# IT Work

Include raw transcripts / recordings in appendix to support your written component.

## 15-12 Marks

You have clearly described the kind of work done.

You have described and explored all of the interactions with other people.

You have described how most time is spent with a high standard of narrative flow.

You have succinctly included the challenging aspects of this work.

Developing a section substantially beyond the question set.

## Suggested Procedure

2. Arrange a time to meet and speak with the IT professional.

3. Work out how you will ask the questions, and how the responses will be recorded. If there

are two of you, it may work out that one person asks the questions, and the other records

responses, or that you alternate asking questions, with the other person recording answers.

Please do remember that it is a conversation, and it is more important to listen and respond to

the person you are interviewing than to record every last little detail of what is said. You may

wish to record the conversation, but only do this with the explicit permission of the

person you are interviewing. So if you want to do this, **ask the interviewee if you have their**

**permission to record the conversation**. If the response is anything other than a firm “Yes”,

then do not record it. If you do record it, make sure the recording device is clearly visible to

the interviewee. You should also **offer to email the interview a copy of the questions you will be asking**.

4. Arrive for the appointment about 10 minutes early. When you first meet the interviewee,

introduce yourselves, shake hands, and thank them for agreeing to talk with you. You should

also briefly mention the background of each student. Once the introductions are done, if you

wish to record the conversation, ask for permission. Then commence with the questions (see

below)

5. Let the conversation flow, and do not try to stick too rigidly to the script. Remember that

your objective is to get some insight into the day-to-day working life of the interviewee, and

they may answer questions without explicitly being asked about them, or mention things that

you find interesting. If the conversation stops, then move onto the next question as a way of

keeping the conversation moving.

6. When the allotted time is up (usually 30 minutes, but it may be less), you should move to

cease the interview, even if you have not finished answering questions. Make sure you shake

hands again, and thank the interviewee again for their time.

## Interview Questions:

*(Required questions in bold. Others need to be “substantially beyond question set.”)*

1. What methods of learning have you found most useful in your career? *(On-the-job experience vs institutional learning vs ad-hoc certifications vs other?)*

2. How do you keep your skills and knowledge up-to-date with an evolving IT environment?

3. Would you please outline how your IT career has progressed up to this point?

**4. Please tell us about your IT work. What exactly do you do?**

**5. Please tell us about the industry you work in.**

**6. What other kinds of work do you have to do?**

**7. Who are all the different people you interact with in your work? Please tell us about**

**them. *(Explore all the interactions with other people. Are they other IT professionals? Clients? Investors? The general public?)***

**8. Please tell us about your interactions with other IT professionals.**

**9. What about your interactions with clients or investors?**

**10. What aspects of your work do you spend most time on? Please tell us about these. *(This needs to be described with a high standard of narrative flow.)***

**11. Which aspects of your work do you find most challenging? *(Succinctly include these.)***

**12. Can you share an example of the work you do that best captures the essence of the IT industry?**

**13. Where do you spend most of your time? *(As per specs this needs to be answered.)***

14. What part of your position do you personally find most rewarding?

15. What would be your ideal position in the IT sector?

16. Do you think that the demand for IT professionals in your position will increase/decrease/remain the same over the next 5 years?

17. What would be the most important piece of advice you would give to someone beginning a career in IT?

Purpose of interview is to answer these questions:

* What kind of work is done by the IT professional?
* What kinds of people does the IT professional interact with? Are they other IT professionals? Clients? Investors? The general public?
* Where does the IT professional spend most of their time?
* What aspect of their position is most challenging?

Link to interview recording: <https://rmiteduau-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/s3992802_student_rmit_edu_au/EbxWbICr9VJOjH9hnjkbglIBEfn1wNYkkxPv35g2H1dKJw?e=8neXvp>

Link to raw transcript: <https://rmiteduau-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/s3992802_student_rmit_edu_au/EY7ua8iFNZRMpbQ3TnDDVzoBM3ChvQXrtRNVXV0W9YLqcA?e=bKyXF4>

## Interview Answers (draft):

*(Required questions in bold. Others need to be “substantially beyond question set.”)*

1. What methods of learning have you found most useful in your career? *(On-the-job experience vs institutional learning vs ad-hoc certifications vs other?)*

Early career – on-the-job training and formal learning (TAFE diploma, university degree).

Now - certifications

2. How do you keep your skills and knowledge up-to-date with an evolving IT environment?

Micro-credentials (e.g. Azure fundamentals -> Azure directory services). Can remain up to date as opposed to taking a 3-4 year course where by the time you’ve finished it may no longer be relevant.

3. Would you please outline how your IT career has progressed up to this point?

Started as System Administrator – high level basic tasks (e.g. creating accounts, active directories, email addreses, making and restoring backups). Customer rapport. 3-4 years.

