

Careers in IT

Support Teams

Support Teams

Support covers a variety of roles, all of which are involved in helping people to resolve problems associated with hardware or software.

- The Help Desk, sometimes called 'first line' involves taking calls from users, registering basic details and performing simple diagnostics (e.g. password resets)
- The fault will be passed on to specialist teams who will diagnose and resolve the more complex faults
- Fault resolution may involve anything from a simple call to the user to the writing of code corrections

End User Support

The End User Support staff offer a more pro-active service to users.

They help users in their use of proprietary packages e.g. Microsoft Office etc. This will include guidance in the use of word processing, spreadsheets and simple databases.

The work is as much about understanding how people are using a particular package as having detailed technical knowledge of the package.

The Help Desk

Most organisations have a central Help Desk team and support organisation. These can be contacted by telephone from any part of the organisation.

Frequently the support organisation is 'outsourced' i.e. provided by a separate company. There are specialist organisations that provide these services.

What do I need?

General support roles do not require a specialist qualification, often good communication skills are the most important requirement. For the more technical roles a degree or HND in Computing may be advantageous.

Some employers prefer to recruit school-leavers or take graduates and train them in IT on the job; others look only for graduates already trained and experienced.

The BCS Higher Education Qualifications or Open University degrees are other alternatives. Large companies such as Microsoft and Novell have developed their own qualifications.

A Typical Day

Tasks will range from the simple and routine such as:

- Setting up new users
- Re-setting passwords
- Talking user staff through a series of actions, face to face or by phone

To the more complex such as installing and configuring software packages.

Ad hoc work may include troubleshooting and resolving system faults.

Pay and Prospects

There are no set pay scales in computing. The average graduate starts on £22,000. Pay will rise with experience and responsibility. With experience you can work your way up the promotion ladder.

Support Teams

Computing is essential to many areas: including business, education, and medicine. Mostly you will work in teams.

You will need to:

- Enjoy solving problems
- Communicate, so have skills in listening, speaking and writing
- Show attention to detail
- Enjoy making organisations or tasks more effective

Employers may be producers of computer systems (hardware or software), or even if it is not their main occupation, they will rely on IT to function effectively.

- Employers may be large or small
- You may be self-employed

Other leaflets in this series

CWG01 Entry Points	CWG12 Communications and the Internet
CWG02 Typical Career Paths	CWG13 Data Modelling, Management and Architecture
CWG03 Year 9 Time of Choices	CWG14 Multimedia
CWG04 Initial Entry (Age 16+)	CWG15 Web Design
CWG05 Industry Years Ages 18 & 20	CWG16 Artificial Intelligence
CWG06 Intermediate Entry (Age 18+)	CWG17 Games Development
CWG11 Systems Development	CWG80 Employment Case Studies

Disclaimer

Although every care has been taken by the Working Party of the BCS Schools' Expert Panel in the preparation of this publication, no warranty is given by the Working Party or BCS as Publisher as to the accuracy or the completeness of the information contained within it and neither the Working Party nor the BCS shall be responsible or liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising by virtue of such information or any instructions or advice contained within this publication or by any of the aforementioned.

More information can be obtained from:

BCS The Chartered Institute for IT

First Floor Block D North Star House North Star Avenue Swindon SN2 1FA United Kingdom

T +44 (0) 1793 417 424 F +44 (0) 1793 417 444 Online enquiries www.bcs.org/contact Website www.bcs.org

e-skills UK: www.e-skills.com

Connexions: www.connexions.gov.uk

© The British Computer Society (Registered charity no. 292786) 2009

If you require this document in accessible format please call +44 (0) 1793 417 600