

## Resource Pack

**IN ANY BUSINESS, IN ANY  
INDUSTRY, MORE AND MORE  
IT IS THE PEOPLE WORKING  
IN IT THAT ARE KEEPING  
EVERYTHING AFLOAT.**

*In association with:*

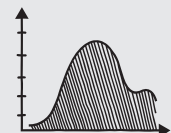


Think about it, our whole world operates on computing systems and other technology. It also plays a part in most of our everyday lives. It is the I.T. industry that keeps all this functioning.



Alongside other technology based sectors, I.T. is one the fastest expanding career areas as every part of society adopts more, and new, types of technology.

There is currently a skills shortage in the industry, meaning that there are many opportunities to begin your digital career.



The industry, is also growing faster than most others, with an expected growth of 1.62% each year up to 2020 (nearly twice as fast as the national average). And with 40% of people in technology and I.T. based roles working outside of the industry in areas such as retail, finance, the public sector and marketing no two jobs will even be exactly the same.



According to the Tech Nation Powering the Digital Economy 2015 report more than a million roles were advertised in Information Technology in 2014, a 28% rise from the previous year.

Having the right technical skills in things like coding and IT systems can open up many different opportunities, in many different companies and in many different industries.

## Resource Pack

### TYPES OF IT JOBS

The area of I.T. covers a wide range of roles – these are just some of them:



- **SOFTWARE ENGINEER**

Software engineers design and programme the software that you use – operating systems, database systems etc. They know how both software and hardware work.

- **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

This is probably the area of work that most people think of when they think I.T.! Technical support are basically the troubleshooters of the I.T. world, solving issues and problems with I.T. hardware and software for both consumers and businesses.

- **NETWORK ENGINEER**

This is one of the more demanding areas of I.T., with people working in this area setting up, administering, maintaining and upgrading communication systems and networks.

- **WEB DEVELOPER**

This covers everything to do with building websites and the infrastructure behind them. Web development is seen as one of the more cutting-edge and exciting areas of I.T.



## Resource Pack

# YOUR ROUTE INTO AN I.T. CAREER

## A-levels and equivalent

Taking subjects like science and maths will be very useful, and should you decide to go to university some institutions require them for more technical degrees. In general any STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are of specific interest to I.T. employers.

There are specific A-levels and equivalent qualifications such as BTECS in related subjects such as ICT and Computing which are obviously a good basis to move into more advanced areas of I.T.

## Apprenticeships

If you already know you want to work in the I.T. sector and want to start work right away, but still need to learn more – apprenticeships are for you.

With an apprenticeship you can earn while you learn, working in a I.T. company directly while learning the skills you need to succeed.

Like other industries more and more companies are taking on apprentices, with vacancies up by over a quarter in the last year. You can take an apprenticeship after GCSEs or A-levels.

The average salary for apprentices is £170 per week after tax and you'll also get a nationally recognised qualification with a local college, university or private training provider.






## Apprenticeships are available at three levels:

- Intermediate or level 2 apprenticeships take a year to complete and are equivalent to 5 GCSEs.
- Advanced or level 3 apprenticeships take at least a year to complete and are equivalent to 2 A levels. You'll typically need five good GCSEs to get on one.
- Higher or level 4 apprenticeships typically take 18 months to 2 years to complete. They can lead to qualifications such as HNDs, as well as foundation or even full degrees. This depends on who you work for. You'll typically need two good A levels and five good GCSEs to get on one.



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One employer offering business and I.T. apprenticeships for school leavers is IBM, one of the world's largest technology companies.

