

Session 3 (1/29/26):

Intros:

Recent grad from ISU (B.S. in Computer Engineering, minor in business). Network engineer internship, other working experience.

1 or 2 of your favorite classes so far and why? My favorite class was SW development when I made an application. Got to see the whole process and see the result.

Behavioral Interview:

Question 1: Leadership & Initiative (taking ownership, stepping up, driving results without being asked):

✔ What to Look For

- Identifies problems proactively, doesn't wait to be told
- Takes ownership of outcomes, not just tasks
- Influences others without formal authority
- Shows clear "I did" vs "we did" — knows their specific contribution
- Demonstrates follow-through to measurable results
- Volunteers for stretch assignments or ambiguous situations

🚩 Red Flags

- Waits for permission or explicit instructions
- Takes credit for team efforts ("we" without clarifying their role)
- Confuses activity with leadership (busy ≠ leading)
- Can't articulate the impact of their initiative
- Blames others when initiative fails
- Leadership examples are all about authority, not influence

"Tell me about a time you had to make a decision without all the information you needed."

"Describe a situation where you had to lead a team or project. What was your approach?"

S/T: Senior design project had to create a pressure sensor patch. Would be seated onto a wheel chair. This would make sure they don't get pressure sores. I was assigned to be the team leader (AKA the scrum master). The main role was to keep the project moving forward, and checking in with the progress with each team member. I also had to run agile sprints, and communicate with the clients. I had to revise and submit all the progress reports.

A: Actions were the things mentioned in the role above.

R: Finished the project. Performed well, scored well in the class as well. The device did what it was supposed to do. We did send it out to the client. Was sent out to the company.

LL: I asked the question. Importance of communicating well with the clients. First time working with the outside client. I had to represent the team, was the face of the team talking to the clients.

BT: I asked the question. I would have rather taken more technical responsibilities in addition to my leadership role. (this could be a dangerous answer, because you were the team lead.)

Client Feedback: Not prepared as much as I wanted.

My Feedback: I can see you looking at other monitor and checking other information. You were moving around a lot (seemed nervous) as I was reading the question/doing the intro. I would want to have a bulleted list and not spend so much time searching. You might have included actions in the S/T. Never had any communication with the client/company afterward, should follow up.

3 levels of an answer:

- 1 – did what was asked, answers the question, answers the competency
- 2 – level 1 + above and beyond what was asked (process improvement afterwards, broader impact than intended or super effort/overcame big obstacles to get it done)
- 3 – level 2 + became a spokesperson for this thing, shared with other teams/groups/departments/trained others/taught others/applied elsewhere.

Question 2: Problem Solving & Technical Judgement (analytical thinking, debugging approach, technical decision-making):

✓ What to Look For

- Structured approach: breaks down complex problems systematically
- Considers multiple solutions before deciding
- Articulates trade-offs clearly (cost, time, quality, risk)
- Uses data/evidence to support decisions
- Knows when to ask for help vs. push through
- Learns from debugging experiences—doesn't repeat mistakes

🚩 Red Flags

- Jumps to solutions without understanding the problem
- Can't explain their reasoning or thought process
- "Trial and error" without hypothesis-driven approach
- Overcomplicates simple problems or oversimplifies complex ones
- Blames tools, time, or others for technical failures
- No mention of validation or testing decisions

"Walk me through how you approached a complex technical problem."

S/T: From full stack development at KAU. Position I got when I was speaking with university staff. Lecture/course planning was very inefficient. They were using excel and hand written paper (time metric?). I proposed to them to build a website to make the process easy and save them a lot of time. Started in June 2025, target was to complete before August 2025, so they could use it before semester started. I was also collaborating with another developer to create it. Was being created from scratch.

Main difficult part I was going through was that throughout building, database kept changing over and over, and getting errors. We were trying to figure out things as we go, which kept creating bugs and we had to keep solving them. We had to do a migration every time we have to change the database. Everyone who would pull the code from git would have to run migration as well.

A:

R: Delivered the scheduling system reduced time from 2 weeks to a couple of hours. They could schedule without conflicts, in one place, one website. We sent out beta testing for them to use, and provide feedback so we could provide continuous improvements.

LL: Learned typescript from scratch and applied it to this production environment. Also gained hands on experience with authentication, authorization, and securing multi user login through 1 database, and making sure everyone only got access to what they're supposed to.

BT: We had a lot of trouble with the database, I was using MySQL, but I would have explored other kinds of databases to see if we could have avoided the use for migrations. Have not looked at other databases. (do this before you interview, even if you just ask Grok)

Why did you choose this migration solution specifically? Because that's the only solution that I knew of. From my SQL experience, this is what I knew. I did explore other possibilities and it reinforced my belief that migrations were the best.

Still in use? Still supporting and there are some small continuous improvements. Need to create a landing page and a video tutorial to teach people how to use it (english/arabic).

Client Feedback:

My Feedback:

Question 3: Teamwork & Collaboration (working well with others, cross-functional skills, and supporting teammates):

✔ What to Look For

- Shares credit genuinely—highlights teammates' contributions
- Adapts communication style for different audiences
- Seeks to understand before being understood (active listening)
- Puts team success above personal recognition
- Offers help proactively, not just when asked
- Handles conflict constructively—focuses on solutions, not blame

🚩 Red Flags

- "I" language only—no acknowledgment of team
- Speaks negatively about previous teammates/managers
- Avoids conflict entirely OR escalates unnecessarily
- Takes a "not my job" attitude
- Can't give specific examples of helping others
- Blames team dynamics for personal failures

"Describe a conflict you had with a teammate. How did you resolve it?"

S/T:

A:

R:

LL:

BT:

Client Feedback:

My Feedback:

Question 4: Communication & Influence (explaining complex ideas, persuading stakeholders, and presenting):

✔ What to Look For

- Adjusts message complexity for the audience
- Uses concrete examples, analogies, or visuals
- Listens and addresses objections thoughtfully
- Shows preparation and structure in presentations
- Delivers difficult messages with empathy and clarity
- Persuades through logic AND relationship-building

🚩 Red Flags

- Uses jargon when explaining to non-experts
- Rambles without clear structure or point
- Gets defensive when challenged
- Avoids difficult conversations entirely
- Relies on authority/position rather than persuasion
- Can't give examples of adapting communication style

"Tell me about a time you had to explain something technical to a non-technical audience."

S/T:

A:

R:

LL: