Getting your first co-op

By Padena, 4th year Software Engineering

About Me!

- 4A Software Engineering
- Co-ops: TD, AMD, Bell, Microsoft, Meta
- I like reading & singing & watching shows :D

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Disclaimer: I'll be focusing on software co-ops.

01
Resume

What do I put on my resume?

Courses
Languages and projects from your courses

Extracurriculars
Leadership, research, clubs, design teams

Projects
Hackathons, side projects

Tips

Get your resume reviewed
- **Student societies** will have resume reviews depending on which faculty/program you're in (MathSoc, EngSoc, SESoc)
- **WiCS** holds resume reviews in partnership with companies
- Reach out to **upper years**: "Hi, I'm X, I'm starting to apply for my first co-op, and I would appreciate any feedback on my resume"

Formatting
- Keep your resume to **1 page**
- Have a dedicated section for **technical skills** (coding languages & tools)
- Have impact focused bullet points in **XYZ format**: "Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y] by doing [Z]"

Jake Ryan

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EDUCATION

Southwestern University — Georgetown, TX
Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science, Minor in Business — Aug. 2018 – May 2021

Blinn College — Bryan, TX
Associate's in Liberal Arts — Aug. 2014 – May 2018

EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Research Assistant — June 2020 – Present
Texas A&M University — College Station, TX
- Developed a REST API using FastAPI and PostgreSQL to store data from learning management systems
- Developed a full-stack web application using Flask, React, PostgreSQL and Docker to analyze GitHub data
- Explored ways to visualize GitHub collaboration in a classroom setting

Information Technology Support Specialist — Sep. 2018 – Present
Southwestern University — Georgetown, TX
- Communicate with managers to set up campus computers used on campus
- Assess and troubleshoot computer problems brought by students, faculty and staff
- Maintain upkeep of computers, classroom equipment, and 200 printers across campus

Artificial Intelligence Research Assistant — May 2019 – July 2019
Southwestern University — Georgetown, TX
- Explored methods to generate video game dungeons based off of *The Legend of Zelda*
- Developed a game in Java to test the generated dungeons
- Contributed 50K+ lines of code to an established codebase via Git
- Conducted a human subject study to determine which video game dungeon generation technique is enjoyable
- Wrote an 8-page paper and gave multiple presentations on-campus
- Presented virtually to the World Conference on Computational Intelligence

PROJECTS

Gitlytics | *Python, Flask, React, PostgreSQL, Docker* — June 2020 – Present
- Developed a full-stack web application using with Flask serving a REST API with React as the frontend
- Implemented GitHub OAuth to get data from user's repositories
- Visualized GitHub data to show collaboration
- Used Celery and Redis for asynchronous tasks

Simple Paintball | *Spigot API, Java, Maven, TravisCI, Git* — May 2018 – May 2020
- Developed a Minecraft server plugin to entertain kids during free time for a previous job
- Published plugin to websites gaining 2K+ downloads and an average 4.5/5-star review
- Implemented continuous delivery using TravisCI to build the plugin upon new a release
- Collaborated with Minecraft server administrators to suggest features and get feedback about the plugin

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: Java, Python, C/C++, SQL (Postgres), JavaScript, HTML/CSS, R
Frameworks: React, Node.js, Flask, JUnit, WordPress, Material-UI, FastAPI
Developer Tools: Git, Docker, TravisCI, Google Cloud Platform, VS Code, Visual Studio, PyCharm, IntelliJ, Eclipse
Libraries: pandas, NumPy, Matplotlib

02
Applying

Where to apply?

WaterlooWorks

- 2 job boards: full cycle service + employee student direct
- Rank/match: employers rank students & students rank them back

LinkedIn

Set countrywide job alerts
- Keyword: "summer 2026 intern" country: "canada"
- Note: winter term may be called spring by some companies

GitHub Lists

Collection of internship listings
https://github.com/SimplifyJobs/Summer2026-Internships

Tips on applying

- Start early

- Expect to be rejected especially when applying externally. Do not count rejections and do not take them personally

- You may need to apply to 100s of jobs to land interviews. Don't be too picky and dedicate a good amount of time to applying

- Prioritize learning opportunities over superficial factors like prestige or pay
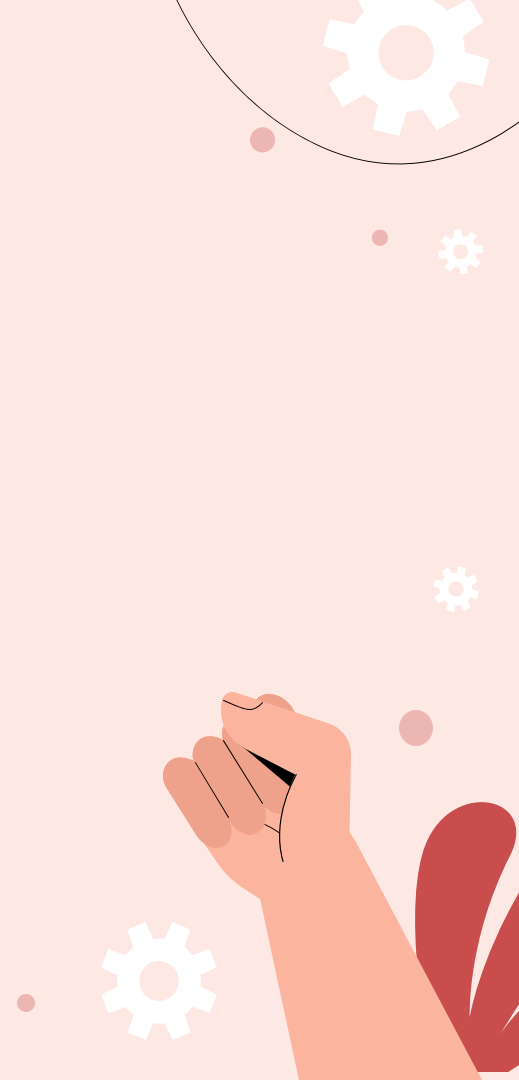
03
Connecting

Connecting with employers

Club/society Sponsors

Groups like WiCS have several events with company representatives and recruiters.

Employer Info Sessions

Sign up through WaterlooWorks and attend events to meet employers

Hackathons

Hackathons will typically have a sponsor bay with recruiters and sometimes special application links

Rewriting the Code

Great community & resource to find events, workshops, learn about opportunities

LinkedIn

Put yourself out there and companies may reach out!
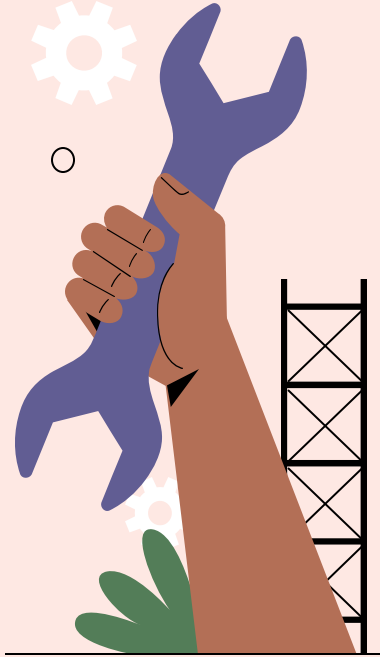
04

Interview Prep

Interviews

Technical

Common types

Online Assessments

Live coding problem
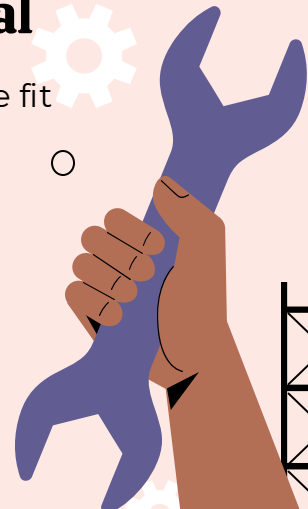
Trivia/knowledge based

Less common

Take home project

System design

Non-technical

Behavioural & culture fit

mastering technical interviews!

Learn the basics

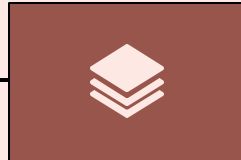Get used to the syntax of some language (preferably less wordy ones like Python)

Data Structures & Algorithms

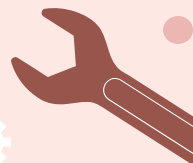Learn more over time, pay attention to relevant courses

Practice

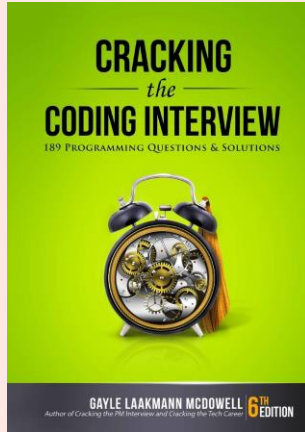Start with easy questions to get used to problem solving

