

# How to get into IT

Discover ways your child could start a career in technology.

**T**here are IT jobs available at many different levels. If your child is doing well academically it makes sense for them to start a little way up the ladder, either by going to university and then getting a graduate-level job, or by starting work after their A levels or Scottish Highers with an employer who will train them – for example via a higher apprenticeship.

## Uni first, job later

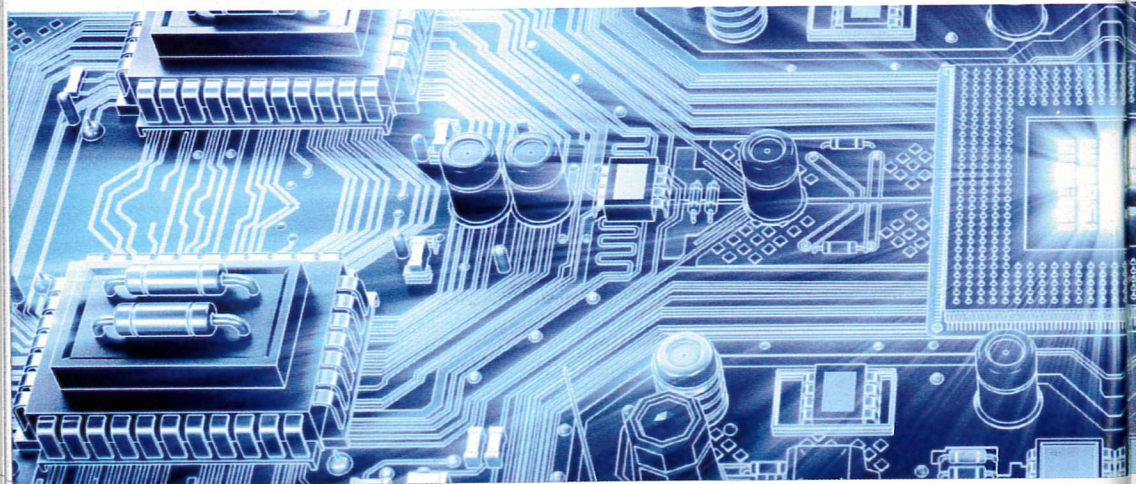
It's possible to get into an IT career as a graduate with any subject. However, broadly speaking, the less technical your child's degree the fewer roles will be open to them; as such they'll face more competition and need to be more impressive as a candidate.

- Some technology employers require a particular, IT-related degree, eg computer

science or software engineering. This is particularly the case with smaller employers, who are less able to take graduates who need lots of training.

- Some technology employers accept subjects such as engineering, science or maths for IT jobs but won't accept arts or humanities.
- Some technology employers accept graduates with any degree and train them up. In many cases this will be for slightly less technical roles. To beat the competition for these jobs, a strong academic record and extracurricular achievements will help.

There is a wide range of IT degrees available. Your child could choose a broad, technically focused subject such as computer science, a more commercially focused degree such as business IT or something a bit more specialist such as computer games design, network engineering, digital media or





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animation. See [targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors](http://targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors) for our advice on degree choices for IT careers.

A level maths is typically needed to get onto a degree in computer science or similar at a leading university, often at A or A\* grade. Less prestigious universities don't always ask for A level maths.

#### Starting work at 18

Sponsored degrees and higher apprenticeships will allow your child to start work in IT after their A levels or Scottish Highers (or equivalent) and study towards higher level qualifications at the same time. See page 10 for more detail on how such programmes work. Lower levels of apprenticeship are also available.

There are a handful of sponsored degree programmes that would enable your child to complete an IT degree while working for an employer. Participants earn a wage and have their studies paid for, meaning that they can graduate debt-free and with several years of valuable professional experience on their CV. CGI and Capgemini both run sponsored

degrees; Ford has a similar programme though it calls it a higher apprenticeship.

Several other programmes include a foundation degree – the same level of qualification as an HND, and equivalent to the first two years of a bachelors degree. Take a look at employers such as National Grid, Unilever and BAE Systems.

To get onto a programme that includes a sponsored degree or foundation degree your child will typically need three A levels (or equivalent). UCAS points requirements tend to vary between 240 (CCC) and 300 (BBB). Often their A levels need to include at least one or two science, maths or technology subjects. However, this isn't always the case – Unilever simply asks for a minimum of two A levels.

There are also numerous higher apprenticeships in IT that don't include university study. Entry requirements for these vary widely. Some employers ask for three A levels; others are happy with two. Some expect science, maths or technology subjects; others will accept any subject. And some specify minimum grades they will accept (typically Cs) while others don't. **1**

#### More help from TARGETcareers

Visit [targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/](http://targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/) to find out more about careers in IT, including:

- an overview of the types of jobs and employers in IT
- typical salaries
- advice on choosing an IT degree
- types of tests used to assess candidates for IT higher apprenticeships and sponsored degrees.