

Information Technology Manager

Introduction

Information technology managers make sure that computer departments run smoothly and efficiently. They might work with systems analysts to improve computer systems. They might also manage databases, organise staff training, manage budgets, arrange computer maintenance and put into place back-up systems in case an IT fault develops.

Also known as

- Manager, IT
- IT Manager
- Chief Information Officer (IT)



Work Activities

Information technology (IT) managers have overall responsibility for the provision and use of IT within the company. They usually organise and supervise the work of a team of specialist staff, for example, help desk and technical support staff, network and database administrators, software developers, web developers and trainers. They might be responsible for the company's website and e-commerce (online business activity).

The IT manager has to make sure that the company has all the right equipment it needs to be as efficient as possible. IT managers therefore need a very broad knowledge of different IT systems; they must keep up to date with advances in information technology so that they can liaise with, and advise, other senior managers, and plan for the future.

They are also likely to be in charge of a budget, spending money wisely to bring the most appropriate technology into the company. They work closely with equipment suppliers, negotiating the purchase and any aftersales services, such as technical support in case there are any faults with the equipment.

As well as buying new systems, IT managers keep a close watch on the technology the company already has. They think about the company's needs, and identify areas where new technology could support people's work. They might ask a business systems analyst to visit the company to do an in-depth study of the existing technology and come up with suggestions to improve the situation.

Information technology managers work as closely with people as they do with machines. They make sure people are properly trained and supported in their use of IT; they might ask an IT trainer to visit the company to teach people how to use a specific system or software product, or the organisation might employ its own IT trainer or trainers.

Managers are responsible for setting quality standards, and for making sure that IT staff complete their work within deadlines and budget limitations.

They are also responsible for the accuracy and security of data within the organisation. A strict data protection law controls the use and security of information held on databases; it's up to the manager to make sure that systems are in place so that only authorised people can look at the data.

Members of the public have the right to access information about them on a company's database, so managers might have to negotiate this access with them.

IT managers must be able to cope quickly and efficiently if there are any problems with the company's computer systems. They must make sure that back-up systems are in place, so that no data is lost if there is a fault.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As an IT manager, you'll need:

- A broad knowledge of computer systems, networks and software products.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Negotiation skills.
- The ability to explain things clearly and concisely to people who might have little knowledge of computers.
- Very good organisational skills to plan and prioritise work, arrange meetings with other professionals and set deadlines and targets.
- Business skills.
- To be able to cope well under pressure.
- Problem-solving skills.
- To take responsibility for your decisions.
- To work well with people throughout the organisation.
- Number skills to manage your budget.
- Leadership skills to manage staff.
- To be able to delegate tasks.
- Report-writing skills.
- To keep up to date with general developments in IT.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

IT managers earn in the range of £26,000 - £33,500 a year, rising to £42,500 - £55,500. Higher earners can make over £70,000 a year.

Salaries could include performance-related pay, profit share or company bonuses.

Hours of work

IT managers usually work 35-37 hours, Monday to Friday, though occasional late finishes might be required.

Where could I work?

Employers include many types of organisation in the private sector. IT managers also work in the public sector, with local and central government departments and the NHS, for example. Other employers include universities and colleges, as well as large charities. There are many other types of employer.

Opportunities for IT managers occur in towns and cities throughout the UK. A significant number of vacancies for IT and telecoms professionals are in London and the South East of England.

What's happening in this work area?

The IT industry is predicted to grow much faster than the rest of the UK workforce over the next decade. The recession has affected the IT industry, but overall it has emerged in a very strong position.

One reason for this strength is the realisation, by the global economy, of the importance of IT in helping businesses to survive the recession and economic downturn. Investment in technology is also viewed by many as a way for public bodies to become more efficient.

There is a shortage of candidates with IT skills and qualifications in the UK.

Future skills needs Technical skills are highly important in this industry. However, employers have also highlighted the need for the following non-technical skills:

- teamworking skills
- good communication skills
- business skills.

Self-employment

Opportunities occur for experienced IT managers to work on a self-employed, freelance basis - usually on fixed-term contracts.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised on specialist IT job boards and employers' websites, in computing magazines and professional journals, in local/national newspapers, on Universal Jobmatch and at Jobcentre Plus.

Short-term contract work is found through specialist IT recruitment agencies.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Most IT managers are graduates, although few enter this job straight after graduation.

Most people first gain skills in, for example, network or support management. Others have skills in systems analysis or project management.

A number of universities offer the Information Technology Management for Business degree that has been jointly developed with major employers. Some universities and employers offer internships or student placements that develop business, communication and interpersonal skills.

Full-time and part-time foundation degrees are offered in various computing subjects. These can be topped up to full degrees after further study.

Training

Many managers are members of the Institute for the Management of Information Systems (IMIS) or BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

Some managers take an MBA (Master of Business Administration) course in order to get a greater understanding of the business process. MBAs are widely available part-time and by distance learning.

City University London offers a part-time postgraduate Master of Information Leadership course at its Centre for Information Leadership. The University of Cranfield offers the part-time IT Leadership Programme.

Progression

IT managers can progress by moving to larger organisations. Some IT managers might progress to senior manager or director posts.

Qualifications

For entry to a degree in information systems, the usual requirement is:

- 2/3 A levels
- GCSEs at grade C or above in 2/3 other subjects
- English and Maths at GCSE.

Alternatives to A levels include:

- Edexcel (BTEC) Level 3 National qualifications
- the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

However, course requirements vary so check prospectuses carefully.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

Skills/experience

Some employers will consider applicants with relevant skills, even if they lack the usual academic or professional qualifications for entry.

These skills could be gained as a systems designer/programmer, engineer or analyst, with a focus on one or more specialised areas of IT, such as networks or databases. Experience as a team leader can be an advantage for entry into management-level posts.

Courses

For senior posts, taking the MBA (Master of Business Administration) can be an advantage.

A range of manufacturer accredited courses are available on an intensive basis, often flexible and part-time, including evenings and weekends.

Access courses

If you don't have the qualifications needed to enter your chosen degree or HND course, a college or university Access course, for example, Access to IT/Computing, could be the way in.

These courses are designed for people who have not followed the usual routes into higher education. No formal qualifications are usually needed, but you should check this with individual colleges.

Distance learning

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, offers the Professional Examination Certificate, Diploma and Graduate Diploma by distance learning.

The Open University (OU) offers two degrees: Computing and IT, and Computing & IT and Business. The OU also offers the MSc in Computing for Commerce and Industry.

The University of Portsmouth offers degrees in Business Information Systems and also Computing and Information Systems by distance learning. Robert Gordon University and Sheffield Hallam University offer postgraduate degrees in Information Technology Management by distance learning.

Statistics

- 4% of people in occupations such as IT manager work part-time.
- 17% have flexible hours.
- 2% of employees work on a temporary basis.

Further Information

Professional institutes Professional institutes have the following roles:

- To support their members.
- To protect the public by keeping standards high in their professions.

For more information on the institute(s) relevant to this career, check out the contacts below.

Contacts

- **Queen's University Belfast**
Irish enquiries
Website: www.qub.ac.uk
- **The Tech Partnership**
Skills for business and information technology
Address: 1 Castle Lane, London SW1E 6DR
Tel: 020 7963 8920
Email: info@e-skills.com
Website: www.e-skills.com
- **Open University (OU)**

Tel: 0845 3006090
Website: www.open.ac.uk

- **BCS: The Chartered Institute for IT**
Address: First Floor, Block D, North Star House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FA
Tel: 0845 3004417
Email: custsupport@bcs.uk
Website: www.bcs.org
- **Big Ambition**
Email: bigambition@e-skills.com
Website: www.bigambition.co.uk
- **Bring IT On**
Irish enquiries
Website: www.bringittonni.info
- **Institute for the Management of Information Systems (IMIS)**
Address: Suite A, (Part) 2nd Floor, 3 White Oak Square, Swanley, Kent BR8 7AG
Tel: 0845 8500006
Email: central@imis.org.uk
Website: www.imis.org.uk/information/careers_information
- **Professional Issues in Information Technology**
Author: Frank Bott Publisher: Chartered Institute for IT (BCS)

Related Careers

- Computer Games Developer
- Web Developer
- Computer Operator
- Software Developer
- Data Entry Clerk
- Multimedia Specialist
- Website Manager
- Computer Games Designer
- Computer Network Manager - deprecated
- IT Support Manager
- Computer Help Desk Operator
- IT Project Manager
- Software Tester
- Computer Systems Analyst
- Computer Systems Programmer
- IT Sales Manager
- Computer Software Engineer
- IT Trainer
- Computer Customer Support Manager
- Database Administrator
- Data Manager
- Computer Engineer
- Data Analyst
- Computer Games Writer
- Games Producer
- UX Designer
- Cyber Security Consultant
- Network Engineer
- Assistive Technology Trainer
- Big Data Expert
- Gamification Design Consultant
- Content Manager
- CX Designer
- CAD Drafter

