



CompassPoint Careers

Navigate Your Future

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Technology

The Numbers You Need to Know

215,000+

Students in Computing and IT subjects UK
HESA 2024/25

£33,500

Average graduate starting salary, technology sector
Graduate-Jobs.com, Apr 2026

87%

In relevant employment within 15 months
HESA Graduate Outcomes 2022/23

1.2M

UK tech sector job vacancies in 2025
Tech Nation Report 2025

£45,000+

Software engineer salary at 2 to 3 years experience
Glassdoor UK, 2025

3x

Faster salary growth vs UK graduate average
ISE Student Survey 2025

The Honest Market Picture

What your university careers service probably did not tell you

Technology is one of the few graduate sectors where your degree subject matters less than what you can actually build and demonstrate. A Computer Science degree from a Russell Group university helps, but developers, data scientists and product managers are hired from Geography, Physics, Economics and dozens of other disciplines every year. What consistently separates candidates who get offers from those who do not is a portfolio of real work — projects, contributions, builds — that proves technical competence beyond a transcript.

The UK tech sector employs over 1.7 million people and has historically outpaced the broader graduate market for both volume of roles and salary growth. However, 2023 and 2024 saw significant redundancies at major US tech firms, including Google, Meta and Amazon. The graduate market has tightened at the top end as a result. Big Tech graduate schemes remain extremely competitive. The broader market — scale-ups, consultancies, public sector digital, fintech — continues to hire at volume and often offers faster progression and greater ownership than household names.

Employment Outlook 2025 to 2029

- AI and machine learning roles are the fastest-growing specialism in UK tech. Graduates with Python, familiarity with LLM APIs and basic ML knowledge are being hired ahead of traditional software generalists.
- Cybersecurity has a significant talent shortage. The UK has an estimated 11,000-strong cybersecurity skills gap according to the DCMS Cyber Security Skills in the UK Labour Market report 2024.
- Cloud computing skills — particularly AWS, Azure and GCP — are now expected at graduate level across software engineering, data and infrastructure roles.
- Public sector digital transformation is a major growth area. HMRC, DWP, NHS and GCHQ all run substantial graduate tech programmes with strong job security and competitive salaries.
- Product management is increasingly popular as a graduate entry point. Roles at scale-ups and consultancies offer broad commercial exposure alongside technical work.
- The demand for data engineers and analytics engineers is outpacing supply. dbt, Spark and modern data stack skills command a premium even at entry level.

Sources: HESA Graduate Outcomes 2022/23; Tech Nation UK Tech Report 2025; DCMS Cyber Security Skills Report 2024; Graduate-Jobs.com Apr 2026; Glassdoor UK 2025; ISE Student Employment Survey 2025

What Employers Actually Want in 2026

Skill	Why it matters	How to demonstrate it
Programming fundamentals	The baseline for most technical roles regardless of specialism	Python, JavaScript or Java projects on GitHub; university coursework; personal builds
Cloud and DevOps awareness	AWS, Azure and GCP are now the default infrastructure for most employers	AWS Cloud Practitioner (free tier); Microsoft Azure fundamentals certification
Data literacy	Every tech role intersects with data in some form at graduate level	SQL projects; Tableau or Power BI dashboards; Kaggle competitions
Version control	Git is non-negotiable. Employers check GitHub profiles before interviews	Active GitHub with documented projects; contributions to open-source repositories
AI and ML awareness	Expected knowledge at entry level across software, data and product roles	Fast.ai or Coursera ML course; personal projects using APIs or open-source models
Communication and problem-solving	Technical ability alone does not get offers. Employers hire for both	Hackathons; team projects; explain technical work clearly in every interview

Top Graduate Employers and Schemes

Big Tech	Consulting and Services	Scale-ups and Fintech	Public Sector and Defence
Google, Amazon (AWS) Microsoft, Apple Meta, Salesforce IBM	Accenture, Capgemini Deloitte Digital PwC Tech KPMG Ignition	Revolut, Monzo Wise, Checkout.com Deliveroo, Babylon Ocado Technology	GCHQ, HMRC Digital NHS Digital DWP Digital Defence Science (DSTL)

The Mistake Most Technology Graduates Make

The single most common reason technology graduates fail to get interviews is applying with no portfolio. A CV listing modules and grades tells a technical recruiter almost nothing. They want to see code. A GitHub profile with two or three well-documented personal projects — even simple ones — does more work than a first-class degree on its own. If your GitHub is empty or private, fix that before you send a single application.

The second mistake is targeting only household names. Amazon, Google and Microsoft receive hundreds of thousands of graduate applications globally each year. Many strong candidates spend months chasing Big Tech and receive nothing, while overlooking scale-ups, consultancies and public sector roles that are actively hiring, pay competitively and offer faster career growth. Cast the net wider and treat every application as practice for the ones that matter most.

How to Stand Out in 2026

- Build a public GitHub portfolio before you apply anywhere. Two or three projects with clear README files and documented code is the minimum.
- Get one cloud certification. AWS Cloud Practitioner or Microsoft Azure Fundamentals are both achievable in under a month and free to study for.
- Practice technical interviews on LeetCode or HackerRank. Most graduate tech roles include a coding assessment. Preparation is the difference between pass and fail.
- Learn SQL to a working standard. It is tested in data, backend, product and analytics roles. It takes two weeks to learn the essentials.
- Apply to tech consultancies and public sector digital programmes alongside Big Tech. They hire at higher volume, offer structured development, and the work is often more varied.
- Build your LinkedIn to show technical projects, not just job titles. Recruiters search for skills keywords. Make sure yours appear clearly on your profile.

Application Timeline: When to Apply

September to October	Big Tech and major graduate scheme applications open. Amazon, Google and Microsoft deadlines often fall before Christmas. Apply immediately.
October to December	Online assessments and coding challenges begin. Practice on LeetCode before this window opens — most candidates are eliminated here.
January to March	Technical interviews and assessment centres for Big Tech and consultancy graduate schemes. Scale-up and fintech roles open on a rolling basis year-round.
March to June	Summer internship positions begin. Many graduate offers are made to previous interns. Public sector digital schemes often have later deadlines into spring.
Year-round	Scale-ups, agencies and SME tech firms hire continuously. LinkedIn, Otta and Workable are the primary channels. Set up job alerts and apply within 48 hours of posting.

CompassPoint Careers gives Technology graduates the CV, LinkedIn profile and interview preparation to compete at the highest level. Book a free 15-minute discovery call.

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