The Digital Futures Toolkit

Establishing a Digital Futures Programme for Graduates, Apprenticeships and other new talent for IT

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Toolkit Contributors

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Tom joined King's Libraries in 2007 after working as a musician, video store clerk and then in public libraries. After a restructure he began his career in IT in 2009 and has gone through several technical roles before becoming EUS TechBar and Apprenticeship Manager.

He's really pleased that apprenticeships and graduate schemes offer a more direct route into IT than the one he followed.

Lead co-author

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Andreas has a BSc in Business Management, from King's College London and was one of the first IT graduates to join King's IT. He's experienced several roles ranging from IT Governance & Assurance, Communications, Supplier & Contract Management, progressing his career and being promoted. He's now a Manager within Enterprise Architecture, supporting innovation and change, to help King's exploit digital technology.

Andreas also has the privilege of being the IT Graduate Scheme Manager, which allows graduates to experience several roles across IT and build their career.

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Lead co-author

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The Digital Futures Programme offers support and opportunities for people starting out in their IT careers.

It enables them to develop worthwhile learning opportunities that will hopefully lead to full time permanent employment either with their current or other employers.

The programme brings together a Graduate Scheme, Apprenticeship programme, Work Experience, Student Analysts, T' Levels and the government backed KickStart Scheme by formalising the approach in a well-planned and managed way.

This first draft of the Toolkit focuses on introducing a Graduate Scheme and Apprenticeship Programme for both new and existing staff.

When developing a Digital Futures Programme, it needs to have:

- Strong sponsorship from the top

- Engagement from Hiring Managers

- Support available from the staff to mentor and guide the Graduates and Apprentices placed within the team

- Oversight and management for it to be a success

The Programme creates positive opportunities to support local communities with job creation and helping the economy as well as contribute further to the diversity of the IT workforce and promote representation.

Furthermore, it helps plugs the gap in the sector for talented IT staff, by growing our own talent and developing the future pipeline of permanent staff.

Chapter 1:
How to establish a Graduate Scheme

The following section covers how to launch a rotational Graduate Scheme across areas of your IT Department, and the aspects that need to be considered from role and budget planning, through to recruitment, induction, rotations, training & development during the Scheme, and career paths and progression from graduates as they exit the Scheme.

Through creating exciting opportunities to start an IT digital career in the higher education sector, graduates will grow their technological and business skills, with the opportunity to develop in several areas of IT and build the foundation of their career.

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1:1 Appoint an IT Graduate Scheme Manager

To ensure the IT Graduate Scheme has central ownership, management oversight and end to end support, appoint a member of the team as the IT Graduate Scheme Manager. This can be an existing member of staff who has experienced a role on a Graduate Scheme or has prior knowledge and experience in capability development and people management, and a passion to support entry level talent and their progression.

This is not a full time role, and is expected to be carried out alongside the staff members' existing role as graduates will be locally managed in the team they are working in on a day-to-day basis. In setting up, it may be that these roles are carried out by the same person, until the Scheme grows.

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will play a key role in ensuring the development and continued success of the Scheme for both your institution, the graduates, the sector and wider community. They are responsible for the end to end process and the central point for queries; from budget planning, recruitment, induction, onboarding, rotations, training and development, career support through to the graduates' exit of the Scheme.

In establishing an IT Graduate Scheme, they will need to liaise with key stakeholders including:

- IT Executives who will sponsor the Scheme,
- Team managers who host graduates, plan their long-term talent needs and ensure they can support and train graduates
- HR team for roles, recruitment and training,
- Finance team for role budgeting.

They will also need support from:

- Communications team to showcase graduate profiles, successes, and recruitment promotion.

The structure below allows for the Scheme to scale up or down as required.

IT Graduate Scheme Manager

Direct reporting line

IT Graduate Analyst

Dotted reporting line

Day-to-day Line Manager

Graduate numbers will vary

Managers may host one or more grads in their team
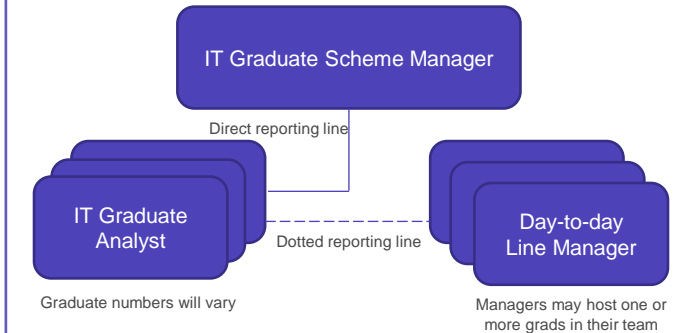
1:2 Confirm Scheme's objectives

To request funding for graduate roles, confirm the objectives and the anticipated benefits, for example:

- Invest in and grow long-term talent for IT and the wider institution,
- Be an investor in people and provide a good return on investment in training,
- Support equality, diversity and inclusion targets for the department.

1:3 Identify demand and secure funding

The Scheme is rotational to allow graduates to experience two to three roles in IT and grow their skills in a range of business and technical roles. In establishing the Scheme, identity roles and teams that are suitable – this includes the work graduates will be doing, the demand in given teams and also the support available in that team to provide guidance and coaching. It is recommended to start small, with a few graduates across some teams, and over time expand the Scheme with more roles across more IT teams, to further build on the rotational experience that can be offered. Over time, more teams may wish to host graduates, and the Scheme can be scaled up or down depending on funding available. The Scheme could be IT only or broader if other Departments show interest. Also, other Departments could receive talent grown from IT.

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will need to work with the IT Executive team to confirm strategic areas of importance for the Department, and create a business case to create new graduate roles.

Subject to approval, requests can be taken forward for recruitment.

1:4 Create job description and advert

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will create a generic job description allowing for graduates to be placed in teams across IT for the duration of the contract. Key aspects include:

- Having a generic job title: IT Graduate Analyst and team: IT Graduate Scheme.

- Having a direct reporting line to the IT Graduate Scheme Manager for the duration of the Scheme, and dotted reporting line to a day-to-day Manager in their local team.

- 2 year fixed-term contract. At the end of the Scheme, graduates are expected to secure another role, either internally or externally. The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will recruit to backfill the vacant graduate role. This ensures a rolling headcount.

- Annual leave, probation and performance reviews are subject to standard HR policy, including eligibility to work in the UK.

- Set and agree the grading range for the posts, considering grading of other existing roles within the Department for consistency and to allow for progression. Graduates are expected to begin at the starting salary of a grade with incremental progression each year up to the grade maximum.

- Generic aims and objectives, typical activities and an overview of team areas currently being offered, along with essential and desired criteria.

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1:5 Recruit

Once funding is approved, a job description has been created, and roles approved by Finance, HR and the IT Executive, the role can be recruited.

As the Scheme grows, run batch recruitment as there is likely to be a volume of applicants and is more time effective. Consider timing recruitment around the student timeline e.g. not during exam seasons. Aim to bring graduates on board as soon as possible and maintain a reserve list to offer speedily.

1:5:1 Advertise

When the role is being advertised, the IT Graduate Scheme Manager, along with support from the Communications team should promote the role through internal channels. This may include via targeted emails, on central intranet and SharePoint pages, newsletters, notices of student and staff systems, and social media. This should be targeted to students about to graduate, those who have recently graduated and members of staff who may share the opportunity with others.

Create engaging content with testimonials to attract interest. As the Scheme grows, there will be an increasing number of current and past graduate testimonials, and managers hosting graduates.

Create a dedicated website as the Scheme grows, to direct interested parties to. This can include a welcome from the IT Graduate Scheme Manager, how the Scheme works, teams participating in the Scheme and testimonials. A note can be added when there is a recruitment advert to apply for.

1:5:2 Shortlist

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager and panel member(s) will shortlist applications received based on the essential and desired criteria as set out in the job description.

1:5:3 Interview

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager chairs a panel with members across the Department, particularly Managers who will host graduates.

The interview process includes two panel interviews, each thirty minutes long. This allows for a variety of questions to be asked, and involves staff from different teams but maintains a common approach. For continuity, each panel has a lead; one the IT Graduate Scheme Manager and the other a nominated Manager. They will interview all shortlisted candidates. For each panel, an additional member supports the lead. Depending on applicant numbers and availability, they may not interview all candidates and so different Managers may step in. Members can include those hosting graduates, from other teams, or previous graduates (once well established).

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Interview panel chair

Panel 1: lead IT Graduate Scheme Manager

Panel 2: lead Manager

Panel leads will interview all candidates for continuity

Panel 1: member Manager

Panel 2: member Manager

Candidate interview 1

Candidate interview 2

Candidate numbers will vary during each recruitment campaign. Candidates will complete interview 1 with one panel, followed directly by interview 2 with a second panel.
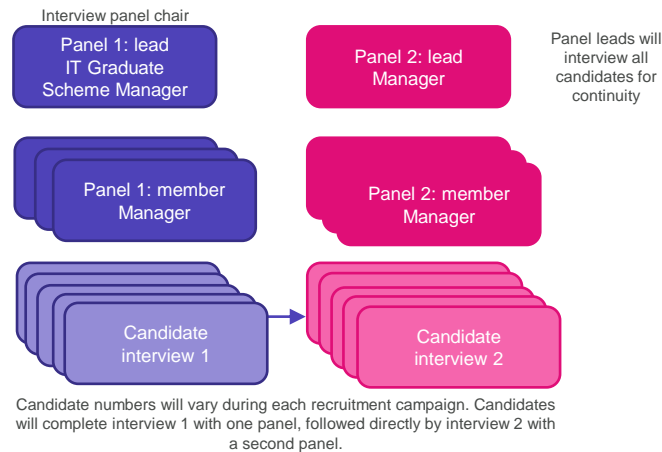
Each panel will have a unique set of competency and scenario-based questions provided by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager, to test candidates' skills, knowledge, experience and general attitude to the role. These will follow essential and desired criteria.

Panel members should ask candidates' interest in team areas, but reiterate that it's a rotational Scheme and they should be open to explore opportunities, and no guarantees can be made of what teams they'll be placed in. The panel

should also provide the candidates with an opportunity to ask questions. Anything specific related to the role, contract, start date can be directed to the IT Graduate Scheme Manager.

Panel members will need to take notes during the interview, and score candidates individually as per HR policy. This will be collated by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager for HR.

Upon completion of interviewing, the IT Graduate Scheme Manager and panel members will confer and decide on appointments, and options of where to place candidates to a team for their first placement.

1:5:4 Appoint

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will make an offer to the selected candidate(s) based on number of roles available. Some candidates may be added to a reserve list, and others not

suitable will be sent regret emails. If candidates ask for interview feedback, this can be provided by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager on behalf of the interview panel. HR will issue a conditional offer of appointment to the candidate(s) and provide next steps.

1:5:5 Onboard & induct

When the candidate accepts the offer, HR will create a staff profile. The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will prepare to welcome the new graduate and organise an induction schedule for their first week. A buddy should be assigned to the graduate to help them settle in. This can be someone in the team, or as the Scheme grows, another graduate or graduate alumni. The day-to-day Line Manager of the graduate can then provide a local team induction, to introduce the team, the role and activities.

How to establish a Graduate Scheme

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Learning & developing from others (informal)
- New and challenging experiences
- Tools and technology
- Solving problems
- Reflecting and improving
- Networking
- Projects and BAU
- Rotations

Personal development (informal)
- Interactions
- Teamwork
- Project work
- Networks & Committees
- Feedback
- Coaching
- PDRs

Formal learning (technical and soft skills)
- Courses
- Conferences
- Webinars
- Workshops
- Self-study
- Exams and certification (online, events, face to face / internal and external)

Our suggested approach to training

Specialised disciplines:
Project, change, process, data, UX, testing, cyber security

Culture & engagement:
Mental health, wellbeing, ways of working, networks (diversity & inclusion, sustainability) & social events

Business skills:
Presentation, personal effectiveness, career, time management

Digital skills:
ITIL4, Microsoft 365, DevOps, system based

Onboarding essentials:
GDPR, health & safety, agile working

Supported by managers, buddies, mentors, probation & performance development reviews

Training and development opportunities throughout the IT Graduate Scheme

1:6 Train & develop

As part of Performance Development Reviews, ensure graduates have access to a range of resources to support their learning and career to develop their technical, digital and business skills, from online courses, in-person training events, certification paths to networking and being part of committees.

A suggested approach to training is 70% on the job learning, 20% informal learning and 10% formal learning.

Through support from the IT Graduate Scheme Manager, day-to-day Manager, mentors in their local team, graduates should have a range of support to develop their career rapidly.

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1:7 Share, support and learn

A regular Forum should be held by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager for all graduates to share news, best practice, updates and discuss matters in an open and informal style. Whilst organised by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager, graduates should take it in turns to take a lead role in the session, by organising the agenda, any guest speaker, running an activity and providing a presentation on their background, current team and achievements. As the Scheme grows and graduates are assigned to teams across the Department, this creates a graduate cohort and supports a collaborative one team approach. It should be an opportunity for graduates to learn more about each team, so they can show interest as part of the rotations. As graduates, they will also complete an end of Graduate Scheme presentation.
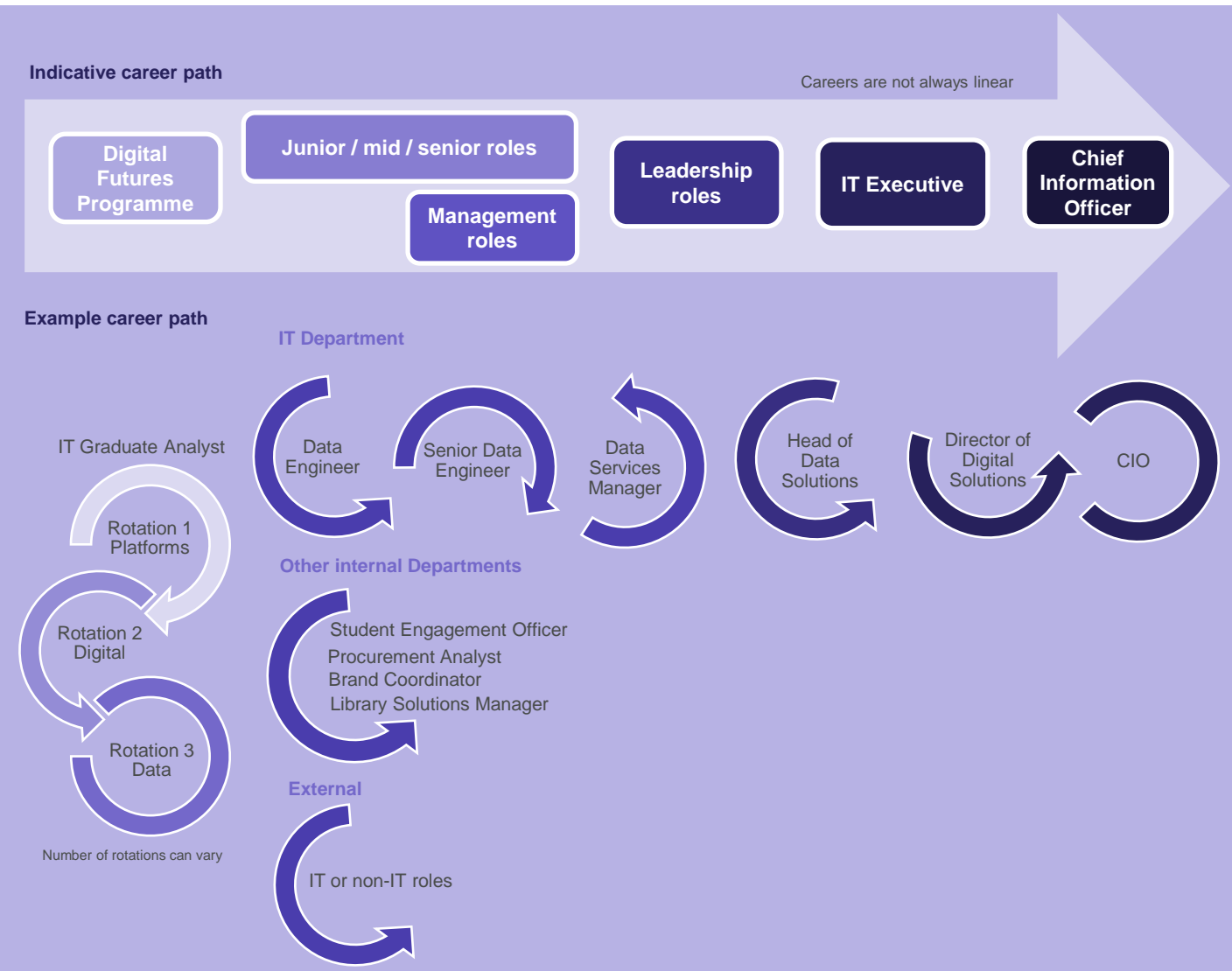
1:8 Rotate graduates

Graduates can expect to have 2-3 assignments during the 2 year Scheme. As the Scheme grows, it is anticipated more teams will host graduates, and the number of roles on the Scheme will increase. This will allow for a range of business and technical roles to be offered and provide a broad overview. It is recommended that a graduate works for a given team for a minimum of six months or more to allow for adequate training and handover between teams. If a graduate has a strong interest in a particular area, they may request their Scheme focuses in the area, but no guarantees should be made.

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will facilitate the conversations, team moves and communications to ensure fairness and consistency, supported by the day-to-day Manager on local handovers.

Graduates should share their interest in rotations, and talk to other graduates and teams to understand more about the role and see if it interests them. They should discuss this in 1:1s with their day-to-day Manager and also let the IT Graduate Scheme Manager know of their interest.

As the Scheme grows, it is advised to have a variety of teams hosting graduates, to create a wider pool of choice for rotations. This also allows graduates to experience a range of roles across the IT Department. This could include areas such as Enterprise Architecture, Project Management, PMO, Business Analysis, Data, Solutions, Digital & Web, Testing, Service Management & Support, Cyber Security and Infrastructure, depending on your department's teams.

How to establish a Graduate Scheme

Indicative career path

Careers are not always linear

- Digital Futures Programme
- Junior / mid / senior roles
- Management roles
- Leadership roles
- IT Executive
- Chief Information Officer

Example career path

IT Department

IT Graduate Analyst

- Rotation 1 Platforms
- Rotation 2 Digital
- Rotation 3 Data

Number of rotations can vary

Data Engineer → Senior Data Engineer → Data Services Manager → Head of Data Solutions → Director of Digital Solutions → CIO

Other internal Departments

Student Engagement Officer
Procurement Analyst
Brand Coordinator
Library Solutions Manager

External

IT or non-IT roles

Indicative career paths & example route from IT Graduate Scheme to IT and other Department roles

1:9 Develop career paths for progression

The IT Department should have an indicative career path. If not, the IT Graduate Scheme Manager should work with the IT Executive and local Managers to define this. This will help identify teams who can host graduates, and also a longer term talent pipeline for graduates completing the Scheme, and may be able to apply into permanent internal roles.

It is recommended graduates experience a number of rotations to build a broader perspective of IT upon which to build their career. They are expected to complete at least 1 year of the Scheme before applying into internal permanent roles, to ensure adequate training, exposure and experience.

As the Scheme is a 2 year fixed-term contract, there are no guarantees of a role after the Scheme. Graduates will be supported by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager for career advice and coaching, and local Managers on specific disciplines they're interested in. Ideally graduates will move into a role at the end, or towards the end of their second year on the Scheme – either within IT or other Departments. Some may secure external roles. This allows the IT Graduate Scheme Manager to recruit into the newly vacant role.

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1:10 Further advice

It is recommended to **start small**, with a few graduates across one or several teams (somewhere between two to four graduates). This allows the Scheme to embed itself and review feedback. As demand grows from teams, scale up depending on funding and a business case. As the Scheme grows this will allow for more rotational opportunities.

In identifying **demand from teams**, also consider the work graduates will be doing; will it be varied, interesting, giving opportunities for learning and development, and will the host team also be able to provide guidance and coaching to graduates. Consider hosting graduates in teams where there is some level of maturity of the discipline, and where staff can dedicate time to support graduates. For example, Project Management, Business Analysis, Enterprise Architecture and Desktop/ Audio Visual support have been successful as they have career paths and training plans established e.g. from Project Coordinator, to Junior Project Manager (PM), Senior PM, Programme Manager, Head of Portfolio. This may differ by institution. There is also a vast range of **training and certification** for the discipline and staff coach graduates. It is worth identifying demand from teams and interest from graduates as the Scheme grows, and then consider more technical specialist areas such as Testing, Data, Solutions development, and the support measures needed to be in place by the local team.

It is recommended that the IT Graduate Scheme Manager create a **standard job description** (see section 1.4) and list teams participating in the Scheme, but note this may be subject to change. This allows for standardisation. As more teams host graduates, the job description can be updated by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager.

It is more likely (depending on the institution's policy) that Graduates must be **eligible to work in the UK** to apply as it can be difficult to sponsor work permits at this level.

Graduates will follow **standard HR and IT team policy** around probationary period, performance development reviews and training plans. It is recommended that as graduates are at the start of their careers, they receive regular business and technical training (see section 1.6), discussed with their local manager and approved/ reviewed by the IT Graduate Scheme Manager.

There are many ways to **measure the success** of the programme such as graduate and host team manager feedback, retention rates of those on the Scheme and progressing into internal permanent roles, or external roles. Also measuring the diversity of graduates and ex-graduates and how this is contributing to the overall IT department's diversity and inclusion profile.
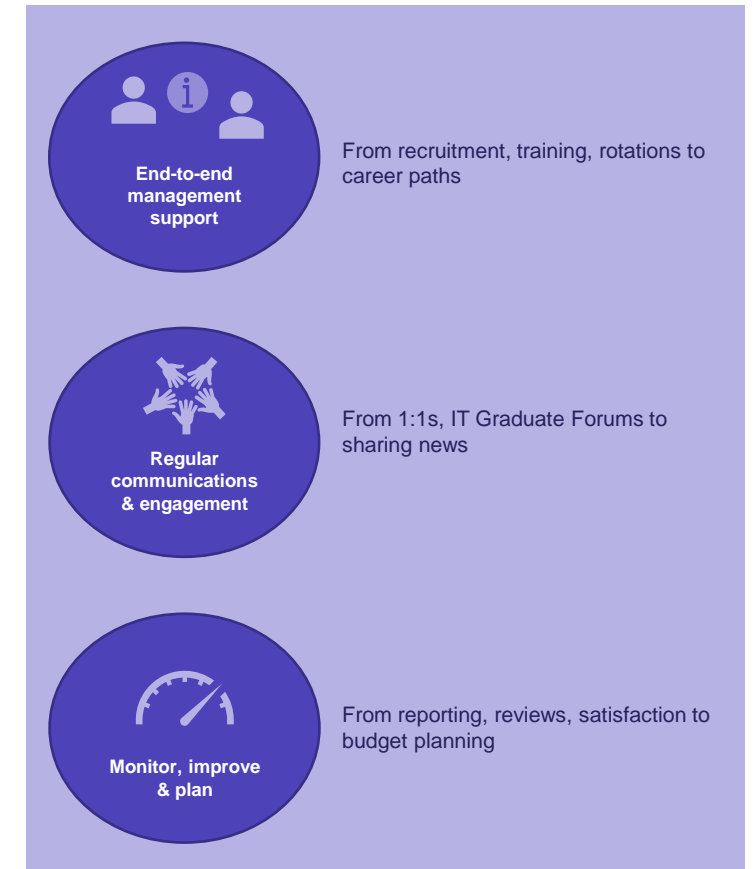
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How to establish a Graduate Scheme

1:11 Oversight and ongoing commitment

The IT Graduate Scheme Manager provides the management oversight of the Scheme, ensures its continued success and development, whilst supporting graduates for their 2 year duration. Local day-to-day Managers will provide the graduate with objectives, work tasks, feedback, coaching and approve annual leave and other requests. The IT Graduate Scheme Manager will:

