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Ireland: the perfect launchpad for your technology career

Ireland is a global leader in the field of technology and is the global and EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Asia) headquarters of many household technology names. According to the IDA, there are currently over 106,000 people employed within the sector, with well over 700 companies currently operating within the sector in Ireland.

While Dublin is the main hub of tech activity, the real strength of the tech sector in Ireland is its diversity in terms of location and legacy in terms of how long many major tech firms have been operating here. From Microsoft, Google and Meta in Dublin to Apple in Cork, HP and Intel in Kildare, there are growing clusters of tech activity throughout the country, with Galway, Limerick and Waterford also the locations of major indigenous and international technology operations.

Northern Ireland's tech sector is a massive employer, contributing billions to the economy. Over 100 international tech investors are in Northern Ireland, making it one of Europe's leading investment regions for technology and software. 13 university-related research centres exist in Northern Ireland in such tech areas as security, wireless technology, digital media, semiconductors and telecommunications.

The tech sector in Ireland is:
- The sector accounts for 13% of Irish GDP and in terms of exports is worth over €26 billion
- Home to the top five global software firms
- Nine of the top ten US technology companies
- Four of the top five IT services companies

Roles currently in demand within the technology sector include: Business analysts, App developers, Client account managers, Cloud architects, Cyber security engineers, Database administrators, Data Scientists, DevOps engineers, Foreign language tech support, Programmers, Systems analysts/engineers, Technical architects and Test engineers.

What if you don't have a technology-related degree?

A technology specific degree isn't essential for a career in the sector; diverse skills as finance, marketing, HR and sales are also required. If you do wish to pursue a career in the strictly tech-oriented side, most colleges offer conversion courses specifically designed to convert your current academic path into one more in line with the technology sector.

University College Cork's Higher Diploma in Applied Computing and TU Dublin's Higher Diploma in Science in Computing are two examples of courses that provide non-technology graduates with the opportunity to acquire the theoretical knowledge and practical experience the technology sector demands. Visit gradireland.com/careers-advice/postgraduate-study to find the right conversion course for your needs.

Employment trends

Despite the tech sector's stability in the past, it is not immune to downturns. The impact of AI and automation, and global uncertainty has seen the market take a hit. Companies such as Intel, Stripe, Microsoft, Salesforce, Google, Spotify, IBM and Amazon have laid off significant numbers of their employees globally. It appears this is more of a hiccup than a long-term decline. The overall view is that this is a correction of Covid-related over-hiring.

Speaking to the Irish Examiner, Simon Coveney, Minister for Enterprise said, 'This is a correction in the tech sector but it is certainly not a crisis, I can assure you when the tech sector starts to grow again it will probably be growing out of Ireland rather than anywhere else'.

The good news is that companies are looking to invest in new areas of business and are therefore still hiring. There is now an increased need for certain specialisations such as AI. The phenomenon may also entice people into working more with start-ups and SMEs. These companies have previously struggled to compete with multinational companies for hires. The tech startup sector shows good promise for growth in Ireland.

The country is now the go-to choice for the location of international tech headquarters. Three quarters of jobs in the sector go to those with third-level qualifications, while the most common age group hired is 25–34, accounting for over 40% of new hires. This illustrates how postgraduate applicants and those transitioning from other sectors are successfully being hired in the sector. ●

Growth roles in technology

1. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are two very hot buzzwords that have become synonymous with innovation. Today, AI and ML are used in a vast number of services and tools.

Skills such as TensorFlow, Python, Java, R, and Natural Language Processing are skills that you should learn today to improve your chances of getting hired for an AI or ML job, as these skills now have the highest demand.

Learning to build chatbots is also one of the most in-demand skills that come under AI and ML. You must have noticed that AI deals with customer service interactions and queries on many websites and that chatbots pop up when you visit these websites. AI-operated chatbots are being deployed extensively by several major industries.

2. Cybersecurity

It's very important for any company that collects sensitive customer information or deals with sensitive data of its own, to keep their networks secure. Almost every major company today stores customer and company data in databases, making cyber security one of the top technology trends.

Cyber Security, Information Security, Network Security, and Vulnerability Assessment are the best skills to learn to land a job as a cyber security specialist. You also need a good knowledge of the basics of programming languages.

6 out of 15 top-paying IT certifications focus on security, so learning IT security is definitely a worthwhile addition to your tech CV.

3. Full Stack Development

While not a new job, the rapid pace of technology change has made full stack developers a valuable asset for any company. Both front-end and back-end developers are in high demand in many countries, but full-stack developers are in even greater demand.

Currently, the most in-demand coding languages across the globe are Go, JavaScript, Java and Python. JavaScript is also the most commonly used programming language. There are other coding languages in high demand but low supply due to fewer developers working with them.

4. AR and VR

Also known as Extended Reality (XR) is the collaboration of both Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). Many industries, such as entertainment, education, health, manufacturing and advertising, have already adopted XR technology. According to industry data, the immersive tech industry is set to grow to almost €1tn by 2030.

5. Blockchain

Blockchain comes last in this list due to the rapid decline in the popularity of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. Blockchain is not only used for cryptocurrency but is also used for peer-to-peer payments, crowdfunding, file storage, identity management, digital voting, and so on. Therefore, more companies need developers who understand blockchain, smart contracts, and can build decentralised applications.

Some of the blockchain skills you should learn are networking, database design and programming languages ranging from Java, JavaScript, and C++ to Go, Solidity and Python.

What sector would suit you?

In the modern world, technology plays a huge role not just in our daily lives, but in practically every organisation, business and institution. Possessing the right qualifications gives you the opportunity to work in a variety of different circumstances, be it through self-employment, working for private industry, the civil service or for an NGO or charity.

Jobs in the tech industry have become diverse, covering everything from designing and programming computer systems to testing and maintaining those systems to training other IT professionals. The range of employment possibilities open to technology graduates is now quite vast.

The three types of technology employee

Employees account for the majority of the tech industry's workforce. Working for a single employer and receiving a set salary might be the plan for most graduates, but there are more options available for qualified professionals in today's marketplace.

Contractors are professionals provided by an agency to work on location and are usually paid by the hour. Contractors are expected to be specialists in their chosen field who can offer skills unavailable elsewhere in their clients' organisation.

Consultants specialise in offering solutions to their clients' problems. As they usually run their own business, provide their own technology and operate without an agency, their earnings are generally higher than contractors.

Graduates may be attracted by the greater flexibility offered by contracting and consulting work, but a considerable amount of experience is required for both these areas.

Where can technology graduates work?

As technology is used to some degree in every organisation and institution, technology graduates can find employment in practically every sector.

Technology employers include:
- IT services organisations
- Technology solutions providers
- Technology consultancies
- Telecoms companies
- Insurers
- Accountants
- Software houses
- Game developers

Sectors you may have overlooked
- **Financial technology (fintech)** – While most large financial institutions have their own software teams, they also outsource development activities to specialist software development companies.

