

# *The Domer's Guide to Interviews*

## Computer Science Edition - dcurrie, wbadart

As a computer scientist, there are typically three types of interviews one will encounter: behavioral, case, and technical. Traditionally, a computer science major will encounter technical interviews and behavioral interviews on their way to securing an interview. If they are pursuing an internship in technical consulting, however, they can also expect case interviews in which they have to solve a typical consulting case.

Typically, case interviews and behavioral interviews are quite manageable and do not require formal preparation in the same sense that a successful technical interview is predicated on an understanding of one's coursework. In order to rock a behavioral interview, a candidate must have a firm understanding of the company and its culture, as well as several good reasons why they are a good fit for the company. Case interviews require more preparation than this, but there is no need to take a formal course in case interviewing. There are countless resources one can access via Google. One very solid resource is Victor Cheng's [CaseInterview.com](http://CaseInterview.com). In this free video crash course, he guides the viewer through the different types of cases and gives a fail proof method for solving them.



In my experience, non-tech companies (e.g. consulting firms) will administer 2-3 behavioral interviews to assess your technical fluency and get an idea of what team you'd fit in best with. This is your chance to brag about your resume, show off those side projects, nerd out a bit if your interview(s) ask you to get technical. These interviews are largely conversational, so you won't necessarily need to practice, but you can still prepare. Before you have an interview like this, prepare a couple stories about previous work and/or projects that showcase your problem solving skills and lessons learned. [Cracking the Coding Interview](#) provides an excellent template for prepping these mini narratives.

Technical interviews are a different beast. Preparing for a tech interview is more like studying for a test (I mean, it pretty much is a test). Don't be discouraged, these interviews can be really fun. I'm going to recommend [Cracking the Coding Interview](#) here again, particularly the first few chapters. Chapter 3 has great tips for the general prep process (it's a great section to re-read the night before an interview). The next few chapters walk you through the computer science basics you'll be quizzed on during the interview.

The other resource I highly recommend to prep for a technical interview is the practice interview. Throughout the school year, the career center puts on mock interview sessions. If you sign up for one, you'll be paired up with an alumnus at a major tech company and you'll get a 30 minute call with them to do a practice interview and get a little feedback. Furthermore, the computer science department often puts on a similar program, though in these sessions, you'll be interviewing one on one, in person with an upperclassman who's gone through the tech interview process numerous times before. There are tons of resources at your disposal: use them!



There are countless resources to help a student prepare for interviews and their future professional lives. Two phenomenal groups that help those interested in consulting are SIBC and the Consulting Consortium. Both of these allow students to work with real companies as they work through either a mock or a real case. Eventually students travel to the company and give a presentation of their work. This is not only a wonderful opportunity for networking, but it is also very representative of a consultant's typical work. Therefore, it gives a student a chance to see if they really enjoy consulting. Further, these cases are a wonderful chance to boost one's resume and work in the mindset of the consultant for an extended period of time.

The Career Center is also a great resource. Using the advisors there as well as GoIrish greatly simplifies the job search process. These professionals are literally paid to help you find a job, so every student should meet with them.

As far as books, there truly are countless options and any resource that gives advice on interviewing is extremely helpful. Previously we mentioned the immense utility of [CaseInterview.com](http://CaseInterview.com) and [Cracking the Code Interview](#)



Hackathons! Every year, undergrads (usually computer science upperclassmen) partner with AT&T and others (like the Intel Watson team this past year) to throw IrishHACKS, the annual Notre Dame hackathon. If you're not familiar with hackathons, they're basically weekend-long sprints to take a cool, innovative app from idea to prototype. Freshman and sophomore year, I participated as a hacker, and in junior year, I was a mentor (someone who floated around the room offering help and ideas to any team that asked).

In addition to IrishHACKS, computer club, four horsemen, and other organizations send coalitions of domers to other major midwestern hackathons, like Hack Illinois. Hackathons are an outstanding way to get experience making apps/websites/services for real users (as opposed to arbitrary class projects and assignments).

SIBC is a great way to network with Domers who currently work for large firms throughout the nation. Further, there are countless dinner or luncheon events that students can sign up for to meet with executives at companies. These are great chances to network. Thirdly, the Career Fairs in the Fall and Spring are both great chances to meet prospective employers and put a face to their name.

Besides these events and other ones, it is important to maintain networking relationships via emails. Do not be annoying, but make sure to follow up. An email every couple weeks or every month about opportunities or questions regarding the company is a great way to show professional interest and impress potential employers.

If you're going for an internship, you won't really have a lot of leverage in negotiating your wage or salary. The only time I came close to negotiating my pay for an internship was when the company I wanted to work for offered less than a company I was lukewarm on. Basically, other offers are going to be your biggest strategic advantage at the negotiating table.

At the end of the day, don't stress: your interviewer is just a person too. Have fun and good luck!