

IT Support Engineer

IT support engineers install and maintain computer hardware and software systems for a wide range of businesses, in both the private and public sectors.

Different companies use different job titles, so this job is also known as desktop server or application support engineer, IT technical support officer, or technician.

The Work

You could be:

- responding to technical support calls from end users of computers and software applications
- setting up and installing new computers, networks and software
- setting up user accounts and profiles on the network
- installing updates, known as patches, to software applications
- installing and configuring operating systems, anti-virus software and other applications such as Microsoft Office
- diagnosing and fixing network problems and hardware or software faults
- maintaining inventories of hardware and software
- managing backups of servers, in case of data loss
- keeping a record of issues and faults along with solutions, for future reference.

Depending on the size of the organisation you work for, you may carry out duties in all areas of IT or specialise in one, such as networks or hardware.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

A newly qualified IT support engineer earns around £18,000 to £25,000 a year. With experience this can rise to £50,000 a year or more.

Conditions

- Many IT support engineers work regular hours, but you might sometimes have to be on call at evenings and weekends to deal with emergency breakdowns. You might sometimes have to work at weekends when businesses are closed, to install new computer systems.
- You may have to bend, kneel and lift and carry equipment.
- You may have to travel to different sites to carry out work and possibly spend nights away from home.
- You would deal with customers by phone, email and face-to-face.

- You would have to meet targets for response times to calls and completing the request.

Getting In

- You normally need an HNC (SCQF Level 7) HND (SCQF Level 8) or degree (SCQF Levels 9-11) in Computing: Technical Support or another relevant technical subject.
- For entry to HNC and HND courses you normally need 1-2 Highers plus some subjects at National 4 or 5. For a degree course you need 4-5 Highers including Maths and Physics or a technological subject.
- You may be able to get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in IT and Telecommunications at SCQF Level 5 for which you may need 3-5 subjects at National 5, usually including English and Maths. Computing Science would be useful.
- You could enter through the Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) in IT: Hardware and System Support, which you can start in S5 or S6 and study at school and college. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually need relevant subjects at National 5 such as Maths, Physics or Computing Science and be working towards Highers in S6.
- Employers also look for knowledge of programmes and applications such as Microsoft, Linux and Cisco (networking).
- You might need a driving licence for some jobs.

Some engineers in this field work for large organisations which are major users of computer systems and networks such as banks, utilities, schools and colleges and the National Health Service (NHS). Others work for computer manufacturers or for specialist service firms.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- an interest in how computers work and in solving technical problems
- a good knowledge of computer hardware and software
- a logical and methodical approach
- technical ability and analytical skills
- excellent problem solving skills
- a helpful and patient manner
- a customer-focused approach
- good communication skills and tact to work with non-technical users.

You need to be able to:

- plan and organise programmes of work
- work to timetables and meet deadlines, sometimes under pressure
- keep clear and accurate records
- work on your own and also as part of a team
- be flexible and versatile.

Training

- You could take industry recognised qualifications such as Microsoft Certified Professional (this has now been retired and replaced with Microsoft [Role-Based Certifications](#)).
- Other certifications you can study for include CompTIA A+ or various Cisco routes.
- You might take short courses on specific technical areas, such as Microsoft operating systems, virtual platforms or Active Directory.
- You might take an introductory course in the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), which is a globally recognised set of best practices for service delivery and management.
- You must keep up to date with new developments.

Getting On

- You might complete advanced ITIL courses at Level 4, from Foundation, ITIL 4 Managing Professional, ITIL 4 Strategic Leader, and Master.
- You might move into a supervisory or management role.
- You could move into a related area of work such as network engineering.
- You might become self-employed, working with smaller businesses or providing a home PC repair service.
- There can be opportunities to work abroad.

More Information

If you are considering a career in IT why not take a look at the [Tech Future Careers](#) website. You will find the video case studies of workers and general information on the industry useful.

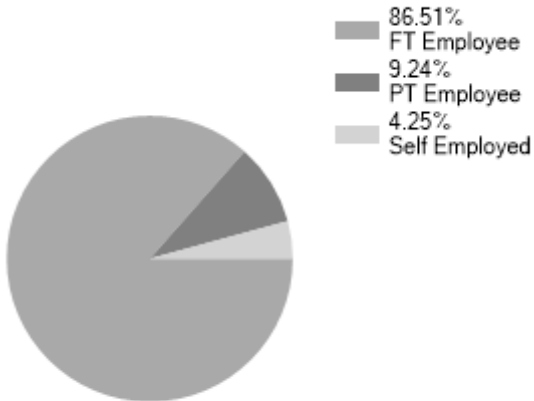
For more information please see organisation below:

[BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT](#)

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

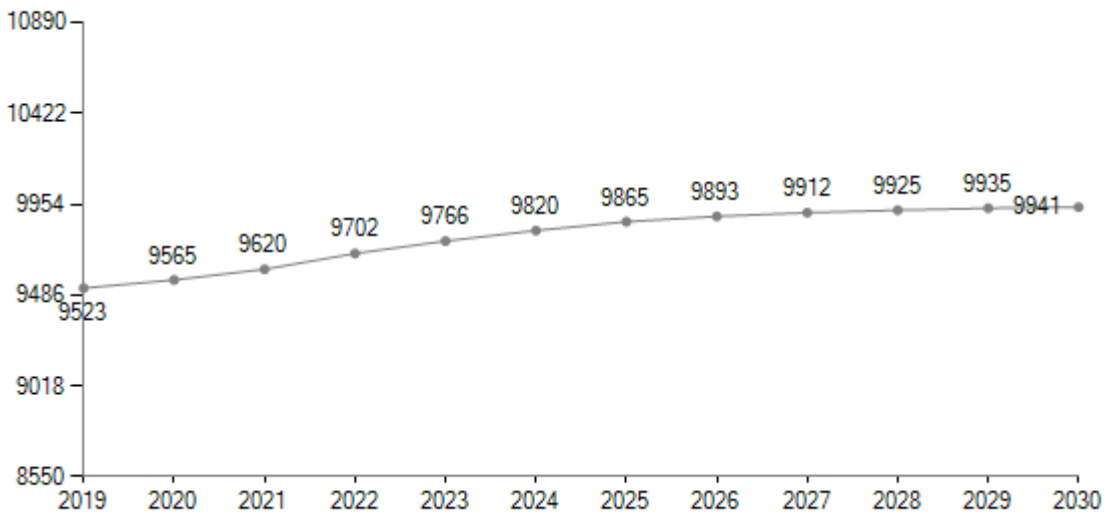


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)