

IT Specialist

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# What Is an IT Specialist?

An IT specialist is the person that can be counted on when things fall apart. From supporting internal employees and helping to keep them productive to assisting external customers, an IT specialist seems to handle it all.

## Other duties may include the following:

Install computer hardware and peripheral components like monitors, keyboards, printers, scanners, network cards and disk drives

Load specific software packages, such as operating systems or graphic design programs

Install software and update drivers

Set up and troubleshoot computer hardware

Maintain daily performance of computer systems and networks

The role of IT specialist varies depending on company size. Large organizations are likely to have IT specialists on staff, while smaller companies may use contract employees or outsource to a managed service provider (MSP).

An IT specialist must be organized and have technical skills, since they are most likely the one to set up new workstations, respond to basic network and software problems, and provide desktop support.

Sometimes, an IT specialist will be called up to think outside the box for solutions without obvious answers, so someone in this position must be able to think on their feet and look for creative solutions. Fields like education, finance, computer systems and telecommunications employ IT specialists.[[1]](#footnote-1)

# How to Become an IT Specialist

While an IT specialist is still considered an early-career position, many companies hiring for this role requires a few years of experience – perhaps at the help desk. Many ask for at least an associate degree, though some prefer a bachelor’s degree in information technology or computer science.

Candidates who don’t have a degree or have a degree in another field can validate their experience and knowledge with CompTIA A+. This IT certification is the industry standard for launching an IT career. Studying for and earning CompTIA A+ prove to employers that you can handle the tasks and responsibilities of an IT specialist.[[2]](#footnote-2)

# IT Specialist Salary Range

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), an IT specialist made $49,770 on average as of May 2021.[[3]](#footnote-3)

# Job Titles Related to IT Specialist

## IT support manager

The IT support manager leads the help desk team, which may include various tiers of help desk technicians and technical support specialists. To do this, IT support managers need to have a working knowledge of the software and hardware systems in place at an organization and be able to implement or optimize the troubleshooting processes that lead to successful resolution of IT issues.

Successful IT support managers also equip their team with the necessary resources and training to facilitate optimal outcomes. They must also be able to communicate sophisticated technology concepts to both IT pros and end users, the latter of which may have limited technical understanding.

### Other duties of an IT support manager may include the following:

* Providing an optimal working environment for help desk employees while enabling quick and effective resolution
* Training employees to adhere to customer service principles and best practices
* Enabling fast and successful resolution of user issues
* Supporting communication between escalation teams and end users
* Developing a knowledge base of easily accessible resources for help desk employees to use when assisting end users
* Evaluating the performance of individual technicians
* Ensuring help desk technicians are abiding by ticketing expectations and tracking the resolution of problems
* Supporting the delivery of quality technical support for end users or clients
* An IT support manager is expected to develop necessary processes to make sure user issues are resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. These leaders need a wide-ranging knowledge of troubleshooting procedures and common IT problems.

Additionally, they are expected to guide their team to track issues from start to finish. Effective IT support managers will manage both people and processes to enable the smooth and quick resolution of technical problems.[[4]](#footnote-4)

### IT Support Manager Salary Range

The 2019 median annual salary for this position was $59,234.[[5]](#footnote-5)

### IT Support Manager Job Outlook

There were 11,093 job postings for IT support manager roles in 2019, according to Burning Glass Technologies (2019) Labor Insights.

### Job Titles Related to IT Support Manager

* Help desk manager
* Technical support manager
* IT support team lead

## IT project manager

An IT project manager sets timelines for group projects and keeps the group on task and on budget. In addition, a project manager may have the following job duties:

* Coordinate project phases and schedules
* Select the right people to serve on the project team
* Delegate assignments
* Effectively communicate with all stakeholders in the project
* Organize project plans and prepare reports and other tools to detail the specific budget, time, and projected outcomes of the project
* Track the progress of the project and adjust plans as needed
* A project manager is the liaison between those who ordered the project and those who bring it to life. Strong interpersonal skills are a must, and a project manager must relay the goals of the project to the team and the issues that arise back to the stakeholders.