Desktop Support role (e.g. physically resolving hardware issues like switching out discs, disc arrays).

Service Desk Team Leader – leading internal helpdesk and desktop support team. Critical thinking where to position staff, improving service level. Focus of that role was bringing together the previous two roles.

Then pivoted away from IT operations into Project Management. “Having the experience of the IT Operations really made that transition into Project Management really smooth and super easy.” Having been in the Operations Team I’d felt the pain points of a project that’s delivered without documentation maybe, or a project that’s delivered and requires a whole bunch of people to support it, but we haven’t got those resources”. Moving from running the things to building the things. Although the projects would change, the underlying ethos was very much the same, and grew bored of that.

Moved internationally and took on an IT leadership role in an insurance company. Combined all the things done previously. Leading Project Management, leading Operations. Was an exciting time when digitization and modernization was being done. Moving off old mainframe systems.

Moved back to Australia and next role was leading a whole department of a bank – IT Service Operations. Owning a service from top to bottom – strategy of that service, the technology stack, architecture, operations, support, SLAs – end-to-end. And also leading the people who deliver that.

Now in a role leading an Asia Pacific team in Cyber Security.

**4. Please tell us about your IT work. What exactly do you do?**

Cyber security for 10 years. Lead Identity and Access Management department across Asia Pacific. Look after all aspects of IAM (Identity and Access Management). Services include:

Directory Management (e.g. Active Directory, Azure Active Directory)

PKI (Primary Key Infrastructure) (e.g. SSL certificates)

Public Certificate Authority – issue certificates internally to build a trust between an end-user’s device and the organization

Single Sign On using industry standards to authenticate and authorize users to relevant levels of access

Privileged Access Management – admin access for all servers – provision just-in-time access to administrators so if their access is compromised it cannot be used to create an attack on the organization.

MFA (Multi Factor Authorisation) – deploying and managing MFA across the organization – to ensure you are who you say you are. A username and password is no longer enough – “We need to have something you know (which is your password), and something you have (that second factor).

All services run to industry standards – the main two are Agile and ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library). ITIL includes practices and standardisations that organisations follow to align operations. For example within ITIL there is:

Incident Management – how does an incident go from start to finish?

Change Management – how do you introduce change to the environment in a controlled way. Minimise interruptions to business.

Problem Management – investigate root cause and implement permanent corrective action so it doesn’t happen again.

Configuration Management – hierarchy of all assets in the full IT environment. All applications, what servers they run on, what IP addresses they are on, what infrastructure is there. Robust library of all the assets in the organization.

If you’re working in IT, standardization in terminology is important.

**5. Please tell us about the industry you work in.**

Professional Services and Consulting Industry. Cyber Security and IT in general are important as clients are coming to us for help, and the solutions to the problem is often technology.

**6. What other kinds of work do you have to do?**

Technical component as before. Non-technical – people leadership, coaching of team, (technical – e.g. microcredentials, non-technical soft skills like rapport, strong communication skills, audit and compliance), SOC2 accredited organization, most large corporations are which takes a huge burder if you are the remain compliant.

SOC2 (Service Organisation Control 2) – independent way to evaluate controls an organization has relating to security, processing confidential information, availability of your service. What controls have you in place and how effective are those controls. High benchmark and need to continue to meet that benchmark to maintain compliance. A lot of organisations won’t work with you unless you have SOC2 compliance.

Strategy and Service Roadmapping – anticipating needs of business and customers ahead of time to devise strategy on where I need to be going in 12 months – 2 years – 3 years. Across the board is my service still fit for service, room for growth? Refreshing of hardware or software. Roadmap will define what the IT Service is today, and what it will look like in the future.

Budget Planning – to keep service running. A badly configured cloud environment can cost you way more than using a data centre, so a tight focus on finance, budget planning and tracking the actual spend.

Writing Business Cases – e.g. efficiencies through automation – less errors, improved throughput, financial saving.

Defect and Bug Tracking – servers have any defects or bugs?

Voice of the customer – meeting customer needs or not?

A broad range of other types of work. As career changes and progresses, from more technical and less leadership. Many things are in the scope of what’s called IT.

**7. Who are all the different people you interact with in your work? Please tell us about**

**them. *(Explore all the interactions with other people. Are they other IT professionals? Clients? Investors? The general public?)***

Team members that I mentor and coach.

Finance and business partners.

Change management if I need to make a change in an environment I own to go through the change management process.

Major Incident team if there’s an outage to manage communications to affected customers.

Business stakeholders – business leaders which is main customer as it’s a mainly internally focused role.

**8. Please tell us about your interactions with other IT professionals.**

Upstream and downstream dependencies – relationships with other IT teams that consume and rely on his services that he runs, and likewise he consumes other services. For example his services are running on the network so he has a dependency on the network team so he has a very good relationship with the owner of all the network services.

