



For

FDE

The AI job *nobody told you about.*

What a Forward Deployed Engineer does, and how a student gets there.

Made with an engineer who **does this job at Microsoft and teaches at NYC.**





Before you follow a plan, you should know who made it.

Made with an engineer
who does this job at
Microsoft *and teaches at
NYC.*



Swapnil

Forward Deployed Engineer, Microsoft

Works on Microsoft Teams. Teaches Full Stack Engineering
at NYC.

He speaks for himself, not for Microsoft.



ABOUT NYC · 2 OF 3

Our students are already *training for this job.*

Taught by an engineer who does this job at
Microsoft.



LIVE CLASSES Full stack with AI

EVERY PROJECT Reviewed by working engineers

FINAL WEEKS Demo it and defend it



Where our students *work* *now.*

Students taught by the team behind NYC, at Sheryians Coding School. 1,200+ are placed.

HIGHEST PACKAGE



Kushagra Patidar

SDE 1, Amazon

₹47 LPA

[LinkedIn](#) ↗



Anuj Parashar

SDE, Care Health Insurance

₹22 LPA



Rishika Jain

Cisco

₹17 LPA



Mansi Patel

Airtel

₹15 LPA



Now, let's start *the plan.*

Eight short sections. Read them in order.

- 01 What an FDE does all day
- 02 Who hires FDEs
- 03 The skills: build and talk
- 04 Your 6-month plan
- 05 Your portfolio: 3 projects
- 06 Your week, day by day
- 07 5 rules for the FDE interview
- 08 7 mistakes to avoid

An engineer who builds *at the customer.*

Palantir invented the title. Today AI labs and AI startups use it for the people who take a model and make it work inside a bank, a hospital or a logistics firm.

WHERE AN FDE SITS



The customer

A bank, a hospital, a logistics firm



You, the FDE

Between the two



The product team

At your own company

Half your time
with the customer

Calls

Demos

Requirements

Half your time
with the product team

Bugs

Features

Feedback



What you do there

Take the company's messy data and its problem. Build the AI workflow, deploy it, and train the people who use it.



Why the job exists

Models alone sell nothing. A model is a demo until someone wires it into real data and real users. That someone is the FDE.

What an FDE *does all day*.

MORNING

1 Customer call

What broke yesterday, and what they need by Friday.

AFTERNOON

2 Build

Whatever the use case needs.

Pipeline

Prompt

API

UI

EVENING

3 Demo

Show it working on their data. Take notes on every "but".

EVERY
WEEK



Release

Weekly, not quarterly

Something goes into production every week, not every quarter.

Same job, different titles

Forward deployed engineer

Deployment engineer

AI solutions engineer

Applied AI engineer

Who hires FDEs *right now.*

Check the careers pages. The title appears in all six places.

AI LABS

OpenAI

Anthropic

They deploy models into big companies' workflows.

DATA PLATFORMS

Palantir

Databricks

Where the role started. Still hiring.

AI STARTUPS

Customer-support agents

Voice AI

Enterprise search

Startups that build these. Most hire FDEs before they hire sales staff.

BIG TECH

Google Cloud

Microsoft

AWS

Their customer engineering and "AI solutions" teams.

INDIA AI STARTUPS

Bangalore

Hyderabad

Pune

Startups in these cities hire early. Fresh-graduate FDE openings exist.

SERVICES FIRMS

TCS

Infosys

Accenture

Their AI units and GenAI studios. Same work, different title.

What FDE interviews check

2

skills they test: can you build, and can you explain?

3

projects online to show, one with a real outside user

1

live demo decides most FDE interviews

Company names are examples from public job listings in 2026. Openings change. Verify on each careers page.

The 2 halves of the job:

build and talk.

You need both halves.

HALF 1 Build



Full-stack

A web app with login, a database and an API.
Built fast.



Model APIs

Prompts, structured output and function calling.



Retrieval

Chunking, embeddings, and search over the customer's documents.



Agents

A model that calls tools, with a confirm step and logs.



Deploy

Docker, one cloud, env vars and monitoring.

HALF 2 Talk



Explain

Explain a system to a non-engineer in 3 sentences.



Plan

Write a one-page plan: problem, approach, risks, timeline.



Demo

Run a 20-minute demo without a script.



Follow up

Say "I don't know, I'll find out by Thursday."
Then do it.



Stay calm

Handle a customer who is angry about a bug you did not write.

3 more skills *they check*.



Data

SQL

Messy CSVs

PDFs with tables

80%

of FDE work is data that looks nothing like a tutorial.



Evaluation



Test 1



Test 2



Test 3



Test 4



Test 5

Write five test cases with known answers. "It works" means the tests pass on their data.



Scoping

Smallest version that proves value

1 WEEK

The rest

Pick the smallest version that proves value in a week. Say no to the rest, politely.

Your 6-month *plan*.

2 hours a day on weekdays. 4 hours on weekends.
Every month ends with something deployed and a demo video.

1

Full-stack, with AI

One app with login, a database and an API, deployed. Build it with AI. Read every line.

2

Your first search app

Search and answers over a real set of documents (RAG). Cited answers. Five tests.

