



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CAREERS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS AT MCC AND SCC

MCC offers a general IT degree for those seeking employment as support technicians. This degree also exposes you to various topics if you are undecided about which IT field to pursue.

- Information Technology (IT) - PC Repair and Technical Support

For more specific degrees in technology, please check out Sandhills Community College.

- Computer Engineering Technology
- Digital Media Technology
- IT - Computer Programming and Development
- IT - Networking
- Simulation & Game Development

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Visit the following websites to learn about the program requirements for each program. Two-year programs focus primarily on the major subject, but there are a few general education courses in English, math, humanities, and social sciences.

MCC IT Degree: <https://3mit.com/mcc/ccp/>
Scroll to the Videos and Links section. Click on MCC IT Degree.

Sandhills Computer Degrees: <http://www.sandhills.edu/computer/>
Check out the Related Links section on the left.



DISCOVERED MY PASSION FOR IT SUPPORT IN ACCOUNTING CLASSES

I started taking computer and accounting courses in high school and enjoyed them. I thought I wanted to be Certified Public Accountant (CPA) when I enrolled at MCC. As I completed courses at MCC, I discovered that I enjoyed assisting others with computer topics and using the computer as much as possible to complete assignments. I even used it for math homework! This helped me realize that I had a passion for computers and IT instead of accounting. Upon transferring to Pfeiffer University, I switched my major to Computer Information Systems. My desire to help people with computers grew when I became a PC Specialist at a local company. After a few years, I applied for a full-time academic support lab position at a community college and started working on my master's degree so that I could eventually teach IT classes. I now have 10 years of full time teaching experience at a community college. **NOTE: When I was still in high school and college, I had NO DESIRE to become an instructor.** Isn't it neat how my progression through college and full time employment helped me discover what I was passionate about? If desired, read more of my story on the 3mit.com/mcc/ccp site.



SKILLS NEEDED FOR IT SUPPORT

Check out the following web site. Skills from this site are summarized below.
<https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/salaries-and-skills/good-to-great-how-to-be-the-best-desktop-support-analyst>

- Technical knowledge
- Problem-solving skills
- Patience and perseverance

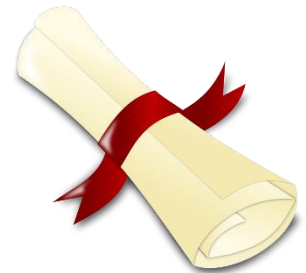


- Passion for continuously learning new technologies
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Heightened attention to detail (repairs, documentation, training others)
- Ability to review products and make recommendations to users

TRAINING NEEDED FOR IT SUPOPRT

Below are some options for IT Support education. I recommend starting with a Career and College Promise certificate at a community college while in high school. The certificate courses will help you complete a 2-year degree more quickly. Then, get a job to explore all the different options available. Some graduates start their careers in IT support and discover through the variety of tasks they perform that they would like to specialize in networking, security, programming, virtualization, database administration, server administration, cloud computing, training, or some other category. Consider getting a 4-year degree in your favorite category of Information Technology. Four-year degrees and higher are especially helpful if you want to progress into a management position.

- Certificate (1 or 2 semesters, usually 4 to 6 courses, can start in high school if GPA is high enough)
- Associate in Applied Science degree (2 years)
- Bachelor of Science degree (4 years)
- Master of Science degree (6 years)



Industry recognized certifications are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED to complement your formal education/degree. Employers look for these to verify that you have a certain skill sets. Some popular certifications for entry-level IT support technicians are listed below.

- Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS): can often complete these in high school and college as part of the curriculum
- Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA): great for entry-level technicians to prove competency in a variety of IT subjects
- CompTIA A+: a must-have for all support technicians
- CompTIA Network+: also important for support technicians and anyone wanting to pursue a networking career
- CompTIA Security+: great to have for any IT career, is fundamental for those pursuing a career in general security or cybersecurity



Check out CompTIA's Career Roadmap at <https://certification.comptia.org/why-certify/roadmap> to learn which certifications are best for your chosen career. This awesome tool is not limited to CompTIA certifications. It also lists certifications from other vendors needed for your career.

SAMPLE POSITION TITLES AND SALARIES

Occasionally you will find an IT support position that only requires a high school diploma. As previously noted, a minimum of a 2-year degree is recommended for this profession. Typical starting salary in a rural area is between \$25,000 and \$35,000 annually. If you move to a more urban area, support jobs may pay up to \$50,000 per year. Seek jobs with benefits such as health insurance and a retirement plan. Below are a few sample jobs that were available at the time of this writing.

<i>Technology Technician</i>	<i>IT Help Desk Technician</i>	<i>PC Technician</i>
Montgomery Co. Schools in Troy, NC	DecisionPathHR in Concord, NC	Advanced Personnel Res., Inc. in High Point, NC
Approximately \$31,000 per year	\$20 to \$25 per hour full time (would require some specialized database training)	\$13.00 - \$16.50 an hour (contract)

If you wish to specialize in areas of IT such as networking, programming, database administration, security, virtualization, etc. that are in high demand, typical salaries in large cities range from \$60,000 to \$100,000 (or more!).

TYPICAL WORKDAY

As a PC Specialist, my daily tasks varied. User requests and equipment issues were treated with a sense of urgency. HIGH uptime was important to our company. We were always kind and courteous to our coworkers regardless of how ridiculous we thought some of the requests were. This is one of the most important skills to possess as a support technician. It is as important, maybe more so at times, than technical knowledge. We had to remain professional with difficult callers as well. That was sometimes challenging. Other tasks included:



- Checking and changing the server’s nightly backup tape
- Extracting data from the accounting database to build custom reports and simple applications in Microsoft Access
- Creating instructional guides for updates, patches, and databases that were distributed to offsite users
- Maintaining, troubleshooting, and repairing computers and printers

- Maintaining an inventory of hardware and software
- Deploying new computers, copying data from old computers, and ensuring a smooth transition to the new PCs for the users
- Learning new software and equipment and then training users

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

MCC currently has two IT students serving as interns in the MCC IT Department. These students get to apply what they learn in class. They also receive free tuition and books each semester for their services. Neither of these students has real world IT experience, so this will give their résumés a nice boost.

There may be paid or unpaid internships available in high school and/or college. Some colleges offer work-based learning as part of the curriculum. The experience I gained as an accounting intern while in high school and college was as valuable as any of the courses I took in college. If given the opportunity, graciously accept an internship even if you are not paid.

QUESTIONS?

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Good luck to you as you explore career options in middle school, high school, and college! ☺ Please let Marsha, your careers teacher, or your guidance counselor know if you have questions. We will be glad to assist you!