Communicate

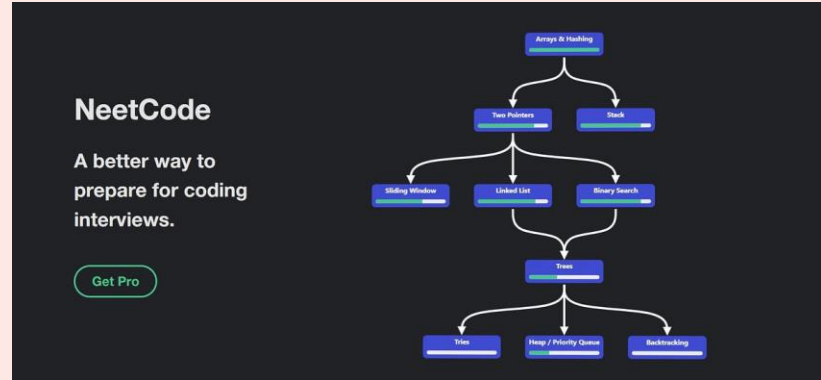Mock interviews; practice talking out loud through problems

Learning Resources

Read!

Watch!

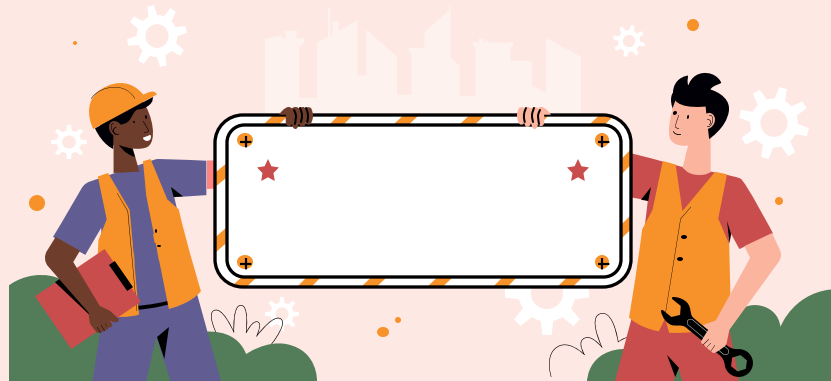https://neetcode.io/

Practice Resources

LeetCode

Can find company specific questions & study plans

Grind75

Customize leetcode study plan based on schedule, difficulty, and topics

Peers

Do mock interviews with friends, upper years, others in your network

Notes on behaviourals

- Do NOT undersell yourself, be confident in your skills

- Keep a document of your general answer to typical questions and review before each interview

  - Tell me about yourself

  - Tell me about a project / technical challenge

- Research the company and role well. Ask meaningful questions. Learn from the interviewer's personal experience at the company.

- Know your resume well, you may be asked to elaborate on skills or points you have
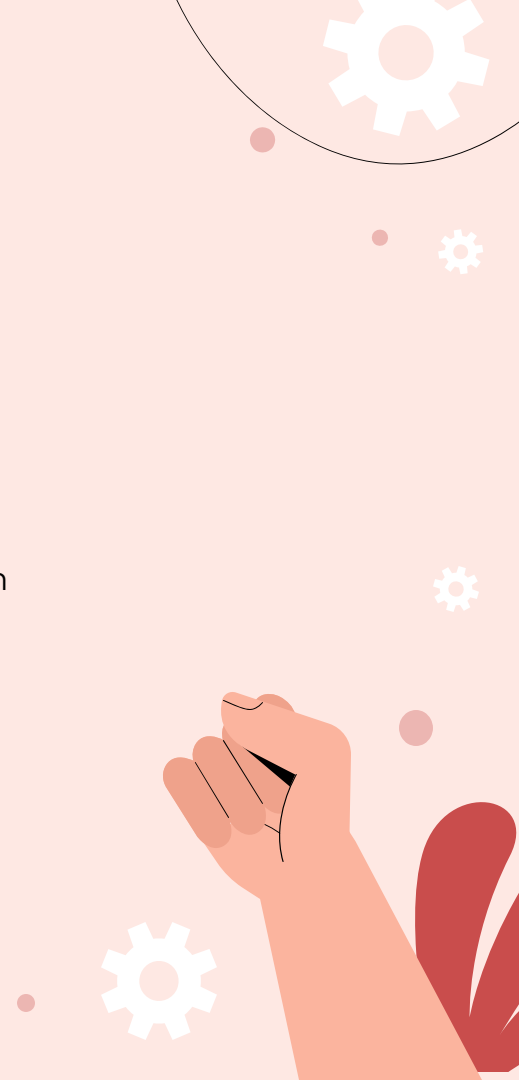
Thanks!

Feel free to reach out with any questions, for resume feedback, mock interview resources, or general advice: https://linkedin.com/in/padena-rasouli