



# Interview Guide





# Thanks for taking an interest in Prolego!

The following document should help answer common questions about Prolego and help set expectations.



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# About you

First, congratulations! We are very selective about interviewing candidates, and you have already distinguished yourself above hundreds of peers with similar backgrounds.

Our mission is to create a home where the world's most talented AI professionals can help transform the world's biggest companies with AI. If that sounds like something you want to do, we might be off to a good start.

**PROLEGO IS  
THE ~~WRONG~~ PLACE  
FOR YOU IF...**



- You don't feel like you can ultimately learn enough to be an effective team member with world-class engineers that focus on solving the hardest problems. Of course, we don't expect you to have all of the skills you need on day one.
- You don't want to work remotely. We have always been 100% virtual and will continue to do so. We can pay for a nearby office or co-working facility if you need one.
- You need others to motivate you. Prolego's engineers are self-driven and proactively pursue the solutions to our clients' problems. We are the wrong place if you are uncomfortable with ambiguity and want to be told what to do.
- You don't want to help or coach others. A part of our job is coaching/helping our clients' teams.
- You don't want to do services work. We are not a product company. We work with our clients inside their environment, on their data, to build and deploy cutting-edge solutions. (You may be leery of doing technical services work—for very good reasons—but don't let that dissuade you from talking to us. See more below...)
- You are a bully. We value "strong opinions, weakly held."

# Our Interview Process

Here are the steps in our interview process.

We will make every effort to complete it in **less than 2 weeks**:

01

Initial screening conversation.

02

One-on-one interview with the hiring manager.

03

Technical interviews with engineering team members.

04

Final interviews with Kevin and Russ Rands, our other founder.

# FAQ

## WHAT WE DO

### **What does Prolego do?**

We help the world's largest companies accelerate their journey towards becoming AI-driven organizations. We do this by building custom, innovative solutions to solve complex business problems. We also help drive the cultural and process changes necessary to fully leverage AI.

### **What do you mean by "AI"?**

We use that term generally to describe intelligent computing. Most of our projects involve identifying and solving problems using state-of-the-art engineering techniques. Usually this involves some sort of deep learning.

### **What does a typical client engagement look like?**

- A 3-6 month initial engagement that is a combination of problem identification, strategy, analysis, and modeling. At the end, we have a methodology and model built, along with analysis on how it would solve a business problem.
- A multi-year engagement of improving and deploying the models.

We also sometimes do training, coaching, and provide other support our clients need.

### **What does a typical day look like for a data scientist?**

- Talking to clients about the nature of the business problems and current workflow.
- Reading blog posts, papers from arxiv and generally staying abreast of ideas emerging in areas relevant to our client work.
- Collaborating with your Prolego colleagues on new techniques or approaches.
- Training and evaluating models.
- Working with Prolego's engineering team on ways to move your solution into production.
- Refactoring your solutions.
- Taking your experimental code and turning it into Python methods and classes.



### What does a typical day look like for a data engineer?

- Reviewing solutions developed by our data science team and turning them into production-level code. This can involve anything from refactoring Jupyter notebook code into reusable libraries to building APIs to serve inference results.
- Building customized MLOps workflows. See <https://cloud.google.com/architecture/mlops-continuous-delivery-and-automation-pipelines-in-machine-learning>
- Developing architecture plans for deploying and scaling ML models into production.
- Reviewing cutting-edge MLOps techniques and tools.
- Performing R&D based on ongoing MLOps techniques and tools reviews, primarily in the context of cloud service providers.

### The work sounds great! What's the catch?

Great question! We think it is important that you also understand the challenges. Many of our clients are not currently organized to work with a high-performing engineering team. Quite often getting access to data, systems, and end users can take longer than necessary.

In other cases, our clients' leadership wants change, but the rank-and-file team members resist it. You will need to bring a level of professionalism and patience to these activities, but you will not be alone. We are developing a playbook to deal with these challenges, and you will have the support of your fellow Prolego team members when they arise.

Feel free to ask for clarification during the interview.

## Consulting? Yuck!

We share your concerns, and we are not like a traditional software consulting company. Here is what we don't do:

- We don't deploy to our clients' sites. Almost all of our work is 100% remote.
- We don't do "staff augmentation" work. We deploy as a team to solve a problem. We don't provide engineering resources.
- We don't do traditional software services work. So no SAP integrations, mobile web sites, or dashboards.

We are an elite engineering team that brings state-of-the-art AI solutions to solve our clients hardest problems.

## How do you work on client projects?

### Will I be on my own?

We work as a team on client projects, and there will be people here to help you get up to speed. We expect you to be a self-driven, motivated fast learner. We don't expect you to have all of the skills on day one.



# FAQ

## WORK LIFE BALANCE

### **How much travel is involved?**

Pre-Covid we would travel to client sites about once every 6 weeks for a day or two. We haven't traveled since Covid began, and we don't know if we will be doing much travel in the future.

Covid has taught us that we can execute successfully without ever spending time on client sites.

### **Will I still have a life?**

We sure hope so! We believe that workaholism is a terrible idea, and that most of our work should be able to be completed in a standard 40-hour week. We don't want you working evenings and weekends.

We try to eliminate cruft, meetings and other distractions that prevent you from doing your best work. Furthermore, we want you to have the life flexibility to work when and where you want to work.

### **What is your vacation policy?**

We don't have a policy, you take time off when you need to. You just have to make sure your work gets done.

We take long weekends on all of the Federal Holidays. Since COVID-19 started we have also made them 4-day weekends.

We believe that everyone needs to recharge to do their most productive work. As a result we have instituted mandatory vacation during the week of Thanksgiving and over the December holidays.

Feel free to ask more about vacations during the interview process.

### **How about Maternity & Paternity Leave?**

We offer 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and 3 weeks of paid paternity leave; additionally we offer 5 weeks of paid adoption leave for caregivers.

# The Company



## **Where are you located? Do you have an office?**

We are 100% virtual and do not have an office. Our employees live in big cities, small towns, or cabins in the woods.

Our only requirement is that you have a fast Internet connection and the ability to travel to a client site should the need arise.

## **How big are you? How are you growing?**

As of this writing we are ~11 engineers and 20 people total. We are doubling roughly every year.

## **How are you organized?**

We are organized into 3 teams:

- A data science team that does the modeling
- A data engineering team that deploys the models
- An engagement team that manages clients, does training, and strategy.

Actual job titles may differ from these team titles.



# The Company

## **I'm considering a bunch of good opportunities. What makes Prolego unique?**

Our clients view us as a strategic asset for solving their hardest problems. Our goal is to create new capabilities, transition them to our clients' teams, and move on to the next challenge. We try to isolate our engineers from meetings and distractions. If you like working on "the next big thing," then you will find it exciting.

We don't do a lot of traditional data science work such as data cleansing, simple feature-based modeling, or dashboard generation.

## **Who are your clients?**

We don't share them publicly, but we can tell you verbally during the call. They are household names and you have heard of them. Most are in financial services, although we have done projects in real estate, retail, automotive, and defense.

## **How are you funded? How much financial security do you have?**

We manage the company to keep at least 6 months of runway, and we have always exceeded this. We are funded from the founders and through client revenue.

We have taken no venture capital money nor are we funded by a large strategic partner.

## **What is your vision for the company?**

At the moment we plan on scaling what we already do and love. We believe our model scales very differently than traditional software consulting, primarily because doing AI work requires a small, elite engineering team.

## **What about company culture?**

Glad you asked! First, we believe that culture is what you do, not what you say. You can probably best experience our culture by skimming our book at [book.prolego.com](https://book.prolego.com). We also created the world's first AI comic book! See [prolego.com/adventures-in-ai](https://prolego.com/adventures-in-ai).

We encourage you to ask the team about culture during the interview process. Ask us the hard questions! Better still, we would love to hear your ideas for making a great company culture.

# Compensation & Benefits

## **Do you pay bonuses?**

We don't have a formal bonus structure, but here is how we currently run it.

Our standard bonus is 10% of base salary paid at the end of the year. We prorate this amount based on your starting date (i.e., an employee starting July 1 would be eligible for 5%).

We adjust this bonus up or down based on the performance of the company and the individual. We paid bonuses in 2019 and 2020.

## **Do you benchmark salaries based on cost-of-living in different locations?**

No. We don't consider geography. In fact, many of our team members live in small towns or rural areas. Life flexibility is part of our culture.

We benchmark our salaries based on nationwide trends and need to be competitive with coastal tech companies for talent.

Actual job titles may differ from these team titles.

## **How many employees does Prolego currently employ?**

As of this writing we are ~11 engineers and 20 people total. We are doubling roughly every year.



# Compensation & Benefits

## What are your employee benefits?

We offer a traditional benefits package, including Health, Vision, Dental, HSA, and 401k. Full details of our benefits can be found in this [folder](#), but at a high level, here are the basics:

- **Healthcare** - our healthcare plan is offered by United Healthcare and includes health, vision and dental. You can read details of the plan in this folder, but for quick reference, all employee participants in the Prolego healthcare plan contribute \$100/month for each adult and \$75/month for each child enrolled in the health plan. These amounts are withheld via pretax payroll deductions and Prolego covers the remainder of the premiums.
- **Health Savings Account (HSA)** - our health plan comes with an associated health savings account. You can contribute up to \$7200 pre-tax dollars to your HSA in 2021 to cover deductibles and other health costs not paid by the insurance plan. Any unused balance at the end of the year will roll over for future use.
- **401K** - Prolego's 401k plan is administered by Guideline, which offers participants access to over 40 index funds from Vanguard and other low cost providers that keep investment fees to an industry low. Our 401k plan is a Safe Harbor plan, so regular/annual Safe Harbor contributions (up to 4% of salary) are 100% vested when the contribution is made.

