INTERVIEW STRATEGY

Your GPA Is **Lower** Than You'd Like

Here's how to mitigate it honestly.

Let's Be Honest

🚫 **Some companies have hard cutoffs**
No amount of projects or networking will change that.

✅ **But many companies don't**
And for those, you have options.

🎯 **The goal: mitigation, not miracles**
Show your GPA doesn't tell your full story.

Tell the Transition Story

- 📚 College requires completely new study methods
- 🏠 Living independently for the first time
- ⏰ No one forcing you to go to class
- 🔄 Early GPA damage is hard to recover from

LaunchToLead

Show Your Growth Trajectory
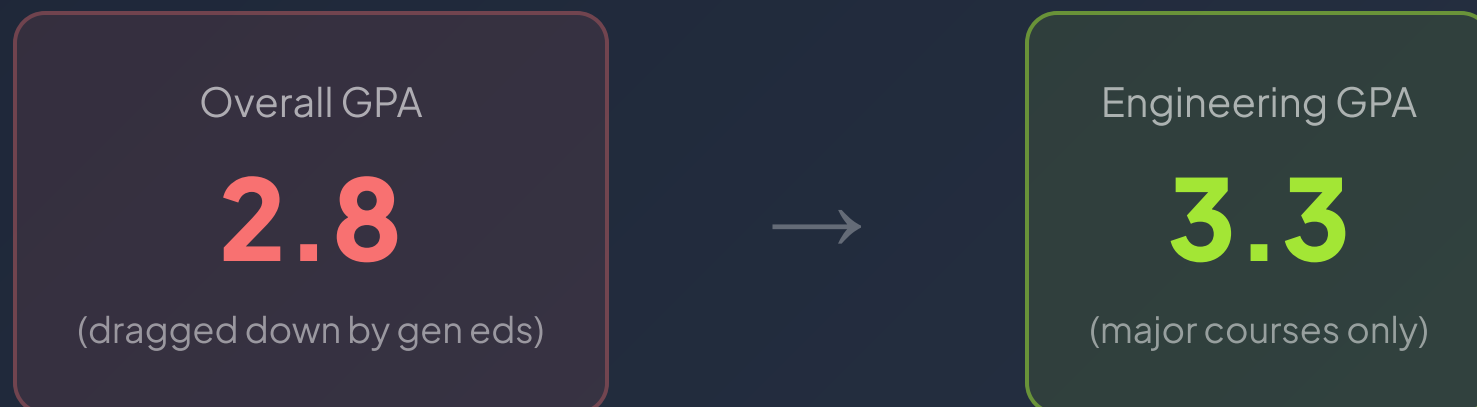
Freshman Year

2.1 → 📈 → Senior Year **3.5**

Cumulative: 2.7 → But last 4 semesters: **3.4 average**

"My cumulative is 2.7, but my last two years averaged 3.4 as I learned how to study effectively."

Use Your Core Engineering GPA

Overall GPA

2.8

(dragged down by gen eds)

$\longrightarrow$

Engineering GPA

3.3

(major courses only)

"Engineering GPA: 3.3/4.0" is 100% legitimate on your resume.

STRATEGY #3

Highlight Specific Wins

🅰 A's in tough courses: Thermo, Controls, Machine Design

🏆 High scores on capstone or senior design projects

📊 Lab reports that exceeded expectations

🎓 Dean's List for specific semesters

Show Independent Impact

Projects outside of class demonstrate skills your transcript doesn't capture:

🔧

Personal Projects

Built because you wanted to, not for a grade

🌐

Open Source

Contributions that got merged

🏅

Hackathons

48–hour builds that worked

💡

Problem Solving

Things you built to solve real problems

LaunchToLead

Get in Front of Humans

ATS systems filter automatically. Humans can see potential.

🤝 **Employee Referrals**
Often bypass GPA filters entirely

🎪 **Career Fairs**
Face-to-face impressions matter more than numbers

💬 **LinkedIn Outreach**
Message engineers directly with genuine interest

If They Ask About Your GPA…

"My freshman year was a struggle adjusting to college-level work and living on my own for the first time.

Once I figured out how to study effectively, my last four semesters averaged a 3.4.

I also earned A's in [Thermodynamics / Controls] and built a [personal project] outside of class."

1. Own it briefly → 2. Show growth → 3. Redirect to wins

The Bottom Line

✓ Tell the story of how you **learned and improved**

✓ Use your **core engineering GPA** if it's higher

✓ Highlight **specific wins**—tough classes, great projects

✓ Get in front of **humans**, not just ATS bots

Will this work every time? No.
But it works more often than you'd think.

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