is how successfully your code solves the problem.**

For each problem, Karat will also be looking at how you:

- Explain an approach that can solve the problem
- Build out the parts of that approach
- Debug your code to get it working

As there are multiple problems that you will have to go through in the interview, there is a chance that the interview will end in an unfinished state. This is OK! You will be credited to the point until where the interview ends.

Do you evaluate anything else?

Karat will also evaluate:

- How efficient your code is
- How well-organized and readable it is
- How comfortable you are with the coding language you choose

None of these are as important as how completely you solved the problem. For that reason, we recommend focusing on building working code, and making decisions about efficiency and clarity based on what helps you solve the question. If two options both seem equally easy, choose the more efficient or more readable one!

How do I know if I succeeded?

As the Karat interview has multiple sections where we are assessing a number of skills required to be successful in the role, Karat can't give you a definite answer of how much you need to do during the interview in order to advance in the hiring process.

Karat will ask you more questions than the minimum needed to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your skills. For that reason, it is important to note that **doing well in one section will help your scoring, if you find another section challenging**. For example, if you are unfamiliar with most of the topics covered in the discussion questions, but write good solutions to the coding problems, the overall result might be good enough for you to move forward in the hiring process.

What's next

What happens after the interview?

Once you have completed the Karat interview, you can take a break. Karat will send us detailed feedback with an overall score of your interview. From there, your Atlassian recruiter will be in touch to discuss next steps.

What if I would like to request a redo?

It's possible that you didn't do your best in the interview the first time and want a second shot. If you have concerns about your performance or score from your original interview, please reach out to your Atlassian recruiter to discuss if a redo is an option for you.

FINAL HELPFUL TIPS

While the Karat interview is conducted by Karat Interviewers, please note that Atlassian Engineers have calibrated closely with Karat to ensure alignment in expectations of the interview. We encourage you to reach out to your Atlassian recruiter to ask any questions around the interview process so you are well prepared.

Best of luck!



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