



Highlights

Non-Profit	Screen for Determination, Problem Solving
Tuition and Debt Free	No Prior Coding Experience Required
Train Full Stack Coders	Employer Engagement
Learn Coding by Coding	Team Instruction/Coaching
Simulated Professional Work Place	Startup Culture, Look & Feel
Soft Skills	Continuous Change, Rapid Adaptation

Train Full Stack Computer Coders & Web Developers

We produce full stack coders to current industry standards for entry level coders set by prospective employers.

Employer Engagement

We partner with potential employers at inception in coder selection and curriculum design; during the program with instruction, mentoring and performance review of coders and evaluation of their projects; and at the end in preparation for employment. The employers see the coders develop; the program is an 11-month interview.

Proficiency Demonstrated by Code on GitHub, not Certificates or Credits

Coders measure other coders by the quality of their code, not academic credentials. Where feasible, we seek certifications and college credits, but we will not change the program in ways that detract or distract our primary focus...developing reliable and proficient entry level coding professionals.

Learn Coding by doing Coding Projects

Learning is by doing. 80-90% of student time is spent coding, with "arm on the shoulder" coaching by the instructors as needed; only 10-20% of the time is lecture. Coders work on projects continuously in one language (such as Python) for weeks or months until they are proficient; then switch to writing code in another language (such as HTML). We do not follow an academic format with 50-minute blocks allocated to specific subjects.

Simulated Professional Work Place

We keep industry hours: 9 AM to 5 PM, five days a week, with business holidays. At course completion, the coders will have worked in a professional office environment for 11-months. After completion of each of several major coding projects, the coder undergoes a corporate-style performance review.

Soft Skills

We emphasize soft skills as much as technical coding skills, so the coders can thrive in a professional workplace. Attire, work habits, working as a team member and diligence on the job are all core elements of the program.

Team Instruction

Each cohort has two instructors: a veteran classroom teacher and a senior coder with current industry skills and experience. The instructors work as a team.



Screen for Determination & Problem Solving; not Coding Experience

In selecting coders, we look for determination, desire, and problem solving skills. We do not require or expect prior coding experience. We use aptitude tests only as indicators, not as a single decision criterium. We determine aptitude and suitability with a "boot camp" start-up week spent doing simple coding exercises; at the end of that first week, students should know if they want to pursue a career in coding, and our instructors have good awareness of their ability to complete the course.

Startup Culture, Look & Feel

The Academies have the look and feel of a startup enterprise, and there is a close association with Innovate Mississippi, a non-profit with the specific goal of encouraging entrepreneurial activity. We tap into the resources of Innovate Mississippi to encourage entrepreneurial thought processes. The Coding Academy founders all have created and developed technology-based companies. We view the Academies as a 15-month-old startup, with 35 people on board.

Continuous, Rapid Adaptation

We are continuously learning and adapting. We have changed curriculum and instructional materials as we gained feedback from our private industry partners. For example, agile development and cyber security were not on the original curriculum and were added in response to employer suggestions.

Coder Involvement

We encourage our coders to help us improve the model; with their input, course-books have been modified, formal lecture time abridged, self-assessments and tests have been improved. We have demonstrated to the coders that they are empowered "employees" and their ideas are as valued as the instructors and founders.

Non-Profit; Tuition Free

Instead of maximizing profit to shareholders, we maximize the creation of human capital. The program is free of tuition and student debt, but heavy on "sweat equity" and commitment.