- Have 1:1s with graduates and provide support, advice and coaching, as well as liaise with day-to-day Managers on any issues or feedback

- Be a central point of contact for any queries

- Ensure 3 and 6 month probations are completed by the day-to-day Manager and graduate and sign this off

- Provide template objectives which can be tailored by local Managers based on the team

- Ensure Performance Development Reviews are conducted

- Provide oversight of training opportunities and approvals, following local Manager confirmation

- Ensure the Scheme's satisfaction, capturing ideas for continuous improvement

- Track future interest and demand – roles graduates are interested in, any new team areas wishing to host graduates and changes in headcount

- Release central communications to graduates, local managers or the wider department on rotations, recruitment, joiners and leavers, with the support of the Communications team

- Maintain a planner of roles and rotations, diversity and inclusion and retention reporting, and career paths of graduates as they exit

- Conduct review points as required

- Organise IT Graduate Forums

- Oversee all recruitment activity

- Manage graduate rotations to different teams

- Provide career support to graduates

End-to-end management support
From recruitment, training, rotations to career paths

Regular communications & engagement
From 1:1s, IT Graduate Forums to sharing news

Monitor, improve & plan
From reporting, reviews, satisfaction to budget planning

IT Graduate Scheme oversight and ongoing commitment

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Chapter 2: Introduction to Apprenticeships

2:1 What is the Apprenticeship Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy is a UK tax, introduced in April 2017, on employers which is used to fund apprenticeship training. It is payable by all employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million, at a rate of 0.5% of their total pay bill.

The levy is designed to put apprenticeship funding in the hands of employers and encourage them to invest in and create apprenticeships.

Employers have 24 months to use their funds once they enter their apprenticeship service account, after this point, their funds will expire.

The funds expire to encourage levy paying employers to invest in high-quality training and assessment and to prevent levy payers from accruing very large balances. However, any unspent levy funds within each financial year are then used to support existing apprentices to complete their training, pay for apprenticeship training for smaller employers and additional payments to support apprentice

Since August 2019, Levy paying employers have been able to transfer up to 25% of their Levy funds to other employers.

The Levy funds can only be access and used to pay for the training element of the Apprenticeship, organisations are required to cover all other employment costs.

Monies from the Digital Apprenticeship Service ("DAS") account are paid monthly directly to the training provider.

2:2 Who can study an Apprenticeship

Apprentices are aged 16 or over and combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge for a specific job.

Apprentices can be new or current employees.

Apprentices must:

- Work with experienced staff

- Learn job-specific skills

- Get time for training or studying during their working week (at least 20% off their normal working hours)

- Apprentices must last for at least a year. They can last up to 5 years depending on the level the apprentice is studying.
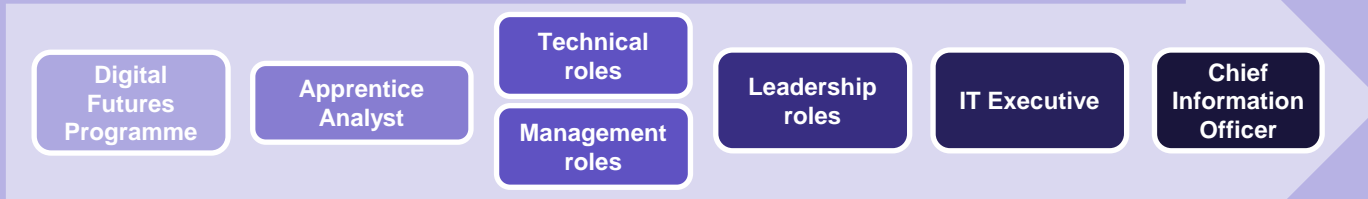
Apprenticeships offer hundreds of different opportunities ranging from IT to accountancy and carpentry to mechanics so organisations have many areas into which they can implement and offer training for both new and incumbent staff.

2:3 Where can monies from the Apprenticeship Levy be spent?

Education bodies can not financially benefit from their own Levy pot by delivering the training themselves.

Introduction to Apprenticeships

Indicative career path for an Apprentice Analyst (new staff)

| Digital Futures Programme | Apprentice Analyst | Technical roles / Management roles | Leadership roles | IT Executive | Chief Information Officer |

Indicative career path for an Apprentice (existing staff)

| Digital Futures Programme | Technical roles / Management roles | Leadership roles | IT Executive | Chief Information Officer |

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Learning & developing from others (informal)	Personal development (informal)	Formal learning (technical and soft skills)
- New and challenging experiences - Tools and technology - Solving problems - Reflecting and improving - Networking - Projects and BAU	- Interactions - Teamwork - Project work - Networks & Committees - Feedback - Coaching - PDRs	- College days - Courses - Conferences - Webinars - Workshops - Self-study - Exams and certification (online, events, face to face / internal and external)

Our suggested approach to training

A number of benefits of the Levy for the Employer include:

- Compliment the company's training budget
- Increases staff retention
- Employers can work collaboratively with training providers
- Become an employer of choice in their local area and/or industry
- Improve productivity
- Reducing costs associated with recruiting and training staff

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Chapter 3: How to establish an Apprenticeship Programme for new staff

There are a number of considerations to make when setting up a program, however really it's all about ensuring you set up a framework so your new apprentice gets the best experience, and your team gets the best from them.

This section of the toolkit covers:

- Things to consider

- One example of how Apprentices can fit into an organisation – How King's College London set up and runs their End User Services Support Engineer Programme

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Apprenticeship courses are numerous and are tailored to all levels of education, from GCSE equivalent, through to post graduate, but there are some things that apply to all of them.

The most important is that all Apprenticeships have an 80/20 split between work and study, so you'll have your staff for 80% of their working hours, with their study taking up the remaining time. This can be as simple as having them at work for 4 days a week with a study day.

The second standard is that all Apprenticeship courses will be run and assessed by Apprenticeship Providers who will deal with all academic training delivery, endpoint assessments and also usually vocational assessments. Your responsibility will be to enable this to happen, and ensure your Apprentice has the tools and opportunity to fulfil these alongside their duties.

Things to consider:

3:1 Define the purpose

The most obvious starting point is why you are setting the programme up, and identifying the roles required and what they do. Some easy answers will be:

- Attract new talent to your team

- Ensure good training opportunities for them

- Make use of your Apprenticeship Levy funds

- To fulfil a business function

You will need to establish what these roles will do, and measurable tasks to monitor performance and ensure you know the programme is working and adding value for your team/organisation, and for the individual Apprentices. Usually with new staff they will be employed on fixed term contracts for the length of their course.

An important consideration is what permanent roles will be available to them after they complete their Apprenticeship, and whether you will encourage them to apply for roles during their course.

3:2 Who will run it?

Some essential roles will be:

- Administration of DAS funds and compliance

- Line management of apprentices

- Liaison with Apprentice Provider

This could all be done by one role, or several depending on where you will be employing Apprentices and how your organisation has chosen to administer payments and staff.

Things to consider

3:3 Find Apprenticeship provider and Apprenticeship

Now you've defined the purpose of the roles, how these staff will integrate into your teams, and who will be responsible for them, choosing an Apprenticeship Provider is an essential next step.

It's sensible to speak to several providers and ask them for suitable courses which will fit your new roles and discuss the different levels of qualification. A level 3 qualification can be completed in a year, whereas a degree standard level 6 one can take up to six.

It's also a good idea to ask them what benefits for the Apprentice they offer- many will offer additional training, and all should be able to administer student benefits such as 30% off travel.

3:4 Advertise and recruit

Your Apprenticeship Provider can assist with this, but the main thing to know is that all Apprenticeships must be advertised on the Government website. This is the main way potential staff will see your vacancy.

Things to think about with your advertisement is language used, especially if these are to be entry level positions. Inclusive phrases, plain, non-technical language may well yield better results than that used for a standard vacancy.

Depending on the role, similar consideration is a good idea for the interview.

3:5 Onboarding

Your Apprenticeship Provider will have their own onboarding and review process for the academic components of the Apprenticeship, but things to think about for the role could be:

- Using a buddy system to pair up the Apprentice with an existing staff member

- Adding things such as writing style and tone for communications to your standard induction process

- Although they'll be getting a qualification, standard things such an ITIL Foundation Certificate could be very useful additional things to offer

Define its purpose- 1st line in-person IT support

In 2016 we identified a need for a walk up, in person 1st line support team for our London Campuses. In addition to this we were keen to create a pathway into our End User Services teams for people looking to start or change their career.

The idea of creating a walk up, in-person, TechBar service and staffing it with our current engineers and Apprentices new to King's was formed.

The Apprentices would complete a qualification in IT support, gain valuable work experience, and we'd hopefully be able to retain a proportion of them to bolster our permanent teams. If successful we would recruit a new cohort of Apprentices every year to replace those who had graduated.

Who will run it?

As we were creating a whole new service we appointed a TechBar Manager as a new role, who would also have responsibility for recruiting and managing our Apprentices, liaising with the Provider and being responsible for all aspects of the running of the scheme.

We used our HR team to manage the DAS payments to the provider and ensuring we were compliant.

We went with a provider who could advertise our roles, advise on recruitment, shortlist and deliver all aspects of the apprentices academic studies.

Find Provider and Apprenticeship

We knew broadly that we wanted our Apprentices to study a course which would give them an overview of IT Support, from operating systems to the fundamentals of how a computer and software works, troubleshooting problems and business processes.

We therefore contacted several Apprenticeship Providers and engaged them in choosing a suitable course at a suitable level.

We chose risual as our provider and a level 3 IT Infrastructure Technician Apprenticeship. This is broadly equivalent to two A-levels, and includes MTAs in networking and Servers originally, now Azure. As we were recruiting for entry level roles this was the perfect fit for our needs.

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Length of contract, recruiting and selection

We initially decided on a 1 year fixed term contract as the delivery of the course was 1 year. This proved to be a mistake as we quickly discovered the courses are roll on roll off at set times of the year, so we moved to 18 months which has worked brilliantly and allowed plenty of time for staff to complete their studies.

We also initially recruited all 8 apprentices at the same time, which we learned wasn't optimal as then they all finished at the same time. We have since moved to rounds of staggered recruitment meaning we aren't recruiting a full team at the same time. We have just recruited our 30th Apprentice so this definitely works for us.

For our interviews we are mostly interested in people skills, enthusiasm and fit for the team- we can teach the technical side as the new staff progress with us.

Onboarding and structure

Initially our Apprentices were managed under one team, our TechBar Team. This proved to be challenging as they were based at multiple campuses and with only one manager, were quite hard to support and manage. This was also confusing for these staff as they weren't well integrated with other teams in IT and the EUS department.

We now split the Apprentices time 50/50 between working on our TechBars and working within our EUS Desktop Support teams. This ensures they are buddied up with experienced staff and local management can ensure their day to day duties are structured with clear reporting lines.

We usually have a cohort of 8 Apprentices at a time, which is over 10% of our End User Services Department.

Future pathways

Our initial plan was for Apprentices to complete their Apprenticeship and join our EUS Support teams in any vacant roles which would normally become available. We quickly realised that not only would not enough roles be available due to natural churn, but also that these roles could be at a too high level. We therefore created new, less technical roles our Apprentices could apply for and move into during their time with us. This has been hugely successful and we encourage our Apprentices to apply for roles at all stages of their Apprenticeships, and have gained brilliant permanent staff as a result.

We've had a 92% pass rate so far, and we have recruited 44% of our Apprentices into permanent roles with us. Others have gone onto be Desktop Engineers, Service Desk Analysts and Team Leaders in the sector, while others have continued education elsewhere.

Expansion of the programme

After the success of this Apprenticeship scheme we are eager to expand it, and are due to launch an Audio Visual Apprenticeship Scheme in September 2022.

This will consist of a cohort of 8 Apprentices recruited in staggered fashion studying a Level 5 Audio Visual Technician Higher Apprenticeship provided by Middlesbrough College Group.

These staff will work in all areas of our End User Services Audio Visual team, and we can't wait for them to start.

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Chapter 4: How to establish an Apprenticeship Programme for existing staff

When the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017, it gave employers the opportunity to think about and offer training and development for incumbent staff differently.

Employers are able to access their Levy pot to fund Apprenticeship qualifications for their staff from GCSE through to Master's Degree.

This will enable staff to develop and attain formal qualifications in their own role or work towards aspirational roles that they wish to develop their career in, providing, they are able to have exposure to this area for the formal qualification element of the Apprenticeship.

4:1 To establish an effective Apprenticeship Programme two roles need to be in place (this can be the same resource)

a) a **Champion** who is the contact point for staff and training providers who understands how apprenticeships work and can champion the scheme within the organisation

b) an **Administrator** of the Digital Apprenticeship Service ("DAS") account who will connect and enable training providers to be paid their fees from the Levy pot.

4:2 **Promotion and communication** of the opportunities to staff and managers is key if the uptake of the scheme is to be positive.

Be clear and concise as to what is involved in undertaking such learning; 20% off the job learning & ongoing management support and provide a library of information as to where apprenticeship courses can be found.

4:3 On a day-to-day basis, the learner will need to be support by the line manager however, during the **enrolment** process it's helpful to have the Champion involved to help ease everyone through the process.

4:4 Line Managers will support the Apprentice by ensuring that they have sufficient time (20%) in their working week to undertake their studies but also to meet with the training provider's Assessor when they visit to undertake **professional conversations**, confirming the learner's development.
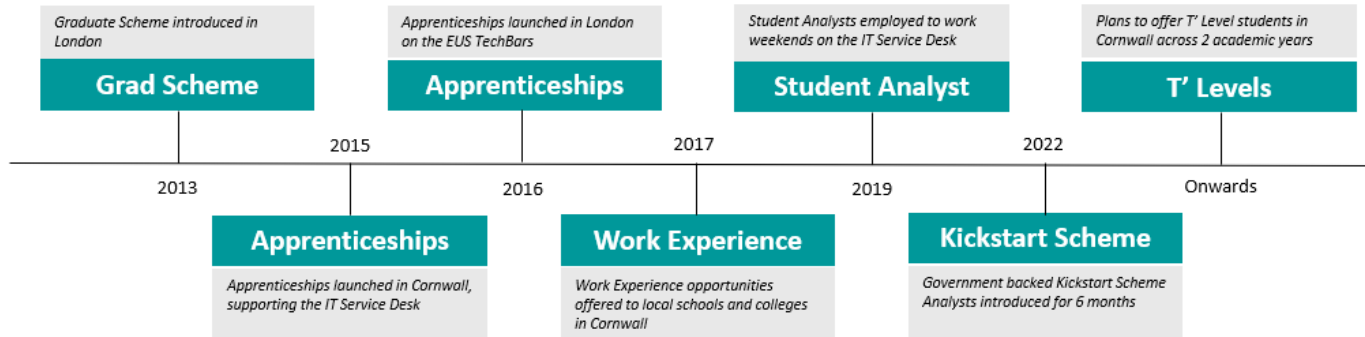
4:5 Depending on the size of training provider they may have an online portal which enables the manager and Champion to access management information which will provide ongoing **management and oversight**. Otherwise, this will need to be provided manually.

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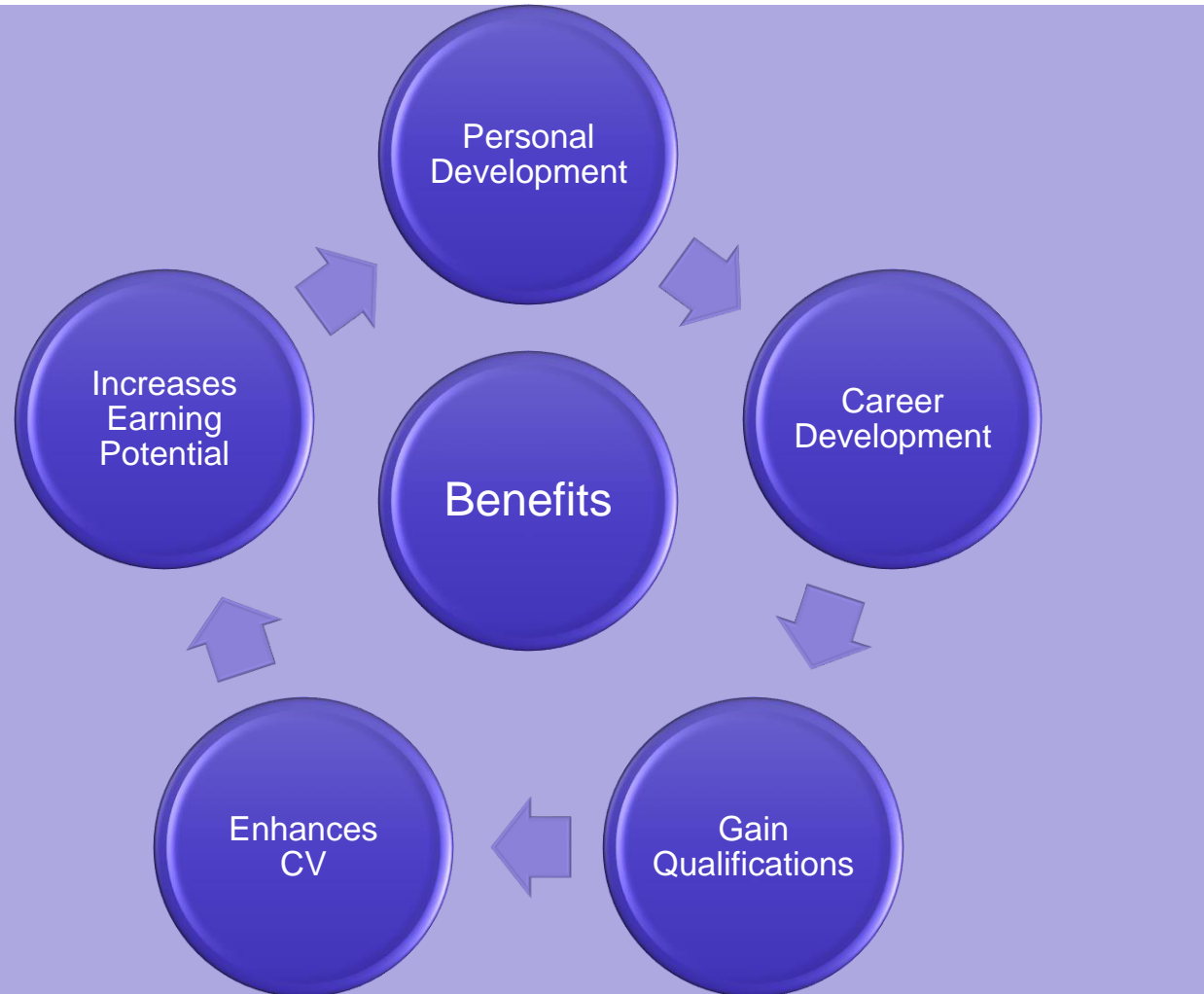
There are many and varied benefits to the existing staff members to undertake Apprenticeship learning.

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Graduate Scheme introduced in London	Apprenticeships launched in London on the EUS TechBars	Student Analysts employed to work weekends on the IT Service Desk	Plans to offer T' Level students in Cornwall across 2 academic years
Grad Scheme	**Apprenticeships**	**Student Analyst**	**T' Levels**

2015 · 2017 · 2022

2013 · 2016 · 2019 · Onwards

Apprenticeships	**Work Experience**	**Kickstart Scheme**
Apprenticeships launched in Cornwall, supporting the IT Service Desk	Work Experience opportunities offered to local schools and colleges in Cornwall	Government backed Kickstart Scheme Analysts introduced for 6 months

King's College London IT Department's Digital Futures Programme implementation timeline.

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How our Graduates and Apprentices have gone on to develop their careers across a range of IT disciplines, from junior, mid, senior to management roles.

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What the Managers say

Chief Information Officer *"It's great to see that the Digital Futures Programme is providing us with fantastic talent and to see people coming through these paths."*

Director, Office of the CIO *I'm delighted with the pipeline of talent that has come through from our graduate and apprenticeship schemes. It provides opportunities to people who might otherwise struggle to advance in IT. The diversity of our staff has benefitted; and I am heartened when I see some former grads and apprentices on their fourth or fifth role with us.*

Head of Application Services *"The schemes provide additional support and structure for both graduates and apprentices ensuring they have additional opportunities to explore skills that benefit the whole of IT."*

Head of Portfolio *"Graduates have played an essential role and made a significant contribution to the successful delivery of projects. Previous Graduates have gone onto securing permanent roles as Project Coordinators and subsequently Project Managers."*

Head of End User Services *"The apprenticeship scheme is one of the initiatives that I am proudest of being involved in at KCL. I am delighted that we offer an opportunity for junior staff to come and learn new skills and progress in IT."*

Head of Service Management *"To be able to offer them genuine employment experience, whilst complimenting their academic studies allows King's to demonstrate a key aim which is to integrate closely with the local community."*

What the current Graduates and Apprentices say

IT Graduate Analyst *"A perfect opportunity to explore a new field that I was always curious about, but had no formal training in. I was able to expand my knowledge and skills and learn about new areas of IT and the possibility of a future career path."*

End User Services Apprentice *"I have always had a passion for computers and fixing them. I was doing a small IT course to pass the time, and an Apprenticeship Advisor came into class one day to tell us about an opportunity at King's College London, which I applied for without hesitation."*

Print Services Lead *"I am now a year into my degree apprenticeship, I started this during the pandemic because I wanted to further my career opportunities due to the uncertainty the pandemic was creating. It was the best decision I ever made, the apprenticeship has allowed me to better my skillset for King's and explore parts of the university such as its Corporate social responsibility, analysis from a macro, micro and internal environment to name a few. The best thing the degree has given me is self-reflection. Through self-reflection I have discovered that I used to fall back on old habits and the safe ways I knew, I now reflect on the decisions made by myself with regards to my role. I have almost completed level four and cannot wait to move onto level five where I will gain an interim qualification. You are never too old to change career and I would highly recommend this route to success."*

What does HR say

HR People Partner *"A great benefit to the diversity of the Directorate. The IT workforce as a whole in the UK is not particularly diverse and our Schemes have allowed us to develop our own diverse talent rather than recruit externally. It has had a positive impact on both gender and ethnicity balance."*

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Testimonials from previous Graduates

Many graduates have successfully completed the Scheme and secured roles within IT and across King's Faculties and Departments. Here are what a few had to say about their experiences:

Abid Ali - BSc Business Information Systems, Project Coordinator

"The Grad Scheme is a great stepping stone into the world of IT. I gained contextual knowledge in project management, confidence and communication skills."

Marina Panteleewa - MSc Information Technology, Architecture Practice Analyst

"This Scheme has been exciting, challenging & motivating. Experiencing different aspects of IT to understand what I want to achieve going forward."

Gurdeep Singh Sheri – MSc Psychology of Social Relations, Student Engagement Officer

"The Scheme is a wonderful opportunity to partake in various training which develops you both professionally & personally making you more employable."

Maria Troullides – BA Comparative Literature, UX Designer

"This experience helped me choose which career path to take, so the creative variety was perfect for me and I have met really great mentors along the way."

Grad Careers with King's IT

Grad Careers across King's

Grad Careers after King's

Website: itgrads.kcl.ac.uk

Testimonials of graduates who have completed the Scheme, and have secured permanent roles within the IT Department, and across the university, ranging from Analysts, to Designers, across disciplines including Project Management, Enterprise Architecture, Web & Digital Solutions, as well as to Faculty and Professional Services teams.

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Further reading

1.Apprenticeships funded by transfer of levy funds

This resource goes into details on how the levy is administered.

2. www.gov.uk/empoying-an-apprentice

The Gov.uk website has a fantastic range of information on all aspects of Apprenticeships, both from an employer and employee perspective.

3. https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/

This is another excellent Gov.uk resource including information on all aspects of Apprenticeships.

4. itgrads.kcl.ac.uk

Weblink to the IT Graduate Scheme at King's College London.

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