

SCARED Requirements Framework Checklist

System Design Interview Requirements Gathering Guide

S - SCALE

- How many daily active users (DAU)?
- Peak requests per second?
- Data storage size and growth rate?
- Geographic distribution of users?

A - AVAILABILITY

- Target uptime (99%, 99.9%, 99.99%)?
- Acceptable maintenance downtime?
- Most critical operations requiring highest availability?

E - EFFICIENCY

- Target latency for read operations?
- Synchronous or asynchronous write requirements?
- Operations with specific time constraints?

C - CONSISTENCY

- Strong consistency or eventual consistency acceptable?
- Tolerance for stale data (milliseconds, seconds, minutes)?
- Operations requiring immediate consistency?

R - RELIABILITY

- Is any data loss acceptable?
- Must survive single datacenter failure?
- Acceptable data loss window?

D - DEPENDENCIES

- Integration with existing services or legacy systems?
- External third-party API dependencies?
- Required authentication/authorization systems?

2-MINUTE SUMMARIZE-BACK RULE

Template: "We're designing [system] for [users] handling [requests/sec]. We need [consistency] with [availability] uptime..."