Left and right IT services that make up the organization – deep relationship with those professionals.

Externally, networking at industry events. Form a community, move from vendor to vendor as technologies evolve. So mostly industry events and vendors.

Doesn’t really use the phone or email to communicate with other professionals. Usually Slack or Teams for real-time communication. Get together semi-regularly for strategic planning in person to work on IT strategy.

**9. What about your interactions with clients or investors?**

Engagement with clients when they have a problem that they need help with. They come for consulting help, he’ll get engaged and see what the problem is and how IT can be a solution to that.

Internal customers monthly service review, SLA reports on how achieve against SLAs, how they are achieving against strategic targets that we may have agreed on at the beginning of the year. And a dialogue for my customers to tell me what’s happening in their business so he can remain in the best position to deliver IT to enable that. Important to ensure the solution is fit for purpose and what the customer needs.

**10. What aspects of your work do you spend most time on? Please tell us about these. *(This needs to be described with a high standard of narrative flow.)***

Has changed over career. Early in career 90% problems coming in, tickets coming in, resolving – and 10% learning.

Whereas today split between management activities (e.g. coaching team, budgeting, monitoring how service is performing, looking for vulnerabilities in service, always being mindful of what’s on the horizon 3, 6, 9, 12 months away.)

**11. Which aspects of your work do you find most challenging? *(Succinctly include these.)***

Organisation is global, and the IT services need to be available 24/7 – having a geographically distributed team and achieving consistency across those geographies, time zones, and cultures. Spends a lot of time on team cohesion to ensure technology is executed in a consistent way without being able to be physically present with all team members. Technology helps, using technology to collaborate, using asynchronous communications so not having to have a conversation in real time.

Rapid pace of change is another challenge. Higher education is typically a multi year thing, which is still required to provide the foundations across the broad spectrum of IT but the facets within it are changing so rapidly. As soon as caught up to speed with something there’s another development. Finding time to stay on top of that is critical. Tries to set himself a goal 1 microcredential per quarter (personal goal) read some journals and see what’s interesting and pick a topic. For his team he sets a target of 1 microcredential per month as he thinks it is important to invest in learning and development to help keep our teams skilled and help them do the best job they possibly could.

**12. Can you share an example of the work you do that best captures the essence of the IT industry?**

IT exists to enhance and develop our lives. Might be sitting behind the keyboard, coding or providing support or delivering a project, but the purpose is always to advance society. From a security perspective our work helps keep the bad guys out and if the bad guys were to get in, to make sure we’re prepared for that.

“If we were to think of what would life be like without the IT that we take for granted today, it would be much different so having a part in that is really exciting.”

**13. Where do you spend most of your time? *(As per specs this needs to be answered.)***

Geographically often travelling as the team is spread around Asia Pacific and being part of a global team. Based in Sydney – primary focus. But responsibilities across the region leads him to all corners of the globe.

Hands-on sense – split time evenly between in-the-day reacting to stuff, and planning for what’s coming next.

14. What part of your position do you personally find most rewarding?

2 parts. Seeing people that I’m coaching and leading grow and achieve great things.

When presented with a problem or challenge. Can either build or deploy technology to solve that and make someone’s life easier. See the effect of what you’ve done never gets old, is still so satisfying.

15. What would be your ideal position in the IT sector?

At heart I’m a technologist and have an affinity for IT. As career progresses from a leadership point of view the type of work changes.

“I’m in a really sweet spot now where I still do hands-on IT work to be in the trenches with my team when we’ve got a major incident going on – it’s kind of all hands on deck. To be able to coach my team I need to have those technical skills. But also I really thrive in the leadership space so where I am now is really quite satisfying because I get the best of both worlds.”

Previous roles was loving the technical aspect but was yearning for leadership responsibility. Then if he went further he’d take on more leadership and not really have much exposure at all to the technology.

16. Do you think that the demand for IT professionals in your position will increase/decrease/remain the same over the next 5 years?

Increase dramatically. Already happening. Being a leader, the demand for hiring is growing. Consistent across all industry peers that he talks to. Different pockets of demand. Strong pocket of demand in Cyber Security, and in Cloud while organisations are still migrating from on-prem to cloud, and for good quality software developers, and for project professionals to deploy all that IT.

17. What would be the most important piece of advice you would give to someone beginning a career in IT?

Firstly, maintain a level of intrigue and interest and constant asking of questions. Remain interest and continue to learn. Keep hunger for new information and learning. Remain relevant “by maintaining that hunger and that passion.”

Secondly, remember the purpose of IT is to advance and simplify and solve problems. Seen many people come with technical blinkers on just thinking about the technology and not the human aspect. Once you widen your scope and think about the implications of technology, the reason, the who, the how, the why, that will give you an advantage over other people who are just focusing on the technology.

## Narrative-based article: