HOW TO TEST DEVELOPERS' SKILLS BEFORE HIRING

GUIDE & CHEAT SHEET

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WHAT WE DO AND WHY WE DO IT

Working out whether developers have the right technical skills (or not) is one of HR's biggest challenges.

At CodinGame, we're on a mission to help companies all over the world streamline their tech recruitment process. We're changing the way companies source, screen, and retain tech talent with our powerful, all-in-one tech hiring platform: CodinGame for Work. We're paving the way for skill-based hiring.

WARNER BROS.   DASSAULT SYSTEMES   Nasdaq   Nintendo   UBISOFT   AMADEUS   SOCIETE GENERALE

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS GUIDE

We've put together this guide to help you out. Here are five tried-and-tested ways to check out a developer's skills, remove the guesswork and avoid mis-hires. We've even gone and put a cheat sheet together for you - just in case you want to keep a checklist handy (head to page 19).

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1

DIG INTO THEIR PROGRAMMER PORTFOLIO

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◆ **Programmer portfolios come in many shapes and sizes**, ranging from single web pages, for those seeking their first junior role, to complex software projects, for senior and managerial applicants.

◆ Portfolios are useful in the recruitment process as **they show candidates' development level, their career goals, the skills they're focused on acquiring, etc.**

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◆ **Look out for how a candidate describes the context of each project in his or her portfolio:** how did they integrate with other libraries or tools? Did they collaborate with other developers? Have they worked on lots of unfinished projects?

◆ **Good communication skills will always pay off** in a developer role and a portfolio is also a good way to validate a candidate's ability to explain and present things.

◆ Going over a candidate's portfolio, digging into some projects, **can serve as a basis for dialogue and help you (or your tech team) construct bespoke questions** to use during the hiring process.

2

TAKE A LOOK AT THEIR GITHUB ACCOUNT

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GitHub is an invaluable resource when hiring developers. GitHub serves as an online showroom where developers work on open source projects and contribute to others' initiatives. For developers, **a quality GitHub repository is proof that they can write readable and maintainable code** that other people can easily understand and/or jump into.

Head to GitHub to see samples of a developer's work (mobile apps, games, scripts, plugins, etc.) and **get a feel for how they voluntarily collaborate with peers in collective projects.**

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As a recruiter, before diving into this code (or asking your tech team to do so),
you can start by checking simple metrics such as:

◆ The number of followers (a sign of reputation)

◆ The date the candidate joined GitHub (a useful "most recently joined" filter exists in the sorting options in the top right-hand corner) as an indication of their experience level

◆ Relevant keywords for languages and technologies

◆ The number of repositories your candidate has (projects they're authoring and what they're forking from others) to get a feel for the type of projects they're involved in

◆ Their public activity shown through the number of contributions made to the site (pull requests, commits, issues opened)

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3

ASK ABOUT THEIR USE OF STACK OVERFLOW

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◆ Stack Overflow is, in its simplest form, **a question and answer site on all things computer programming.**

◆ Developers can ask and answer questions on anything to do with programming and active members receive points and badges for their responses or contributions. The site holds a wealth of knowledge and any developer will be using it daily.

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◆ It is perfect for **measuring a candidate's knowledge level and involvement in the development community.** You can quickly check out developers' reputation on Stack Overflow as well as their top answers.

◆ Reputation rate is all the more objective than it has been granted by peers. Users with high reputations on Stack Overflow are developers who a) are regularly active on the site b) ask pertinent questions c) provide helpful answers thanks to their expertise.

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ORGANIZE A LIVE CODING INTERVIEW

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◆ Being able to **think, code and communicate while in the presence of an interviewer can be stressful** without any practice.

◆ However, **live programming tests are a truly valuable source of information.** They allow recruiters to observe a candidate's logic, their ability to explain what they're doing, how they think, and their ability to code under pressure.

◆ **With tools like CodinGame's remote interview module, you can carry out coding interviews via screen sharing.** The applicant is given a brief and is then observed as he or she completes the task.

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◆ **Interviewers may be interested in seeing what kind of questions the interviewee will ask** to understand the problem before they rush into resolving it. They may also appreciate being told if the candidate encounters difficulties at any point.

◆ At the end of the day, **the aim of this exercise is not to produce (nor to evaluate) a perfectly constructed, perfectly neat piece of code.** Indeed, live coding comes down to allowing both parties to gain understanding of each other in a dynamic, constructive and conversational setting.

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5

INVITE THEM TO TAKE AN ONLINE PROGRAMMING TEST

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◆ **Coding tests are one of the most efficient ways to screen developers before hiring.**

◆ They provide a proven model for identifying and hiring proficient developers. **Candidates code their way through real, practical problems** (such as finding a bug in a defective piece of code or properly synchronizing a multi-threaded application), enabling recruiters to measure their coding skills objectively and efficiently.

◆ **Tech recruiters, HR managers or CTOs can set up programming tests using platforms like CodinGame Assessment**, choosing to test applicants in one specific programming language or over multiple technologies (Java, Angular, Python, etc.).

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◆ Candidates' code is automatically analyzed and **recruiters are provided with performance metrics** ranging from language mastery to code design, lisibility or solidity.

◆ As well as optimizing the hiring process, these tests also provide for an improved candidate experience (compared to the non-technical discussions that too often take place during a first interview). **Programming tests are a way for recruiters to show developers that they are tech-friendly.**

◆ Coding challenges save recruiters a great deal of time while securing their hires on the technical side. **Online technical programming tests usefully replace paper or whiteboard tests**, giving developers a chance to demonstrate their skills.

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TESTING DEVELOPERS' SKILLS BEFORE HIRING
CHEAT SHEET

Keep it handy! Next time you're umming and ahhing over a tech candidate, refer back to this cheat sheet.
Get a clear picture of a developer's technical skills and decide if they're right for the job.

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1 **Dig into their programmer portfolio**

Take a look at a candidate's past projects (or ask your tech team to). This can help you evaluate their skill set and serves as a basis for dialogue.

2 **Take a look at their GitHub account**

Have a look at a candidate's GitHub account. Get an idea for who they are and what they enjoy working (or coding!) on.

3 **Ask about their use of Stack Overflow**

Head to a developer's Stack Overflow profile and see, at a glance, if they ask relevant coding questions and contribute intelligent, helpful answers.

4 **Organize a live coding interview**

Set up an online remote coding interview and evaluate a candidate's thought process, facility to explain what they're doing and ability to think on the spot.

5 **Invite them to take an online coding test**

Invite a candidate to take an online technical test with a third-party tool such as CodinGame Assessment. Validate their technical skills - no tech knowhow required!

GET IN TOUCH

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