-  We offer a variety of Business and Technology advanced and higher apprenticeships, as well as a degree apprenticeship in Digital & Technology Solutions. By completing a degree apprenticeship, you will receive not only a Bachelor's degree, but also a Level 6 Apprenticeship qualification!
-  Our schemes last between three and four years with a starting salary of £20,000, increasing as you progress based on your performance.
-  Apprenticeships at IBM are all about picking up skills for the workplace and embarking on a long, and successful career. We have your professional development in mind from the day you join us as a permanent employee. You will get lots of exposure and an experience you simply can't get anywhere else. In addition to the day job there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in social activities and volunteering with other apprentices, students and graduates.
-  On an IBM Apprenticeship, support comes every step of the way, with an Early Professional Manager looking after your development and assessing how you're doing. IBM Buddies are professionals you can talk to about anything you need help with and they help particularly with building your network and expertise.
-  To be eligible to apply for our higher apprenticeships you need a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4-9 (including Maths and English Language) and you will need to have completed 2 years in further education or equivalent. To apply for the degree apprenticeship you will need five GCSEs at grade 5-9 and a minimum of 112 UCAS points or equivalent.
-  IBM also offers a Futures Gap Year scheme, the scheme is perfect if you are unsure of which route you wish to take after sixth form or college! This is a 12 month scheme and we offer a range of roles within either Business or Technology.

Find out more about what IBM offers school leavers at:

[ibm.biz/schoolleaver](https://ibm.biz/schoolleaver)

## Resource Pack

### UNIVERSITY

Traditional degrees are still a great route into the I.T. industry with a wider array of directly related degrees than ever before.

Many employers offer specific schemes for graduates with fast track career progression in a number of roles. The application criteria and details of the scheme will depend on the individual employer.

### TIPS FOR GETTING AN I.T. JOB



#### Research the role and the company you are applying to

It will help you stand out as a candidate if you can show that you understand what you have applied for, and you can demonstrate your particular interest and motivations based on your research. This may seem time-consuming, but sending out a high number of generic applications is unlikely to prove successful. You need to take the time to consider why you want a particular role and include evidence that supports your reasoning.

#### Review your application

Review your application form in detail, using a spellchecker to check your spelling and grammar. If you can, ask someone else to read through it as well. If you're applying via an online application form that doesn't have a spellchecker, copy and paste everything you have written into a document that does, and then print this out to complete final checks. It's easier to read printed copy than text on a screen.

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### Make sure your application demonstrates your interest in IT

This is not limited to formal qualifications you are studying. Are you in a computer club at school? Have you taught yourself how to code in your spare time? Have you helped friends or family get up to speed with a new piece of tech? All of these experiences are of interest to employers and demonstrate your motivation and capability to work in the IT sector.

### Demonstrate transferable skills

As well as any qualifications you are studying for, employers are interested in finding out what transferable skills you have - skills that can be useful in any role. For example, are you in a school sports team, showing long term commitment and teamwork? Have you worked in a shop, developing communication skills whilst dealing with the public, and being trusted to handle cash transactions? Are you a prefect at school, or have you organised a charity event, showing leadership and responsibility? All of these skills are of interest to employers.

### Highlight all forms of work experience

As a school leaver you might think you haven't got a lot of relevant work experience, especially if you haven't yet worked in an IT related job. However, for an employer any form of work experience is of interest e.g. a week's work experience, a paper round, a weekend job in a shop, or voluntary activities in your local community. These can all help to demonstrate some of the transferable skills mentioned above. Be sure to highlight what you have learned from each experience.



## Apprentice Case Study

In association with:



Tom

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICER

### ● **WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO APPLY TO IBM?**

I applied for IBM after attending an open evening at North Harbour, where I was able to speak to several current apprentices about topics from their roles to the company culture. I have always been interested in technology and how it can be innovated to move the world forward, so IBM (with Watson, IBM Cloud etc) seemed like a suitable place to follow this interest.

### ● **WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?**

I am currently working as a PMO in the Public Sector industry, currently working on Procurement for the project (the purchasing of goods and services). This involves defining the needs of a project, attaining quotes from relevant suppliers and uploading these to internal IBM tools. I have also spent time working on project resourcing and finances.

### ● **HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS?**

I found the application process challenging - but also really enjoyable! At the assessment centre I enjoyed the group tasks and the interview itself, as my interviewer gave me a fair chance to promote myself.

## Apprentice Case Study

### ● **WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM WORKING AT IBM?**

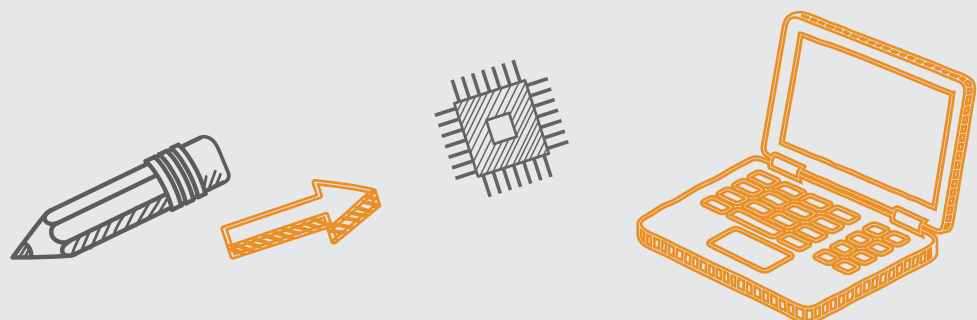
From working in IBM, I have learned many things already. Two thoughts that spring to mind are, firstly that technology is evolving quicker than most realise, impacting all industries radically, a prospect that I find very interesting. Secondly, I have learned that the opportunities of being involved in companies such as IBM are endless. Regardless of qualifications, the chance to help shape the future is accessible to all who put their mind to it.

### ● **WHAT IS THE CULTURE AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT LIKE AT IBM?**

The culture at IBM is very inclusive and it feels very much as though everybody has a voice. It's also a positive that the culture is heavily focused on self development, both professionally and personally, so we're encouraged to ask questions, challenge ideas and not to let the fear of failure deter us.

### ● **WHAT IS THE VERY BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?**

The best part of my job is being actively involved in meaningful, cutting edge technology that is having a genuine impact in society. The great thing about my job is that whatever project I work on is innovative, brand new and exciting - and as an apprentice I get full exposure to these environments and concepts.





## *Apprentice Case Study*

- **WHAT NEW SKILLS HAVE YOU LEARNED IN YOUR JOB?**

I have learned lots of skills that I didn't realise even were skills! For example, generic skills such as how to organise my days/prioritise tasks and how to communicate effectively - important skills that are overlooked. I am also learning job specific skills, such as how to use IBM tools.

- **WHO ARE YOUR ROLE MODELS WITHIN THE BUSINESS?**

Within the business I have met some incredibly talented people, whom I have learned a lot from. I had the honour of meeting Bill Kelleher (General Manager of IBM UK) at an event recently and his successes have inspired me. I also find Mike Hobday, Automation Lead for Europe, very inspiring, due to the success he has and work he puts in.

- **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING AN APPRENTICESHIP?**

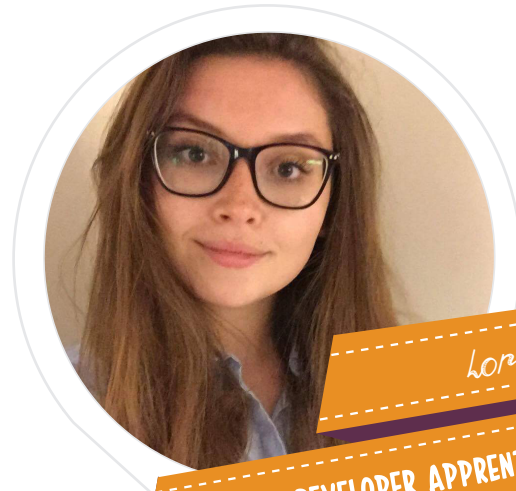
Go for it. You will have exposure and opportunities to concepts, technology and situations that you won't get anywhere else. You will have a personal EPM (Early Professional Manager) assigned to you by IBM Foundation meaning you are never alone. And you will come out with a Level 4 qualification armed with priceless experience, no debt and even potentially have the possibility to go for a degree after.

Find out more about what IBM offers school leavers at:

[www-05.ibm.com/employment/uk/school-leavers/index.shtml](http://www-05.ibm.com/employment/uk/school-leavers/index.shtml)

## Apprentice Case Study

In association with:



Lori

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER APPRENTICE

### ● WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO APPLY TO IBM?

I applied to IBM because of its innovation. It has obtained more patents than any other company for the past 25 consecutive years, with a record 9043 patents in 2017.

