

From a 7th-semester backlog to a design engineering job

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STARTING POINT

A backlog in the 7th semester, no clear direction and weak English

FIRST INTERVIEW

A campus interview. Disqualified during my own introduction

WHAT I TRIED

CAD/CAM courses, then C++ and Python. None of it stuck

NEXT STEP

PG Diploma in Tool Design at CTTC Bhubaneswar

TURNING POINT

Many interviews, and learning from each one

TODAY

Design Engineer, third-party role at DRDO

What I would tell my 3rd-year self

1. Decide your stream in 2nd or 3rd year. The earlier you pick a direction, the less you struggle later.
2. Work on the skill the market actually wants, and be honest with yourself about what you can already do.
3. Give as many interviews as you can. You only find your real gaps when you sit in front of an interviewer.
4. Prepare your introduction in one language and practise it out loud. Mixing Hindi and English in a nervous way hurt me.
5. Know the basics of your chosen field: the tools, the processes and the simple numbers, such as cutter angles for a design or tooling role.
6. Keep presence of mind. Fear of saying something wrong is what makes most of us say something wrong.
7. Avoid backlogs. A backlog in the final year closed doors for me.
8. Do not lose hope. Success comes to the one who keeps trying, and it comes sooner if you start sooner.

A backlog that cost me opportunities

I passed out of B.Tech Mechanical Engineering in 2023 from Bundelkhand University, Jhansi. In the 7th semester I got a backlog, and because of it I missed a lot of opportunities. I gave many interviews and was still not selected.

My first interview: a mistake in the introduction

My very first interview was a campus interview. A company came to our campus and I got the chance to sit in front of them.

My English was not very good. I started my introduction in a little Hindi-English, then slipped into Hindi, and it did not come across as impressive. The interviewer disqualified me right there.

The lesson: your introduction sets the tone. Prepare it and practise it before you walk in.

3rd and 4th year: what is my aim?

In 3rd and 4th year one big question stands in front of all of us: what is my aim, which field do I go into, what do I do? I had no answer.

I enrolled in a couple of courses, including CAD/CAM. I also went towards software and tried to learn C++ and Python. I did not succeed in any of them, and my mind kept getting diverted.

After passing out: still confused

After I passed out I still did not know what I would do. I decided to do a Post Graduate Diploma in Tool Design, with CAD/CAM courses, at CTTC Bhubaneswar.

There I learned many software tools: AutoCAD, SolidWorks, CATIA, Creo and ANSYS. I also learned the basics of manufacturing and did machining myself.

Even then, the interview was hard

After the diploma the same questions came back: how will I get a job and how will placement happen? I gave interviews with one or two companies there, and they asked only basic questions. Even then I could not give a proper introduction, and I made a poor impression on several companies.

One company asked me for the names of tools, what process can be done with a milling tool, what can be done with a boring tool, and what the angle of an end mill cutter is. I could not answer properly, and they rejected me.

The lesson: basics of your field are asked first. If you cannot answer them, the rest of your skills never get a chance.

I did not lose hope

I kept practising and kept giving interviews. I appeared for many companies, and in the end I received two or three offer letters.

Today I am a Design Engineer in a third-party role at DRDO.

What I understand now

I did not start things on time. If I had chosen design in the 2nd or 3rd year, I would not have struggled so much. But sooner or later every one of us has to decide what to do.

Until you actually get interview opportunities you do not learn what you are missing. We think we are fit and well prepared. Then in the interview small things go wrong: we say something wrong about ourselves, or we forget something about tooling.

The biggest thing is pressure. We panic because we feel the people sitting there will think our answer is wrong, and in trying so hard to answer correctly we end up answering wrongly. Presence of mind matters.

Find the right way in the right direction, decide your stream, work on the skill that the market wants, and be happy.

Difficulties I faced

- A backlog in the 7th semester and the opportunities it cost me
- Weak English and a poor introduction in the first interview
- No clear aim in 3rd and 4th year
- Courses in CAD/CAM, C++ and Python that did not lead anywhere at first
- Basic tooling and machining questions I could not answer
- Pressure and loss of presence of mind during interviews

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