Project managers need excellent leadership skills and communication skills to be able to move projects along and keep work on track. A project manager must also be highly organized, and task oriented to keep the team on track. An IT project manager needs extensive knowledge of IT to know what expectations are manageable for the size and scope of a particular project.[[6]](#footnote-6)

### IT Project Manager Salary Range

The median annual salary for an IT project manager is $159,010 as of May 2021.[[7]](#footnote-7)

### IT Project Manager Job Outlook

According to Lightcast, there were 274,000 job postings by US employers for IT project managers during the past 12 months ending September 2022. Employers have posted more than 840,000 IT jobs in the US seeking candidates with project management skills during this 12-month period.[[8]](#footnote-8)

### Job Titles Related to IT Project Manager

* Business analyst
* Project coordinator
* IT support manager
* IT manager
* Business development manager

## Field service technician

A field service technician is responsible for analyzing, troubleshooting, and evaluating technology issues in the field. This role generally supports external clients or end users in the following ways:

* Make data easily accessible to those who need it
* Pay attention to customers’ descriptions of computer problems
* Ask questions to properly diagnose the problem
* Walk customers through the recommended problem-solving steps
* Set up or repair computer equipment and related devices
* Train users to work with new computer hardware or software
* Document changes, revision, and problems
* Provide information to other team members and managers

The main role of a field service technician is helping end users get the most out of their equipment. Individuals who are technically well-versed and can help clients install, repair, and maintain hardware and software while building relationships with customers will succeed in this role.

It’s important to note that a field service technician is not your typical office job. As the title implies, this type of IT pro works in the field, meaning at client sites or a customer’s house – like a cable company technician, for example.

Your day likely consists of a schedule of places to be at certain times, and you could oversee making your own schedule. However, there is always some paperwork involved.

In addition to troubleshooting and problem solving, field service technicians are also responsible for creating reports outlining their field calls.[[9]](#footnote-9)

### Field Service Technician Salary Range

The median annual wage for a field service technician is $57,910.[[10]](#footnote-10)

### Field Service Technician Job Outlook

From 2018 to 2028, CompTIA projects an increase of 10% for field service technicians, with 863,100 jobs recorded in 2018.

### Job Titles Related to Field Service Technician

* Field systems technician
* Field technician
* Field engineer

## Technical support specialist

A technical support specialist does a range of tasks, from installing software to setting up computer workspaces, as well as solves technical issues that arise on a day-to-day basis. A technical support specialist may also do the following:

Maintain system capability by testing computer components

Train users on proper use of hardware and software

Document hardware and software changes, revisions, and problems

Test an organizations’ existing equipment and programs and try out new systems and software to see if the organization would benefit from them

Clearly communicate with managers and co-workers to ensure the understanding of the proper use of technology and any troubleshooting that may be needed

A technical support specialist may support internal clients, helping to keep employees productive, or external customers of a company, helping them via the telephone or web chat.

A technical support specialist is an important piece of an IT team, and companies generally employ more than one at a time. Technical support specialists at larger companies may be called upon to write user manuals for their employees or customers. Fields like education, finance, computer systems and telecommunications employ technical support specialists.[[11]](#footnote-11)

### Technical Support Specialist Salary

The salary for a technical support specialist, or computer user support specialist, varies based on job responsibilities, company, and location, but the median annual wage in 2021 was $62,760, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).[[12]](#footnote-12)

### Technical Support Specialist Job Outlook

Employment of technical support specialists is on the rise, with 11% growth expected from 2016 to 2026, according to the BLS. If you want to get into IT, technical support specialist is a great place to start.[[13]](#footnote-13)

### Job Titles Related to Technical Support Specialist

* Customer support specialist
* Help desk specialist
* Information technology project manager
* IT training specialist

1. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-it-specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-it-specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-it-specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-it-support-manager [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insights 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-it-project-manager [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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10. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-technical-support-specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-technical-support-specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. https://www.comptia.org/blog/your-next-move-technical-support-specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-13)