If you wish to work with mathematical models, large data sets, distributed systems, high speed systems and security, this could be your path into the financial sector without moving in-house.
- **Professional services** – Technology experts from professional services firms provide specialist advice to help other businesses avoid technology problems in their accounting, security and legal compliance processes. They assess how organisations run their IT systems, evaluate risk and make recommendations to help their clients protect and handle their data correctly.
- **Retail** – The past few years have seen huge growth in e-commerce, resulting in a high demand for technologists with the relevant skills. Many retailers are currently focused on developing multi-channel shopping options, and technology is also essential to other areas of a retailer's business, such as coordinating its supply chain and analysing sales performance.
- **Banking and investment** – Investment banks recruit technologists into both support roles (keeping the IT infrastructure up and running) and in-house software development.
- **Engineering** – Engineering companies recruit technology graduates to develop their core projects and support their business systems.

What do you want from your job?

Tech graduates with the right skills have a wealth of options, so it's important that you find the employer and career best suited to your needs. Two key factors should be taken into consideration before you begin your search.

The work you want to do – Are you seeking a role that requires a lot of coding, or none at all, while still employing your technical reasoning skills? Are you a more business-focused person? Maybe you wish to combine both the technology and commercial worlds? Are you looking for a role that offers new assignments on a daily basis, or would you prefer to work on projects with longer deadlines? If you are still undecided on a specific role, your best route could be to find an employer that offers a graduate programme that allows you to experience a variety of roles in numerous business areas.

Are you prepared to be mobile? – The number of opportunities available can depend on your willingness to work on a mobile basis.

A consultant may be required to spend their full working week on-site, spending four or five nights in a hotel room and catching a flight if they wish to return home for the weekend. Workers in IT services may also be required to spend the week on their client's premises. If you prefer to spend most of your time working in the same office, you should opt for a more technical role like a developer or software tester. Falling somewhere between mobility and stability are business and management-focused roles (eg project management), which may require some travel, depending on the role and the company. ●

What skills will you need?

There is strong demand for graduates with the right blend of skills throughout the technology sector. Find out what employers are looking for and give yourself a cutting edge in the recruitment and selection process.

Hard skills

If you're seeking a career in a tech-heavy role like software developer, software tester or network engineer, you will need to be proficient in the relevant programming languages and possess the technical skills employers seek. Some employers have noted a skills gap among graduates in these areas; so you may need to invest in extra study beyond your degree to acquire all the skills necessary to land the job you desire. Spend time researching the specific skills you need to develop for the types of IT graduate schemes that interest you and invest time outside of your university studies to acquire these skills.

Having a range of programming languages will broaden the range of career opportunities open to you. Areas related to programming are among those in highest demand. While Java is hugely popular, graduates with such languages as C#, .NET, C++, HTML5 and Python are also sought by many employers, as are those with a strong understanding of digital design. Employers often find that the graduate candidates most well-versed in the relevant programming languages have acquired their skills through work experience, or they are programming hobbyists who spend their own time developing their programming language skills. Such individuals have the advantage of being able to display their ambition and enthusiasm for this area.

If you can show a prospective employer a practical example of your skills in use, rather than simply your qualifications, you will have an immediate advantage over other candidates. While in university, build a working website for yourself or a family member's small business, or if you're confident enough, establish yourself as a freelance web designer while studying. The ability to show that you already have

the trust of clients of your own (even if it is only a relative) will be appreciated by potential employers. Plus, it's a way to make some extra cash before you land a graduate job. While in university, think about joining a club or society based around your interest in coding or designing. Not only will this help you develop your skills and learn from your peers, it will show employers that you have initiative and leadership skills, and enjoy being part of a team.

An area where invaluable experience can be easily gained is in the world of Open Source projects. Open Source Software (OSS) is software whose copyright holder has made its source code available to the public to develop and work with. Users are encouraged to find solutions to problems within the code, or to add to the code. Hundreds of Open Source projects are looking for contributors at any one time, with most adding their projects to **github.com**, where you will find Open Source projects from a variety of sources; even the US government's usually secretive National Security Agency has begun to share Open Source code. This gives you a chance to gain experience and add some very impressive names to your CV. It will also show employers that you possess the ability to contribute to team projects.

Soft skills

While your technical skills are your bread and butter when it comes to landing a role in IT, it's not the only thing employers will look for in applicants. Particularly for more business-focused roles like consulting, IT graduate schemes will require soft skills and commercial awareness. For such roles, technical graduates will often find themselves competing with arts or social science graduates, so developing your soft skills is vital. ●

Five essential soft skills to develop

Communication

Technology may be present in every business, but it still takes humans to run those businesses. IT professionals are required to possess an ability to communicate effectively with people at all levels in an organisation, from PC end-users and helpdesk assistants to company directors. An ability to listen and understand, and to explain the relevant technology to clients with varying degrees of understanding of said technology, is crucial. Those IT professionals in client-focused roles must be able to communicate clearly with clients to understand and define system requirements. Demonstrate your communication skills by keeping verbal and written communication clear, concise and confident. Display an understanding of your audience and an ability to tailor your communication to them. Show that you can listen to and consider the views of others; and think before you speak.

Planning and organisation

IT is a project-focused industry, one in which good planning and organisation skills are essential. The need to manage tasks on a variety of projects with differing deadlines and competing priorities means effective planning, and the ability to anticipate problems and challenges and transform them into positive opportunities is a must. Demonstrate your planning

and organisation skills by showing that you can add structure to a task or project; highlighting how you scope out an activity and allocate time to individual tasks. Display how you anticipate challenges and issues that could arise and plan contingencies.

Drive and enthusiasm

To work in this incredibly fast-paced industry, drive and motivation are essential. Candidates need to enjoy accepting new challenges, pushing boundaries and looking towards the future. Graduate recruiters appreciate enthusiasm from their candidates because they know enthusiastic people are motivated people. Demonstrate your drive, motivation and enthusiasm by displaying your determination to achieve an end result and demonstrate that you can maintain your optimism and enthusiasm, even when things get rough, showing an ability to bounce back from setbacks by knowing what makes you tick and what types of tasks and activities you most enjoy performing.

Problem-solving

Working in tech requires an ability to define problems in a timely manner, identify the root causes and subsequently gather the relevant information to find appropriate solutions. But problem-solving goes beyond resolving technical issues alone. You may also be required to

suggest enhancements to existing procedures and processes to deliver improved service, a better product and, most importantly, satisfied clients. Demonstrate your problem-solving skills by displaying that you can take a logical and analytical approach to problem solving. Show that you can view problems from a number of angles; demonstrating that you can anticipate potential pitfalls and act to prevent them happening.

Teamwork

Teamwork is essential for sharing knowledge, establishing and building relationships and supporting the people involved in a project. It requires interpersonal skills and, at times, leadership qualities so that you can consider and respond appropriately to the behaviour and motives of others, adapt your personal style accordingly or step out in front to bring others with you. Demonstrate your teamwork skills by displaying an ability to build and maintain positive working relationships. Demonstrate how you share information with others, support others and show respect for alternative views. Show how you have contributed to keeping projects on track and achieving a final goal; working sensitively and cooperatively with others; showing how you have considered and identified what motivates others and how you have led by example.

Tech sector salaries

According to the latest gradireland data, technology graduates in Ireland are making around €39k in their first job, on average. Technology is an area with strong earning potential but remember to focus on the right job and develop your skills first.

Should I negotiate?

At entry level, there is rarely room to negotiate a higher salary, however, some IT companies do have salary ranges. Your placement within these will depend on your academic qualifications, previous experience and performance in the selection process. You should research and find out exactly what level of experience and education will land you the starting salary you deserve. Recent data from the Central Statistics Office found that graduates from technology courses earn significantly more in their first five years after leaving college than other graduates, earning an average of €815 a week.

Do postgrads earn more?

If you possess a master's degree or PhD, some employers may place you on a higher starting salary. A postgraduate degree is one factor that could contribute to a higher starting salary.

Future earnings

The average salary for an experienced IT professional varies greatly depending on whether they are in support or development or are a contractor. Personal motivation and your willingness to push yourself will determine how much you can earn.

According to research by recruitment agency CPL, the median salary for a junior developer is €38,000, this rises to €55,000 for an associate software engineer and €82,000 for a full stack developer. Median salaries for senior engineers rise to €90-100k.

According to the Brightwater Salary Survey, the salary for systems administrators ranges between €50k and €70k. For an IT support role, you would be looking at between €40k and €60k and up to €65k for a team lead.

Average salaries for data analysts range from €50k to €60k and go up to €75k for business data analysts. Data engineers and data scientists earn upwards of €65k.

When looking at cyber security specialisations, according to the Brightwater Salary Survey 2024, an information security engineer earns between €65k and €95k. Information security architects and network security architects earn between €80k and €110k.

Remember that you will need to gain experience and develop and prove your skills in a work environment before you can command any of these higher salaries. Continuous professional development is a very important part of progressing in the IT sector. Your skills are a vital part of your employability toolkit, but you'll need to match them with a willingness to work and learn and soft skills such as communication and teamwork. ●

Areas of work

Technology plays a core role in almost every organisation and activity imaginable today. Many areas of work are listed here in the following pages, but make sure you also visit **gradireland.com/organisations** to see a full list of potential graduate employers across all sectors.

Information technology plays a fundamental role in almost every organisation, business and institution. Therefore, qualified professionals can find themselves happily working in a wide range of different circumstances; they can be self-employed, working for private industry, operating for the civil service, or acting on behalf of an NGO or charity. Furthermore, the catch-all phrase 'IT professional' disguises a huge range of very distinct specialities. 'Working in IT' encompasses everything from the fundamental design and programming of computer systems; to the testing, maintenance and support of those systems; to the sales and marketing of those systems to the general public; to the training of other professionals. That's quite a range of employment possibilities.

Where can you work?

At the most obvious level, IT graduates can find themselves working for the companies that produce hardware and software, but these only account for some of the roles on offer. Nowadays, every organisation and institution uses IT at some level. These range from financial services companies to charity organisations, and it means that graduates can, if they wish, seek work within almost any sector. The job descriptions on the following pages cover the main areas of employment in the software industry; however, it needs to be stressed that job titles can be interpreted very differently from organisation to organisation. In today's more flexible career market, specific roles do not necessarily imply a clear-cut list of responsibilities. It's always important to thoroughly research the role you're applying for. ●

Programmer/software developer

Programming is at the very core of IT. Many IT graduates start out on their career path as programmers, and programming is the basis of a wide range of processes, skills and activities. But what does it actually involve? Well, the work varies hugely, depending on both the organisation and the software being produced, but all programmers essentially write instructions that a computer can interpret. This means establishing a detailed specification and clarifying exactly what a programme needs to do, then breaking the specification down to its simplest elements and translating this into an appropriate programming language.

Different tasks require different programming languages, but those most in demand are Python, Java, JavaScript, SQL and C++. Most programmers specialise in a few different languages, and the ability to learn and adapt quickly is a must.

There are two distinct areas of expertise within programming: applications programmers and systems programmers (also known as systems developers).

Applications programmers write programmes that process and manage incoming information on the computer (database systems): including anything from payroll data to scientific calculations.

Systems programmers deal with the internal operations of the computer: this could involve designing diagnostic programs to finding faults, or controlling the way a computer runs several applications simultaneously.

Programmers usually create programmes from specifications designed by systems analysts or borne out of direct consultation with clients – the size and role of the organisation will determine the source. Programmers generally specialise in commercial data work, scientific applications or computing, or programmes for the home or educational computer market. Working hours are generally a standard seven to eight hour day, but this can change depending on the project, and flexibility is important.

Programmers can work anywhere – IT and programming language skills are universal and very exportable. The UK and the USA are common destinations; many American companies are based in Ireland so opportunities for transfer within the same company do exist. If you're multilingual, there are also opportunities all over Europe.

Not all programmers confine themselves to, well, programming. An analyst/ programmer can successfully analyse a small organisation's computing needs, design an appropriate system and write the applications programme.

So what do you need to become a programmer? Patience, mathematical aptitude and strong problem-solving skills are a must. Being able to work as part of a team is essential, as is proficiency in more than one computer language, along with knowledge of software engineering.

Opportunities for promotion are good; a background in programming is valued in most IT careers as it provides a solid backbone of knowledge. Programmers can discover their strengths and then use their skills to move into other areas; for example, those with a flair for teamwork and communication often end up becoming project managers. ●

Systems analyst/ business analyst

Systems analysts and business analysts bridge the technical divide between skilled and specialised ICT professionals and the less-technologically savvy clients who need their skills. When a business or organisation needs a system to manage information or processes, they often acquire the services of a systems analyst. The analyst assesses and analyses the customers' needs, creates an exact specification of what sort of application might be required and passes it on to a programmer, after which the analyst will guide the project from coding through testing and onto final implementation. A business analyst's work is generally similar to that of a systems analyst, but the focus is on processes and activities within the business environment (business analysts will often have a background in business and IT, either through a combined degree or an add-on IT qualification). Both professions need to be fluent and comfortable with the technical and non-technical aspects of the job, cognisant of both the needs of technically less competent end-users and the expertise of the programmers.

In recent years organisations have tended to employ systems analysts on a contract or consultancy basis, so increasingly professionals in the field are self-employed. Generally speaking, however, systems analysts need a few years' experience under their belts before setting up independently. Many begin in more specialised roles, which equip them with the necessary technical background, before then deciding to move towards the arguably more sociable world of systems analysis.

Indeed, systems analysis requires a lot more of the so-called 'soft' skills. Professionals in the field need to be expert communicators, skilled at evaluating their client's needs and often called upon to work with employees whose very jobs are being turned around (or replaced) by the systems they're charged with designing. Success as an analyst is very much dependent on an individual's ability to interpret the needs of their clients, to communicate their requirements to the programmers, and to then see the whole project through to completion. A good systems or business analyst figures out what the job is, and then gets it done. ●

Web developer

Although no company is without a website, much of the mystery has been taken out of web development in recent years, and this is serving to weed out some of the lower-skilled, template-based pretenders who had been saturating the market. However, there are still web development jobs out there for highly-skilled professionals, and there are new opportunities emerging every day thanks to the explosion in mobile telecommunications and m-commerce (e-commerce through mobile telephony).

At its best, web development is a skilled and interdisciplinary profession involving the design, maintenance and testing of websites, and which integrates IT, design and business skills. On the technical side, candidates should be familiar with HTML, ASP, SQL and Javascript, C++ and Visual Basic. But it's important to note that committed professionals need to keep abreast of changing technology and trends in the field.

The type of work can vary. Some graduates might find themselves working for software companies on the development of web applications, while others will find themselves designing actual websites. Large organisations typically employ their own web developers, and so new candidates can find themselves working within a team for retail businesses, web consultancies, government organisations or software companies. In these environs, a new employee might be involved in only a single aspect of the work (such as programming in Javascript or testing and maintenance), but as they progress through their career they would increasingly be required to liaise with clients and spearhead projects. At this level web development can be seen as a collaborative process with the client, and so people skills as well as design skills are crucial.

Typically, working hours are standard, although flexibility will often be required if deadlines loom. As with many IT professions, travel opportunities are excellent for the skilled professional. ●

Network engineer

Simply put: network engineers are responsible for computer networks. All organisations and businesses, from government departments to national branches of multinational businesses, need these networks to communicate internally and externally with suppliers, clients and staff. Network engineers are the people who install, maintain and upgrade these networks. In order to do this challenging job, they need to thoroughly understand the hardware and software required for networks to function. Typical activities include installing new server hardware and software infrastructures; allocating network resources; providing technical support and training; implementing and monitoring network security; diagnosing and fixing faults and problems; as well as planning the ongoing development of the whole system. In larger organisations network engineers often start in a technical-support role and progress over time to the position of network engineer. They need to have a very strong technical background, particularly a good knowledge of LANS (local area networks) and WANS (wide area networks), but softer problem-solving, teamwork and negotiating skills are also hugely important. Often the nature of a network engineer's job will depend on the size of the organisation for which they work. In a large organisation, such as an investment bank or semi-state company, a network engineer could be responsible for just one small aspect of a very large system. In smaller organisations they could have responsibility for every aspect of the network's smooth functioning.

Whatever the size of the operation, however, network engineers need to be quick on their feet. The nature of computer networks is ever-changing. There's been huge development in the field in recent years, which means that the systems of major businesses have needed, and continue to need, ongoing upgrades and continuous development. This has provided ample opportunity for thousands of programmers and engineers to showcase their skills. Progress in the field is showing no sign of abating, which means there may be many exciting career development possibilities on the horizon. Ultimately, however, career success will be down to the graduate's ability to work under pressure. Indeed, if and when systems fail, and an organisation's operations grind to a halt, all eyes will be on the network engineer. ●

Communications engineer

As the fields of communications technology continue to expand, with more and more gadgets and more and more service providers on the market, there will be greater opportunities for trained engineers. Those with degrees in science or engineering often begin as entry-level communications engineers, although others have been known to start as installers or repair workers.

The work can vary hugely from company to company. On the one hand, trained professionals can find themselves designing or building systems and networks. On the other hand, they may be charged with servicing and maintaining an existing network. One way or another, the role requires a huge level of technical understanding. Candidates should also have a commitment to life-long learning, as it's a field that is continually evolving.

On top of this baseline of knowledge, problem-solving skills are also critical. While many know the nuts and bolts of how a network works, it takes a particularly persistent and analytical problem-solver to get to the bottom of the issues that can arise in the course of its operation. Indeed, in many cases telecoms engineers are expected to foresee network problems before they happen. Unsurprisingly then, telecoms engineers also need to be capable under pressure, as any disruption of service will need to be dealt with swiftly and efficiently and at a minimum of cost.

As well as having a high level of technical skill, engineers working with communications and telecommunications need to be extremely organised as they are often required to deliver high quality projects and repairs to a deadline and within a budget. Verbal and written skills are also crucial, as engineers will often find themselves working as part of a larger team with non-technical staff who may need to be told how development of the network might affect the end user. Essentially, it's all about communication, vital in an industry where the objective is ever-more effective methods of communicating. ●

Technical sales

Many of the careers outlined here are made possible because someone purchases the products they help to create. Technical sales professionals, more than anyone else, are aware of this commercial reality, and as long as software companies continue to win new business there will be a demand for good salespeople.

Technical salespeople tend to concentrate on particular products, services and client sectors, and spend much of their time getting their companies' products in front of prospective customers. They need not only to source customers but also to maintain contact with them, and to become sensitive to their future needs and requirements. As such, the work is very much about relationships, and technical salespeople need to have very sophisticated communication skills (these skills will manifest themselves through tender documents, phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings).

Technical sales professionals also need to have a good understanding of the technology which they're selling, as they need to be able to inform customers about its capabilities. Many are computer graduates with an interest in sales or marketing, or marketing graduates with an add-on IT qualification.

Junior technical sales is the starting point for new graduates, with many moving up the career ladder over time. Working hours are usually regular, but the job typically involves a lot of travel, which can result in early starts and late finishes (overseas travel is less likely, as cultural awareness and language skills are very important factors in successful sales).

The role can become more specialised and complex, focusing on areas as diverse as customer support, sales management or training. Over time, a technical sales professional may rise to the position of sales manager. Technical sales can be a very high-pressure field with sales targets and deadlines that need to be met. Great salespeople, however, tend to thrive under such circumstances. ●

Technical support

Technical support people are the medics of the IT world – they diagnose technology problems and then set about fixing them. They can work for hardware manufacturers, end-user companies or service companies who provide helpdesk and technical support services. Companies with a large number of computers (over 50) will often hire their own technical support staff. Although the role requires an in-depth understanding of most hardware, systems, applications and programming languages, professionals in the field will be particularly competent in the technology relevant to the organisation they work for.

Technical support people are expected to ensure that all systems and applications are running smoothly and seamlessly. Although the work often overlaps with other roles, they are the people at the coalface who roll up their sleeves and face computer problems head on. Core activities include tracking the source of technical faults, identifying viruses and security weaknesses and working with end-users (these may be clients or colleagues). In some instances the work may be done entirely at a helpdesk or call-centre, with all communication done by remote-access, telephone or email.

Employment prospects in technical support are broad. People often start out at first- or second-level support. Opportunities for promotion and career development are greater with larger organisations, but movement is an option. It's an exciting field. New network technologies are constantly emerging with huge implications for the world of commerce. What's more, destructive trouble-making viruses and other threats are being discovered on a daily basis. Technical support specialists are required to keep abreast of these new technologies and threats.

Opportunities to travel are good, especially for those with specialist, unusual or sought-after technical skills. As nobody knows when a computer problem might strike, working hours can be long and unsociable. Many organisations need a technical support person to be on call 24/7, and work is often on a shift basis, involving regular night work.

Candidates need the ability to think clearly, to work well under pressure, and to be patient communicating with non-technical end-users. Ultimately, it's a perfect job for technically adept graduates who like to solve problems. ●

AI developer

Artificial intelligence is a broad field of study that aims to build computer systems that imitate and predict human intelligence and behaviour. Organisations have been incorporating more and more AI (artificial intelligence) into their business. Therefore, the job prospects for those interested in AI development have been getting better and better. AI has the potential to make a big impact in a range of industries such as logistics, healthcare, national security and finance. AI developers build AI systems and tools using approaches such as machine learning, deep learning and neural networks. These systems improve efficiency and cut costs and can help businesses innovate.

AI developers write, test and deploy code. They need to be able to teach machines how to carry out tasks and solve problems the way a human would. The first step to working in AI is to gain an understanding of how Artificial intelligence works.

AI developers and engineers require strong technical skills, soft skills and a good grounding in theory. Apart from mastering popular programming languages such as Java, Python and R and specialised languages such as Lisp, C++ and Scala, AI developers need to be good at probability, statistics and linear algebra. Anyone interested in this field should also be familiar with big data technologies. AI developers should also work on their soft skills. Skills such as teamwork, creativity and problem-solving are critical to this role. ●

Project manager

Project managers lead teams of IT professionals – programmers, analysts and designers – who work together to produce a new piece or system of software. They also consult with, and report to clients, and deal with suppliers. Strictly speaking, a project manager doesn't need to be strong on technical skills: the emphasis is very much on management, organisational and people skills. Most project managers, however, have programming or engineering backgrounds; this lends them more credibility with technical team members and equips them better when dealing with clients.

It's a job for people who can handle a lot of responsibility. At the core of the job is the organisation of both people and time resources, and a project manager is responsible for seeing the project through from beginning to end. It's not a position for novices; IT graduates need to have at least three or four years' experience before becoming full-time project managers. They often move into consultancy after they have amassed more experience.

Working hours are normal, but overtime is commonplace, and project managers must be ready to deal with whatever obstacles may arise. Opportunities to travel are good, particularly at consultancy level where there is an increased possibility that you will be employed by an organisation overseas.

New opportunities for project managers are emerging all the time. The electronic and mobile commerce revolution means exciting new software technologies for project managers. And the employer's focus on 'softer' people skills, such as communication, interaction, management and negotiation skills, will become even more crucial.

Ideal candidates have a good level of relevant technical knowledge and excellent people skills. Specific project management skills, such as risk management, are also very useful. Project managers need to have a positive, confident attitude. They need to be flexible and able to communicate and motivate people effectively. Initially, they may take on projects part-time and move into an established position with time. ●

Software testers utilise troubleshooting skills when investigating why a defect happens and then locate the source of the problem.

Software tester/quality assurance engineer

Technology is continuously evolving, and so too have the jobs within the sector. With the continuing evolution of mobile, cloud, social media and big-data; technology is ubiquitous in everything from our ATMs, smartphones, TVs, fridges, game consoles, in-car entertainment systems to our doctors' surgeries. All of these devices are powered by increasingly complex software, so reliability and quality is paramount. The software not only needs to function as designed, but it needs to perform, to scale to millions of users, be resilient 24/7, accessible to users of varying abilities and, ultimately, it needs to be secure. The 'gatekeeper' of this quality control process is the software tester or quality assurance engineer.

Software testing as a career remains somewhat of an enigma amongst IT graduates in terms of the opportunities it offers. A modern software tester performs many roles and requires a diverse range of skills. While developers find creative ways of building software, testers find creative ways of breaking it so that the defects can be resolved before putting the software in front of end-users.

So what does the career of a software tester involve? There are many paths that a tester can take within the IT industry. No longer is a software tester confined to writing and executing monotonous and repetitive manual test cases to ensure the software does what it is supposed to do – these tests can now be easily automated and executed across a myriad of devices out of hours, which frees up the tester to focus on more value-added tasks. Testers need to have analytical skills to ensure requirements are clear and unambiguous. It is important that they are determined and systematic in their search for defects, not just proving that the system works but also that it can withstand the unpredictable actions of the end-user.

Software testers utilise troubleshooting skills when investigating why a defect happens and then locate the source of the problem. They require the organisational skills of a project manager to plan testing activities and to be able to work to tight deadlines. Being a good communicator and team player is vital as testers must work with developers, business analysts, project managers and end users. A software tester is a negotiator,

an influencer and the provider of information on the quality of the software products and the risks. They should also have the ability to work on their own initiative.

Software testing now encompasses skills more traditionally associated with programming or development. Automation or performance testers use software testing tools (open source or enterprise) as well as scripting languages to find faster, more efficient ways of exposing weaknesses in software. The advantage of this type of work is that it is often 'green-field', or starting from scratch. It involves a level of creativity and freedom not always experienced in development roles and provides the opportunity to be innovative. Software testing offers a proven career path to graduates, starting as a test analyst and then growing into test leads, test managers, programme test manager and, ultimately, head of testing/quality.

Are you curious about how things work? Do you like to break and fix things? Do you like to meet new and diverse people? Are you interested in new technology across all business sectors? Do you have excellent attention to detail? Then consider a career in the world of software testing. ●

Data analyst

Data-related roles have shot up in popularity over the past few years and show no signs of slowing down.

All sorts of businesses and organisations require skilled data analysts to help them process, make sense of and put to use the large amounts of valuable raw data that is available to them.

Data analysis is all about collecting, organising and interpreting statistical information to make it useful to a range of businesses and organisations. A data analyst is someone who scrutinises information using data analysis tools. The meaningful results they pull from the raw data helps their employers or clients make important decisions by identifying various facts and trends. A data analyst can also be known as a data scientist, data analytics officer or a digital analytics officer.

Some of the roles of a data analyst include:

- Using advanced computerised models to extract the data needed
- Removing corrupted data
- Performing initial analysis to assess the quality of the data
- Providing further analysis to determine the meaning of the data
- Completing final analysis to provide additional data screening
- Preparing reports based on analysis and present to management

There is strong demand for qualified and experienced data analysts, but it can be a competitive field. You can gain a competitive edge by obtaining a master's degree in a field like finance or statistics. Career progression prospects are good in larger companies and organisations.

Data analysts will require a high level of natural mathematical ability and very strong IT skills. Knowledge of coding systems like SQL and Oracle would also be a huge benefit, as would be the ability to analyse, model and interpret important data. Data analysts need strong problem solving competencies and a methodical and logical approach to their work with the ability to accurately plan work and meet deadlines. An exacting attention to detail is also a must, as is the ability to coordinate work with others and work effectively as part of a team, with excellent written and spoken communication skills, including report writing.

The usual entry point is a degree in statistics, mathematics or a related subject involving maths, such as economics or data science. Other degrees are also acceptable if they include informal training in statistics as part of the course, for instance, social science or informatics. ●

There is strong demand for qualified and experienced data analysts but it can be a competitive field. You can gain a competitive edge by obtaining a master's degree in a field like finance or statistics.

Businesses are now seeking professionals who can help them manage and lower the risks involved in moving to the cloud.

Cloud computing

Traditionally, users would store their software and data on their own PCs, devices and media drives, but this model is rapidly changing as users are increasingly accessing software and storing their data on 'The Cloud', i.e. the internet. For example, anytime you use any of Google's apps (Gmail, Google Docs, Google Sheets etc), you're engaging in cloud computing, as all of the data involved is stored on Google's cloud. Similarly, when you upload your photos and videos to social media, you're essentially sending them to the cloud.

The main benefit of cloud computing is that users can access their data from anywhere they can access the internet. It also removes the worry of losing all your software and data should your PC or device break down. The need to install software on your own system is also eliminated, with online-only versions of popular apps like Microsoft Office accessible through a web browser.

In the business world, companies are increasingly turning to the cloud rather than local network storage. There are three main services implemented by businesses in their use of the cloud. 'Software as a Service' (SaaS) sees businesses subscribe to applications accessed over the internet. 'Platform as a Service' (PaaS) allows businesses to create their own custom cloud-based software, which can then be accessed by all their employees. 'Infrastructure as a Service' (IaaS) is where large scale providers like Google and Amazon rent out their infrastructure for use by other companies.

As cloud computing grows in popularity among businesses, new career opportunities for those with the necessary skills continue to emerge. Positions available in the field of cloud computing cover a very broad range, from developers and architects to security professionals and data scientists.

Given its constantly evolving nature, working with cloud technology requires a continuous updating of your education. Vendor-specific training and certifications are offered by the majority of cloud providers, but acquiring vendor-neutral certifications will help you stand out from other applicants and make you more employable.

As cloud computing is still developing, many current positions are with companies still in the process of defining their relationship with the cloud, whether accessing SaaS, PaaS or IaaS services, or building their own cloud from scratch.

Cloud architects require specific knowledge of cloud computing technology and providers, and they must possess the ability to mould clouds to fit the needs of a business. Candidates for such roles should have enterprise architecture and/or service-oriented architecture experience, along with a base knowledge of cloud computing technology.

Despite all its benefits, there are still concerns regarding the safety of cloud computing. As a result, it has become the key area for those seeking a career in IT security. Businesses are now seeking professionals who can help them manage and lower the risks involved in moving to the cloud. Security audit services are in high demand, and applicants for such positions should hone their skills to focus on understanding the risks involved in cloud computing.

Along with the obvious technical skills, interpersonal skills are also required. As cloud computing is still so new, IT professionals working in the field will often find their knowledge level greatly outweighs that of their employer, so good communication skills are vital. The ability to advise your employer on the direction they should take their business in a language they will understand, and make them feel comfortable with your choices, is essential. ●

User Experience (UX)

A User Experience (UX) Designer is a technical role that is responsible for presenting a product's development in a way that is attractive and convenient for users. A UX designer is responsible for creating interactive programmes that enhance a customer's experience by simulating the user's journey with a brand. UX designers also need to have a working understanding of coding and transfer the brand's strength through the interface of a product.

As the position combines elements of programming, psychology and digital design, a UI designer requires specialised training in all areas to deliver quality products and services. A bachelor's degree in computer science, web development, graphic design or a related field is essential. Individuals who enjoying bringing abstract concepts to life and working with clients to improve their business marketing platforms tend to perform well in the position of UX.

Responsibilities for UX Designers
- Improve the look and feel of interactive computers and product software
- Create overall concepts for the user experience within a business web page or software product, ensuring all interactions are intuitive and easy for customers
- Analyse customer responses and website data to determine high traffic web pages and why some perform better than others
- Design the aesthetics to be implemented within a website or product, from the layout menus and drop-down options to colours and fonts
- Build storyboards to conceptualise designs and convey project plans to clients and management
- Account for and track the human-computer interaction (HCI) element of a design
- Create surveys for research through various social media platforms to gather feedback on users' ease-of-use

- Conduct testing of completed applications, websites and software to assess user experience

Qualifications
- Proficient with visual design programs such as Adobe Photoshop
- Ability to work effectively in a collaborative environment to create top-performing interfaces
- Experience creating storyboards and site mapping
- Advanced problem-solving skills and the ability to optimise data for the best possible outcome
- Ability to prioritise and manage multiple milestones and projects efficiently
- Professional written and interpersonal skills
- Continued education and research into UI trends, current design strategy and technology
- Experience with coding and ability to troubleshoot using HTML, CSS and comparable languages. ●

A UX designer is responsible for creating interactive programmes that enhance a customer's experience by simulating the user's journey with a brand.

Tech sector interviews

IT employers use interviews to assess your technical abilities, but usually their aim isn't just to evaluate how much knowledge you have amassed in one specific area. They are also interested in your ability to deal with unfamiliar technical issues and acquire new skills.

Types of tests you should expect

Employers may assess you with practical tests, presentations, design exercises, technical questions, or a combination of all of the above. To assess your problem-solving skills, you may be asked to comment on a range of scenarios or hypothetical situations of increasing complexity. Before the interview begins, you may be required to take part in a short design exercise or code analysis activity. You will then be asked to present your solution and explain your findings. The interviewers may ask you how you might revise the system or code if given more time. This may even happen prior to the interview itself, in the form of online tests as the first stage of the selection process or a presentation given to a group at an assessment centre.

Getting to grips with unique problems

In the workplace, you'll often be asked questions to which no textbook answer exists – e.g. 'How can we make this process run faster?' You may also be required to come up to speed with new technologies in a short space of time. Recruiters will often challenge candidates with problems they're unlikely to have come across before. Keep calm and simply give it your best shot. Show the interviewer how you might approach finding a solution, even if you don't have the solution. Remember, how you solve the problem is being evaluated just as much as your final answer.

Focus on your preparation

Make sure you fully understand what the employer does and review the job description carefully. While you won't be required to possess in-depth knowledge of all the company's areas of expertise, it's likely some of the questions you face will relate to these. Be prepared to answer questions on anything you add to your CV. If you've engaged in project work, expect to be pressed on what it entailed, as recruiters use this to assess how you may have tackled problems. When discussing your project in an interview, briefly

explain the key objectives of the work and focus on the skills and techniques you employed and mention how you overcame any difficulties that arose. If it was a group project, explain what your specific role was and how you integrated your skills into the group.

You may be asked what you do for fun. While you can tailor your answer to suit the role you're being interviewed for, be honest or you could easily be caught out. Simply smile and share what you enjoy.

Don't be passive

Most interviewers will stick to a set interview format and ask their questions in a specific order. While you shouldn't attempt to hijack the interview and disrupt their method, neither should you remain passive. Sell your skills and experience in a clear manner while remaining within the framework of the interview.

Make sure you communicate the relevant experience and attributes you possess. Don't assume the interviewer is aware of your achievements as they may not be the same person that screened your application. If asked about your weaknesses, don't attempt to disguise a strength as a weakness (eg 'I'm too much of a perfectionist'); rather be honest and display how you might work to overcome any weaknesses. Interviewers will often conclude the interview by asking if you have anything to add; take advantage of this and raise any key points you didn't get a chance to mention.

It's always a good idea to have some questions prepared for the interviewer. Asking about the company or specific aspects of the role helps demonstrate your interest.

Be polite and friendly

Viewing your interviewers as normal people will relax you and help you come off in a more natural manner. Making some polite but genuine small talk will help you stand out as a thoughtful and mature candidate, one who can interact with others in a business context. ●

AREAS OF WORK

Your technology career planner

Non-finalists

2025

AUTUMN

- Apply for summer internships or placements for 2026. While some employers refuse to take students before their penultimate year, that's not always the case. Deadlines for applications can sometimes end before Christmas, and many recruiters won't wait until the closing date to start filling places.
- Develop valuable transferable skills by helping to run a club or society at your university.

2026

WINTER

- Apply for any remaining internships or placement years.
- If you fail to find an internship, look into other options for the summer, like gaining technology-related experience through a temp job in IT support or shadowing an IT professional. Any role should help to develop your transferable skills.

SPRING

- If you have a choice as to your modules or projects for the next academic year, find out which options are most related to the work of the employers that interest you. If the necessary information isn't available on the company's website, phone its recruitment team.
- For a foreign holiday this summer, consider independent travel rather than a package holiday. This will help develop your planning and problem-solving skills, which will impress employers and will prove more likely to provide experiences you can mention in a job interview than an 18–35 package.

SUMMER

- If you're involved in an internship, job or voluntary role, keep a record of the tasks you perform, whom you work with, any improvements you implement and challenges you overcome. This will give you essential experiences to draw on in applications and interviews.
- If you fail to land a job, spend the summer working on an IT project of your own making, like designing and developing a website, app or database that might be of use to you or your family or friends.
- Research the IT companies that interest you most to ensure you are prepared to apply for internships or graduate jobs in the autumn.