I wanted to work with cutting edge technology, understanding cognitive software and having the potential for my ideas to become reality. As a result, I applied to become an IBMer.

### ● WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

My job at IBM is a Robotics Process Automation Developer. My daily tasks involve using software programs, such as Automation Anywhere and BluePrism, to create robots that carry out repetitive, rule based tasks, that previously required a human being to do.

### ● HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

I found out about the IBM Apprentice Scheme through researching the best programmes in the country. I was interested in starting my career and developing my skills practically, but needed a programme that was challenging and suited my ambition. After careful consideration I realised IBM was the perfect opportunity.

## Apprentice Case Study

### ● **WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM WORKING AT IBM?**

The biggest thing I learned from my experience as an IBM Apprentice is to be adaptable. As a consultant you regularly change projects, and are introduced to new environments, which require and grow different skills sets. This has made me more comfortable with 'embracing the ambiguity', increasing the breadth of my expertise as a result.

### ● **WHAT IS THE CULTURE AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT LIKE AT IBM?**

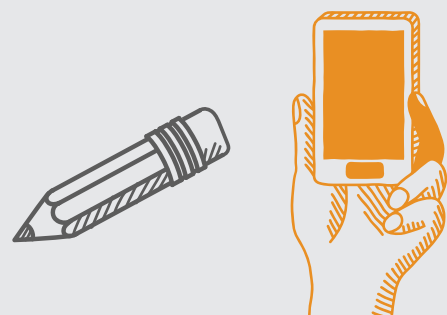
The culture at IBM is very supportive. You have an Early Professional Manager, Task Manager and Buddy to contact if you ever need help. This really helps when settling into the scheme. It is also challenging, though. You are expected to teach yourself the methodology behind many tasks you will do daily, but there is a wealth of information at your fingertips with the IBM Learning Portal.

### ● **WHAT IS THE VERY BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?**

The best part of my job is how interesting it is. I get to work with exciting, new technology, as a part of dynamic, agile teams, learning new skills and developing my business network. As an IBM apprentice two days are never the same, which is a great position to be in.

### ● **WHAT NEW SKILLS HAVE YOU LEARNED IN YOUR JOB?**

I have gained many new skills as an IBM apprentice, the main one being development. I am now qualified to create solutions using Automation Anywhere software, and am working towards the same accreditation for Blue Prism and UiPath. I also now have experience in testing. I have successfully run both blind and Monte Carlo tests for chatbot training data, analysing the results and improving them.



## Apprentice Case Study

- **WHO ARE YOUR ROLE MODELS WITHIN THE BUSINESS?**

My role model at IBM is Jon White, my Early Professional Manager. Despite being very busy, he always finds time to respond to my emails and has coached me through all issues. I have found this invaluable throughout my time on this programme, inspiring me to actively look for give back opportunities and help those I can.

- **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING AN APPRENTICESHIP?**

My advice for young people considering apprenticeships is to do your research. There are many great apprenticeship programmes out there, but you need to carefully consider whether they are right for you, and which programme fits best. I would however recommend applying for schemes whilst you consider this, as the recruitment process can often take up to a year for major businesses.



Find out more about what IBM offers school leavers at:

[www-05.ibm.com/employment/uk/school-leavers/index.shtml](http://www-05.ibm.com/employment/uk/school-leavers/index.shtml)

*More useful resources*

**Need more help with your career choices?**

**You can find a wealth of help and opportunities at the following places:**



## **IBM**

IBM has over 400,000 employees globally, operates in 170 countries and is the largest technology and IT organisation in the world.

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## **THEBIGCHOICE.COM**

Find quality advice and opportunities in apprenticeships, part-time jobs and training on this youth careers portal.

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## **SCHOOL LEAVERS GUIDE**

This online guide, found on TheBigChoice.com, brings together expert advice, guidance on career steps, and opportunities from the UK's top employers.

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## **NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE**

The official place for careers advice and information in the UK.

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## **NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE**

Everything you need on apprenticeships and the best vacancies on offer.