

Sector Summary Report IT Professionals Sector

Sector Definition

The IT Professional Sector data relates to the footprint of e-skills UK. e-skills are the Sector Skills Council for the IT, Telecoms and Contact Centre Industries. Qualifications in IT Professional relate to three related communities:

- The IT Industry
- IT Professionals working in all other sectors
- Business Managers

These communities contain a range of occupational areas in both IT Professional and Telecoms. There are links between this sector and the Financial Intermediation and Business Services sector (including Knowledge Intensive Business Services) defined as a priority in the Regional Economic Strategy.

SECTOR OVERVIEW

IT can be broken down into four related communities: the IT Industry, IT Professionals working in all other sectors, Business Managers and IT Users (Analysed in the IT User Sector Report):

The IT Industry – the 580,000 people in the UK working in companies whose primary business purpose is IT. This includes IT services (including outsourcing, internet services and web design), technology-orientated consulting (management & change), technology development, systems analysis, programming, systems testing and technology sales.

IT Professionals in other sectors – the 590,000 people in the UK in other sectors who view their primary job role to be IT – orientated. This includes IT departments and IT support staff inside organisations.

Business Managers – The IT related skills needs of the four million people performing business management and leadership roles within the UK, to enable organisations to recognise and exploit the benefits of IT in driving competitiveness and productivity.

SECTOR SKILLS MATRIX		E-Skills
		IT, Telecoms
EMPLOYES		
Number of establishments		1,000
Share of all establishments		1.7%
EMPLOYMENT		
Number of employee jobs		29,300
Share of all employee jobs		2.9%
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE		
Employees in:	Higher level occupations	38.5%
	Intermediate level occupations	57.1%
	Craft level occupations	1.6%
	Lower level occupations	2.8%
PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT CHANGE		
Projected employment change 2004-2014		42.2%

(Sector Skills Needs in the NE: Summary Matrix (modified 13 October 2008))

Future Skills Key Demand side issues for 2009/10

From research conducted by the SSCs for their Sector Skills Agreements, the following key issues were identified:

There are critical skills shortage at Level 4+, to fulfil this demand there is a need for growth in Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship numbers where there are appropriate progression routes to HE Level qualifications.

To achieve this, the LSC must work with the SSC, Employers, WBL Providers and HE to establish these progression routes and ensure that the appropriate infrastructure and funding mechanisms are in place.

As in FE females are significantly under-represented in WBL and therefore to address this imbalance in the skills pool available to the sector it is important that the LSC supports solutions that make IT careers more attractive to females.

Sector Qualification & Learning Strategies (SQLS) and Vocational Qualification Reform (VQR)

All Sector Skills Councils have recently completed their SQS and Action Plans. Through this process a variety of new and updated qualifications will emerge that are more closely aligned to the needs of employers. It is anticipated that there will be a need for providers to develop capacity and upskill their workforce to deliver new qualifications.

<http://www.e-skills.com/nvq/1844> - (You may have to register on the e- skills website to access the document).

Compacts

A sector compact is a non-contractual agreement between the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills, the Learning and Skills Council and a Sector Skills Council to work collaboratively to drive up demand for skills across England through Train to Gain.

The LSC has been working with E-Skills to develop their compact from Autumn 2008. It is anticipated that the flexibilities within the compact will facilitate growth in provision by encouraging employers to engage in more training opportunities, including raising the uptake of apprenticeships.

Economic Developments

Software City – The Sunderland Software City initiative was launched in 2007 in a bid to attract business investment, employ thousands of people and generate wealth for the Sunderland area and North East region. A range of IT Professional employers in the Sunderland area and across the region will be supported under the Software City umbrella at a number of key sites and through a variety of support services. As Software City develops and evolves it is likely to encompass a significant volume of Micro and SME businesses.

This will continue to be a key area for growth as Software city has been identified as a priority in the RDA's innovation Connectors programme.

Train to Gain

E-skills demand intelligence reports show that the IT Professional sector workforce is predominantly skilled/qualified to Level 3+ and therefore at the moment there is no great demand for Level 2 or 3 activity through the Train to Gain core offer. Consideration should be made to the additional Train to Gain level 2 and 3 qualifications lists. In the region IT Professional qualifications account for less than 1% of all Train to Gain uptake.

WBL Apprenticeships

There are a wide range of job roles for IT and Telecoms Apprentices. A job in IT and Telecoms can be in a wide variety of organisations including for example; engineering, financial services, central government, NHS and retail. Occupations include:

- Systems Support
- customer Support Technician
- Database Administrator
- Software Developer
- Web Developer
- Telecoms Engineer
- IT/Telecom Project Technician
- Games Developer

Although Apprenticeships are utilised by many of the larger employers within the IT Professional Sector, there are still a number of employers who find it difficult to engage with the Apprenticeship offer, over 90% of IT Professional employers employ less than 50 staff. In March 2008 e-skills UK received approval for the new Apprenticeship/ Advanced Apprenticeship framework for IT & Telecoms Professionals which saw the convergence of the IT Professional Framework with the Telecoms Framework.

Early discussions with the SSC and Providers have highlighted that there is likely to be a significant increase in demand from employers for this new framework as it encompasses a range of units and qualifications that are most closely aligned to skills needs of employers.

Focus Recommendations for 09/10

- Respond to the economic developments in the region with regard to skills growth and demand
- Deliver the new qualifications
- Promote New and Revised Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship Frameworks.
- Assist the SSC in raising the profile of the sector to female learners to assist in addressing the Gender imbalance.
- Support the sector during the economic downturn.