Final-year students

AUTUMN

- Apply for graduate jobs and schemes. While some have application deadlines before Christmas, others will have already filled many of their graduate scheme places by then, regardless of the stated closing date.
- Applying in the autumn term is ideal if you wish to pursue postgraduate study. Popular courses fill their places quickly, and some universities require you to accept a place before you can apply for funding. Deadlines for funding vary greatly and it can prove financially costly if you miss them.

WINTER

- Continue applying for graduate schemes. Some will accept applications into the new year or have 'open' deadlines, though they will close once they have filled the places.
- Make any remaining applications for postgraduate study or funding.
- Prepare for interviews and assessment centres, and factor in time for both alongside your university work. Have a respectable outfit ready for any interviews.

SPRING

- Focus on getting through your exams, and take a break from job-hunting if necessary. The better your qualifications, the more jobs will ultimately be open to you.

SUMMER

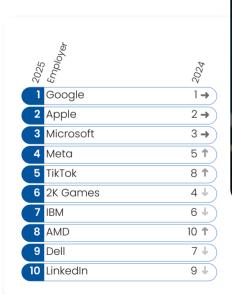- Keep an eye out for immediate vacancies with small employers that don't run graduate schemes.
- Look for graduate internships on gradireland.com.
- Be aware that some graduate schemes may still have a place available for the autumn due to companies struggling to recruit or graduates dropping out at the last minute.
- If you have a job, give yourself a decent break but be prepared for work to make a great first impression.

Top employers in technology

Every year, we carry out a survey of students to decide the most popular graduate employers in the country. The **Cibyl Ireland Graduate Survey** is the largest annual career survey in Ireland, and the votes decide the winners of the **gradireland Graduate Recruitment Awards** and the composition of **Ireland's 100 leading graduate employers.** Here is the winner and shortlist for technology.

2025	Employer	2024
1	Google	1 →
2	Apple	2 →
3	Microsoft	3 →
4	Meta	5 ↑
5	TikTok	8 ↑
6	2K Games	4 ↓
7	IBM	6 ↓
8	AMD	10 ↑
9	Dell	7 ↓
10	LinkedIn	9 ↓

Training and career development: a tech career

Technology now plays an integral part in every business and organisation, and there are any number of ways a career in the industry might evolve. Nowadays, you don't necessarily need to be a computer science graduate to carve out a successful career. Recruiters employ graduates from the entire spectrum of degree disciplines who can demonstrate a serious interest in technology, with many recruiters preferring to hire graduates with previous work experience (not always within the IT sector).

On the other hand, there are also more traditional ways into the field. A computer science graduate might start out as a programmer, software developer, systems analyst or web developer. With a few years' experience, however, these roles can develop in a number of different directions. Some might find themselves moving into contracting or consultancy (the flexibility of these roles certainly suits some people); others might use their people skills and organisational ability to move into a training role; while still more pursue increasing specialisation and expertise (ideally becoming totally indispensable in the process!).

Career diversity

In general, there's a rich diversity of career paths open to graduates in the high-tech industry. Technology is ever-changing, which means that, so too, are the job prospects. Constant on-the-job learning is, of course, crucial, as is a wider general awareness of the field (ideally this desire to learn will be motivated by a genuine interest in the job). By keeping abreast of, and becoming experts in, new technologies, professionals can find their careers developing in ways they never predicted when they first dipped their toes in the IT waters. The variety isn't just in the nature of technology. The sheer range of potential workplaces, from huge international corporations to small flexible NGOs, means that skilled professionals have a certain amount of mobility and a good chance of finding an environment where they feel happy and comfortable. ●

Postgraduate study

A good postgraduate qualification can be a great place to kick-start your career.

How postgraduate study or professional qualifications can help

IT is one of the easiest fields to convert to. One-year courses are the normal route in, such as the Higher Diploma in Applied Science (Applied Computing Technology) offered by University College Cork, the Higher Diploma in Computer Science at the SETU, or the Graduate Diploma in Information Technology at Dublin City University.

Pure conversion courses, such as DCU's Diploma in Information Technology, are designed specifically to fast-track graduates from other disciplines into an IT career.

For unemployed people in receipt of social welfare payments, many postgraduate courses in ICT are currently offered free of charge as part of the government's Springboard initiative. Participants also get to keep their social welfare payments. Preference for acceptance to a course is given to the long-term unemployed, though all people receiving Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit are eligible.

Multidisciplinary postgraduate programmes, such as University College Cork's MSc in Bioinformatics, have also become very popular, reflecting the convergence of formerly distinct fields such as pharmaceuticals and ICT in recent years.

Professional bodies, such as BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT in the UK and Northern Ireland, also offer industry-accredited courses such as the Professional Graduate Diploma in IT. ●

Professional bodies and trade associations

- Technology in Ireland (IDA) www.idaireland.com
- BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT www.bcs.org
- Institution of Engineering and Technology www.theiet.org
- Technology Ireland www.technology-ireland.ie
- Irish Computer Society www.ics.ie
- InvestNI (ICT and electronics) www.investni.com
- Science Foundation Ireland www.sfi.ie

Further study and courses

- Check out gradireland.com/search/courses for a searchable database of computing and IT courses in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Visit springboardcourses.ie for information about that initiative.

Conversion courses in technology

Conversion courses offer graduates the opportunity to change direction from their undergraduate studies to focus on a new area entirely. These courses can be a great springboard to a more vocational or specialised area.

Conversion courses are typically one-year taught courses and are available in most subject areas, but there is often a particular focus on technology, with most of the major third level institutions offering conversion courses in some area of technology.

Conversion courses can be taken as the first step towards a postgraduate degree or standalone qualifications, and they are highly valued by employers. If you feel you didn't reach full potential at undergraduate level, a conversion course can offer a chance to redress the balance. Given the high rate of graduate employment in the area, it's not surprising that many graduates consider a conversion programme related to technology.

Courses typically last for one year and offer a solid grounding in the theory and practice of computer science.

Many colleges offer cross-departmental programmes such as the Higher Diploma in Computer Science (Applied Computing Technology) at University College Cork, the Higher Diploma in Science in Computing at TU Dublin and the Higher Diploma in Science (Software Development) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. There is also

the ICT Skills Computing conversion course at SETU. Students who wish to move into IT in a particular subsector of the industry may wish to explore UCD's taught master's programme in computer science by negotiated learning.

This flexible and innovative programme helps students to customise their learning to their individual student needs and their prior learning experiences. As well as data science, cloud computing, software engineering, forensics and security, artificial intelligence and cognitive science, students can choose a range of tailored modules to aid their specialisation such as app design, data mining, recommender systems or computer graphics. DCU runs a very successful Graduate Diploma in IT, which is a one-year conversion course. The entry requirement is a 2.1 degree in any discipline, and the course attracts people from all walks of life.

A postgraduate conversion course in IT can fast-track you on to a master's, such as UCC's MSc in Interactive Media, Trinity College Dublin's MSc in Computer Science, or an MSc in Applied Data Science & Analytics at TU Dublin.