3

Agents and tools

A model that calls two functions. A confirm step, logs and failure handling.

4

A real "customer"

A shop, a clinic or a college office. Their data, their problem, their feedback.

5

Demo and write-up

A 3-minute video and a one-page plan per project. A case study on LinkedIn.

6

Apply and interview

FDE, deployment, applied AI and solutions roles. Mock build and demo rounds.

By the end of month 6

3

deployed projects, one with a real outside user

3

demo videos, under 3 minutes each

12

mock demos before the real one

3 projects *for your portfolio.*

1 PROJECT 1 Document assistant

PDFs and a question



An answer that cites the PDF

BUILD IT FOR

A coaching centre or a college department.

2 PROJECT 2 Support agent

A customer question



Answers from a knowledge base

IT ALSO

Creates tickets with a tool call. Escalates when it is unsure.

3 PROJECT 3 Data workflow

Messy spreadsheets



A clean report and an AI summary

BUILD IT FOR

A real shop or NGO. It runs every Monday.



One real customer. At least one of the three projects should have a real outside user.

What every project *needs*.



A live link and a 3-minute demo video



A one-page plan

Problem, approach, risks, and what went live.



5 test cases

And the pass rate on real data.



One paragraph from the user

What changed for them.

Where to find a customer: ask ten people



Family businesses

Your college office

A local clinic

Any NGO

Any coaching centre

Any shop with a spreadsheet

Your offer: free, for two weeks, to fix one problem. Most say yes.

A project with one real user beats five tutorials. FDE interviewers ask about the user first.



At NYC: an engineer reviews every project and asks why it was built that way.

Your week, *day by day.*

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Build	Build	Data	Talk	Demo	Deploy	Review
MON	2 hours of building Your current project					
TUE	2 hours of building Write the one-page plan					
WED	1 hour of DSA 1 hour of SQL on messy data					
THU	A customer call, or their feedback Fix the top 3 issues					
FRI	Record a 3-minute demo No script, no cuts					
SAT	4-hour build session Deploy before you stop					
SUN	Mock demo to a friend Plan next week, 20 min					

The 12 things FDE interviews test

- 1 Build a small app live, with AI
- 2 Explain your project to a non-engineer
- 3 RAG: chunking, retrieval, citations
- 4 Function calling with a confirm step
- 5 SQL on an ugly table
- 6 A prompt that fails, and your fix
- 7 Evaluation: how do you know it works?
- 8 Cost per request, and how to cut it
- 9 What breaks at 1,000 users
- 10 Scoping: what goes live in week one?
- 11 A customer is angry. What do you say?
- 12 A 10-minute demo of your own work



At NYC: every final product is shown and defended in front of engineers.

5 rules for *the FDE interview*.

1 Lead with the user, not the tech.

"A clinic was losing 2 hours a day on reports. Now it takes 10 minutes." Then explain how it works.

2 Demo on their problem if you can.

Ask for a sample document before the interview. Show your tool working on it. Nobody else will.

3 Say the trade-off out loud.

"Keyword search first, because it works in a day. Embeddings when the tests show we need them."

4 Show the failure and the fix.

A made-up answer you caught, a prompt you rewrote, a test you added. That is the job.

5 Ask what the first customer looks like.

FDEs decide what to build first. This question shows you think like one.

THEY WILL ASK

Walk me through a project, start to finish.

How did you know it worked?

Tell me about a time a user hated something you built.

Build this small thing now.
45 minutes

Explain embeddings to my manager.

YOU SHOULD ASK

What does an FDE own in month one?

How much time is on site, and how much with the product team?

What did the last successful hire do differently?

7 mistakes that *get students rejected.*

✕ ~~1. Only DSA~~

✓ FDE interviews test building and explaining. 300 problems and no deployed app is the wrong portfolio.

✕ ~~2. Only demos~~

✓ A chatbot over Wikipedia impresses nobody. One real user with messy data does.

✕ ~~3. You cannot explain it to a non-engineer~~

✓ If your mother cannot repeat what your app does, rewrite the explanation.

✕ ~~4. No testing~~

✓ "It works on my examples" is not evidence. Run five tests on real data and show the pass rate.

✕ ~~5. Copying AI code you cannot defend~~

✓ Use AI to build. Then read every line. The build round is live.

✕ ~~6. Searching only one job title~~

✓ Search "forward deployed", "deployment engineer", "applied AI" and "AI solutions". Half the openings hide there.

✕ ~~7. Waiting for a job post~~

✓ Message FDEs on LinkedIn with your demo video. Ask what they would build next. Referrals often start this way.

We teach this whole plan, *live.*

● ● ● nyc · course

Covers this plan



WE TEACH THIS

AI Engineering

AI Engineering: LLM applications and retrieval, agents and connected workflows, production AI. Projects reviewed by engineers, demos practised live.



Live classes



Engineer reviews

For: **Forward deployed / applied AI engineer**

Talk to an advisor

See the course → notyourcollege.com



Guide by the NYC team, 2026. Role descriptions are based on public job listings from the companies named; NYC is not affiliated with any of them. NYC does not guarantee employment or selection.