

Principal Backend Engineer Interview Guide



Welcome! We're excited to have you interview with our team.

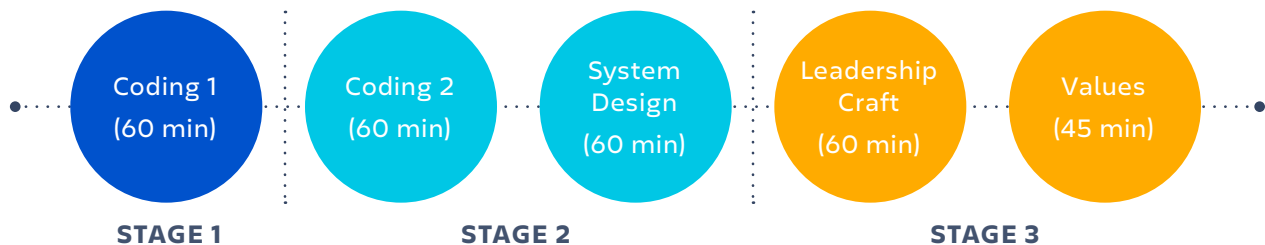
For your upcoming interviews, we want to ensure you're adequately prepared for each step of the process.

Our engineering process consists of the following:

- Two coding interviews
- One system design interview
- One leadership craft interview
- One values interview

To fully understand which stage of the interview process you're in and what's expected, we recommend thoroughly reviewing each email your coordinator sends.

Our interview process is broken up into three stages. This means your interviews will be scheduled in three stages to progress you effectively.



Following the completion of each stage, your Recruiter will be in touch and let you know whether you will be progressing to the next round of interviews.

Interview details and preparation

CODING INTERVIEWS

These interviews requires you to write and execute code. Be prepared with an IDE set up on your computer that is suitable for your chosen language – the one you are most familiar and comfortable with. We recommend having a development environment and your favourite testing framework ready, so that you can start coding right away.

You will screen share this with your interviewer. If you are not able to have an IDE set up on your own computer, let us know prior to the start of the interview and we will have a CodePair environment ready for you.

Each coding interview is capped at 60 minutes and is structured to help demonstrate coding skills, code quality, and conceptual thinking. Atlassian also assesses for adaptability in an ever-changing environment, navigating blockers, and communication style.

How to prepare:

- If you need a CodePair environment setup please reach out to your CX Coordinator prior to the interview and they will arrange this for you in advance
- Use an IDE and computer you are familiar with to make the most efficient use of your time in the interview.
- Please download Zoom prior to your interview as you will utilize this to share screens during the interview, whether this is onsite or remote.
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- If your interview is a Zoom interview, find a quiet and comfortable space with consistent internet access. Log on ~10 minutes early to ensure all systems and hardware are working correctly.
- Using a debugger is welcome and encouraged.

Communication

Demonstrating how you think and approach problem solving is equally important as the end result. Please communicate with your interviewer throughout each session, so they understand your thought process.

Testing

We want to see best practice and testing is crucial to success in the code task. If you haven't tested in a while, we strongly recommend brushing up on testing, in particular the TDD approach.

Problem solving

Because problems are rarely limited to a single solution, please showcase all possible solutions and why the approach you selected is the best fit. Highlighting other solutions helps the interviewer understand your thought process.

SYSTEM DESIGN INTERVIEW

The system design portion of the interview is 60 minutes. The purpose of the system design interview is for you to demonstrate technical depth, breadth, and proficiency through designing a solution to an established problem. Your interviewer will be looking at your problem-solving thought process, decision making and operational considerations such as performance and reliability.

How to prepare:

Seek first to understand

You'll be asked to design a solution for a technical problem on a whiteboard or paper – starting with fundamentals and then building in complexity. Ask any clarifying questions upfront to ensure you understand the problem and then continue to communicate with your interviewer as you progress towards a solution. If your interview is via Zoom, ensure you have a paper and pen available for the technical problem, alternatively, you can use the whiteboard function in Zoom. Another option is to screen share an editor or drawing tool of your choice.

Communication

We want to understand your approach to problem-solving and how you draw from past experiences when designing something new. Keep the customer in mind and how your solution might perform and scale.

LEADERSHIP CRAFT INTERVIEW

The Leadership Craft Interview is a 60-minute interview with one of our engineering managers that will focus on a project (or a few projects) where you demonstrated engineering leadership. Our questions will be scenario-based, so please come prepared with examples that demonstrate your experience across one or more projects that you have been a part of or have led.

How to prepare:

Think about more complex project(s) that best represent the scope of work where you have had measurable organizational impact, achieved meaningful outcomes and demonstrated your leadership qualities. These projects don't always have to be your best or most recent ones.

This will be a structured interview where we will ask questions that will dig into three primary areas:

- Your ability to **own and drive outcomes** across large scale engineering project/s
- The **leadership and direction** you bring to project teams
- How you create **positive organizational impact** through knowledge sharing and improved ways of working

This interview is not intended to go deep on technical architecture, however, be prepared to explain why you made architectural choices and how you involved your teams.

In addition, we're keen to understand how you collaborate with your teams and want to hear from you what you're passionate about, and where you're wanting to take your career.

VALUES INTERVIEW

The Values interview is 45 minutes and includes a set of behavioural interview questions, aimed at assessing how your thought process and actions are aligned with our core set of company values.

How to prepare:

We recommend reviewing Atlassian's [values](#) and use them as the foundation of your preparation. Come prepared with relevant examples/stories of how you've demonstrated living these values in your current or previous roles and projects.



Be the change you seek

When have you advocated to push for change? What did you learn from this process? What was the outcome?



Play, as a team

How do you work with other people? How have you helped make a team/individual more successful if they weren't performing well? Have you ever had to put the team's goals above personal ambitions?



Don't #@!% the customer

How is your mentality 'user-centred'? How have you put the customer first? What trade-off(s) did you make to do this?



Open company, no bullsh*t

What's your approach when having difficult conversations? How have you resolved conflict in the past? Have you adapted your communication style to achieve a better outcome in a potentially negative situation?



Build with heart and balance

How do you think about prioritisation and decision making? What are examples when you or the team have missed the mark? How did you react? How did you approach fixing things?

FINAL HELPFUL TIPS:

Research:

As with any interview, showcasing you've done some research will help you and the interviewer get the most out of your time together. We suggest reviewing your interviewers on LinkedIn and researching Atlassian to get a good feel of our **culture and values**.

Questions:

Your interviewer will provide you with adequate time to ask questions so we recommend coming prepared with questions/topics you'd like to learn more about. If for any reason there is a question you don't get the opportunity to ask during the interview, please reach out to your recruiter or coordinator who can assist you.

As a side note, we run Global Shipt days and our engineers love to talk about these – feel free to watch a video on them **here**.

Finally, we want to ensure you have the very best possible candidate experience with us at Atlassian, so please let us know if you need any accommodations or adjustments for your interview.

Best of luck!



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