For employers, they accept that conversion courses provide an alternative pipeline of much needed talent, but some would still view a graduate coming from a four-year degree in the same discipline as someone coming from a one-year conversion course. Also, it is worth remembering that when employers talk about skills shortages in IT, they are not talking about all areas of IT, so do your research about what skills are particularly in demand, and choose a conversion course that focuses on these areas, or at least incorporates significant elements of these areas.

Visit gradireland.com/search/courses?search= to find a conversion course that suits you. ●

MY CAREER IN TECHNOLOGY

Henry Ballinger

Custom Software Engineering Specialist at Accenture

What does a typical day look like for you?

A typical day can vary quite a lot. We work in an agile methodology, so we work in two-week sprints. The work can vary quite a lot depending on those sprints. For the most part I would be doing development work, but I would also take part in technical analysis meetings. Most of my time is spent on development work. I work a lot using HTML, CSS and JavaScript. My work also involves testing including unit tests, integration testing and end to end testing.

I'm also involved in extracurriculars in Accenture. I've been involved with a lot of the new joiners like the graduates that we'd have coming in. I do Icebreaker sessions with them, we'd organise get-togethers for them and morning coffees. I'm also involved with the University Action Team, where we go to colleges and careers fairs to tell students about Accenture and interest them in joining us.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

I'd say just don't be afraid to get involved; get involved as much as you can. Don't feel like your background or your degree could limit you in any way. I work with people from a broad variety of backgrounds. I came from a computer science background but some of my colleagues have backgrounds in subjects such as maths, physics, psychology, languages and business.

I would say don't be afraid if you want to pivot into a different career than what you started as your degree. Don't be afraid to apply and put yourself out there.

What do you love most about your job?

I would say the people. The people I work with came from a huge variety of backgrounds that I wouldn't necessarily have met before. We have people from all over the country and from different parts of the world.

Everyone I've met in Accenture has always been so friendly and welcoming I've never felt out of place. Everyone is happy to answer your questions. ●

> Internships will give you a better idea of the job role and help you figure out if you're interested in pursuing it.

You can watch Henry's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

You can watch Sharon's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

Sharon Bojja

Salesforce Engineer at Guidewire

What does a typical day look like for you?

A typical day involves engaging with my seniors to figure out a solution. It could be configurational or code based. We collaborate to define a process and to strategise the execution of it and code for it again in Apex code.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

I would say look out for internships and get a certification in Salesforce. There are a lot of beginner certifications out there. Internships will give you a better idea of the job role and help you figure out if you're interested in pursuing it. I started my journey with Guidewire as an intern and later on became a permanent employee.

What do you love most about your job?

I love the daily challenge. The solutions are varied; they're not restricted to something that you can just Google and execute. It involves a lot of strategising and a good knowledge of the existing system within the company because Salesforce as a tool is very diverse and its application depends on the business. ●

Niamh Doran

Technology Consulting Analyst at Deloitte

What does a typical day look like for you?

I know it's a bit cliché, but no two days are the same. I work on health and social care projects. That involves looking at how we can enhance digital capabilities within the health and social care industry. I'm looking at digital transformation projects and how we can enhance that innovation within the Health and Social Care industry.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

For women in stem there's so many opportunities. No matter what your degree or background is I'd say just go for it and take the leap into any field within science, technology, engineering and maths.

What do you love most about your job?

I love working in health and social care. Helping people is a really big value of mine. I love being able to finish a day's work and knowing that the work that I did helps somebody else on the other end of the line. It's a really nice feeling to be able to have at the end of the day. ●

> For women in stem there's so many opportunities.

You can watch Niamh's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

Amy Lenihan

Technology Graduate at Flutter

What does a typical day look like for you?

We start at 9:00 a.m. and we have our standup meetings every day. During our standup we make sure that everyone's on track and has their tasks for the day. If you're having any issues or bugs the standup meeting is a good place to ask for help, we're all there to help each other. A lot of the time I do shadowing with the team. I look at what they're doing and learn a lot from them about the different technologies and platforms they use.

I'm currently working on an introductory project which involves working on a bot that allows you to place bets with the exchange. It mimics what real time users would do.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

I'd say to have an open mind and be really open to trying new things. Don't close yourself off to different routes that you can take. For example, I had no interest whatsoever in being a developer when I was in college. I was certain I wanted to be a network engineer; I had no interest in doing anything else. When I applied to Flutter, they suggested this role for me. It was a leap of faith, and I haven't looked back since. It's been such an eye-opening experience as to how everything in computing connects.

I would also advise graduates to practice. When I first started this role, I thought I wasn't cut out to be a developer but the more I learned, the more I asked and the more I practiced, the better I became.

What do you love most about your job?

It's genuinely the people. The people are so wonderful in Flutter. The culture in the office is buzzing every day. I've never met a bunch of people in a workspace who are genuinely so invested in you. If I'm having trouble with something, I can reach out to someone over Slack and have a quick call to help get it sorted. Everyone is lovely and uplifting. Flutter really invests in their employees, and it helps up work better. ●

Harry Lillis

IT Graduate at PepsiCo

What does a typical day look like for you?

No two days are the same really. I mainly troubleshoot hardware and software problems for end-users. I'm also involved in refreshing laptops, desktops and corporate mobile phones. I also support off-site events such as town halls where I'm involved in setting up hardware.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

PepsiCo offer a range of activities to get involved in such as working with local charities, which is very rewarding. There is also a range of Microsoft certifications such as Power Fundamentals. Don't be afraid to get involved and ask questions. PepsiCo is a very welcoming place to work and with a very friendly atmosphere, so people are more than willing to help.

What do you love most about your job?

You get to meet different people from different business functions such as HR, supply chain, R&D and procurement and get to see what they do day-to-day. At the end of the IT Graduate Programme, you don't have to just stay within IT, you can move to other functions.

Pepsi also offer a lot of social events outside of work, which is a great way to network and meet different people. You also get to communicate with people on a global scale. You get to expand your network and meet people across the world. ●

Cameron Kenny

Software Engineer at Amazon

What does a typical day look like for you?

I start off my day with a coffee in the morning then after that we usually have a daily standup. During the standup we review what we've been doing and talk about any blockers we're facing. We might also demo any work we've completed.

After that you'd start on the problem you're working on. Usually there's a bit of debugging and different bits of coding you do to solve that problem.

I'm currently also the Ops Champion for our team. The Ops Champion is focused on solving customer issues with our service. After all the work is done, we usually have a game of pool or something to end the day.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

If you're a student or graduate, there's two things you should be doing. One is doing projects in your spare time. This is a great way to learn, and these projects are great for your CV.

Secondly, I'd recommend using platforms like LeetCode where you can practice solving code problems that you'll face in your interviews.

Don't be afraid to apply to internships or jobs. I was very nervous applying to Amazon, I didn't feel like I was good enough to work there. Don't let fear hold you back, apply to where you want to be and prepare for the interviews by practicing LeetCode.

What do you love most about your job?

What I love most about the job is that we're constantly getting to solve new problems. I really enjoy that there's constantly something new every day that needs to be fixed or needs to be solved or needs to be created.

I think one thing that's great about Amazon is that there's no kind of hierarchy, you can come in within a week or two and start proposing new changes. I really love getting to whiteboard with some really smart people and solving problems on a whiteboard is really fun and something I really love about the job. ●

> I'd recommend using platforms like LeetCode where you can practice solving code problems that you'll face in your interviews.

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