South Midlands CAREERS HUB | THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

Recruitment

South Midlands Skills Hub

www.southmidlands.org.uk

With the changes in the focus on skills and an increasing competitive labour market, using best practices for recruitment are essential to attract, select, and hire the right talent efficiently and effectively.

The information contained within this section provide some guidance on how to recruit more efficiently and effectively.

- **A well-defined job description**
- **Impactful job adverts**
- **Where to advertise**
- **Opening up recruitment**
- **Flexibility in the workplace**
- **Salary benchmarking**
- **Recruiting without CVs**
- **Improving the process**
- **What are employability skills?**
- **Examples of best practice**

Skills and Recruitment Trends

Through consultation with employers, we have adopted a common employability skills language to promote of better understanding between educators, businesses/employers and individuals about what skills are relevant to employment now and in the future.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ARE DEFINED AS:

- **ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS**
- **CORE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**
- **TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL**
- **BASIC SKILLS**
- **QUALIFICATIONS & CERTIFICATIONS**

Definitions of the skills listed can be found in "What are Employability Skills?".

THE TRENDS FOR THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS INDICATE MORE FOCUS ON ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS AND CORE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WHEN RECRUITING

Demand for Employability Skills Groups as a Percentage of Total vs 2018

Legend: Attitudes & Behaviours, Core Transferable Skills, Basic Skills, Technical & Vocational, Qualifications & Certifications
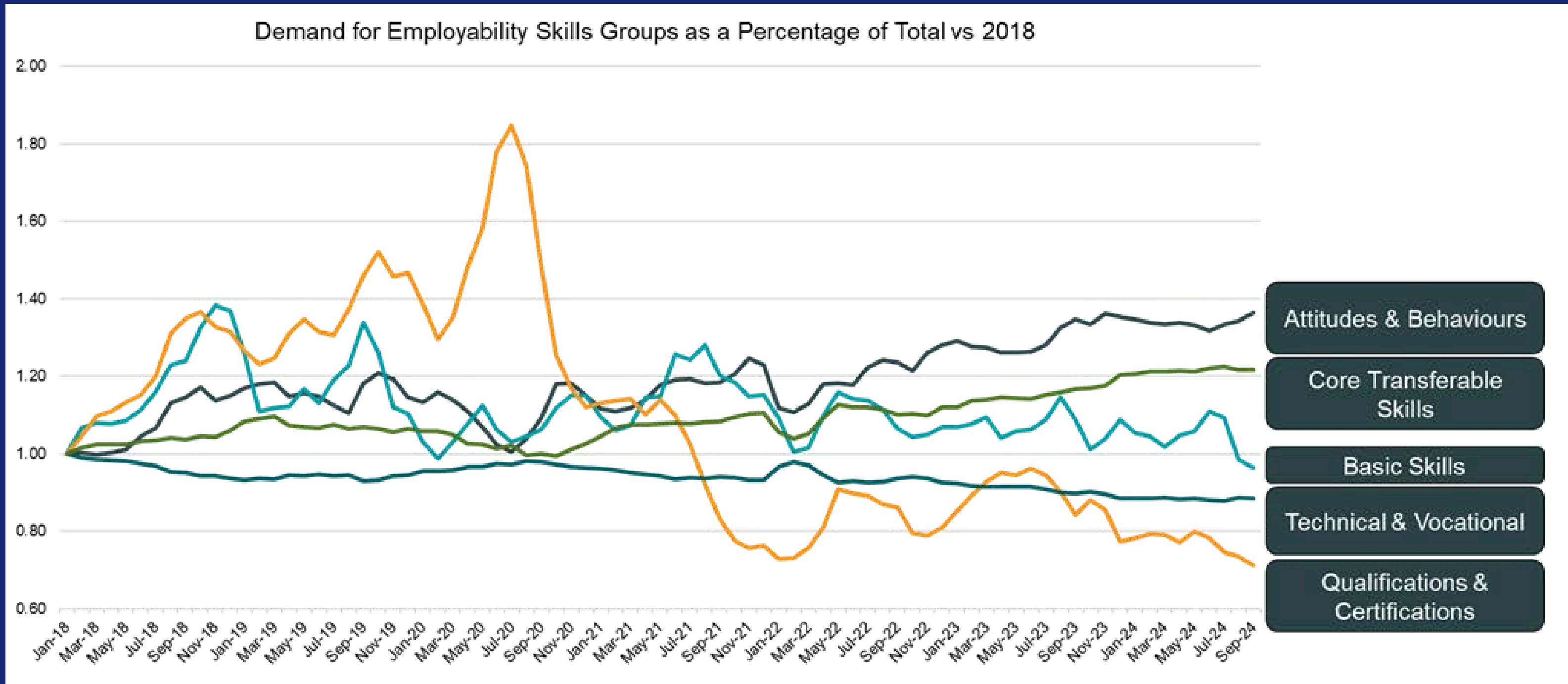
A Well-Defined Job Description

Writing a good job description is essential for attracting the right candidates and ensuring clarity about the role's responsibilities and expectations. A well-crafted job description should be clear, concise, and engaging while outlining key details. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to write an effective job description:

1. Job Title

Clear and Specific: Use a title that accurately reflects the role's responsibilities and level within the company.
Avoid Jargon and acronyms: Make sure the title is easily understandable to potential applicants outside of the organisation.

2. Job Summary

Concise Overview: Provide a brief summary (2-3 sentences) of the role, highlighting its main purpose, importance to the organisation, and how it contributes to company goals.

Engaging Tone: Use an appealing tone that reflects your company's culture to draw in candidates.

Example: "As a Marketing Manager at ABC Ltd, you'll lead our marketing campaigns, manage a small team, and work closely with the sales department to drive our brand's growth. This role is crucial to expanding our market presence and enhancing customer engagement."

3. Key Responsibilities

List in Order of Importance: Use bullet points to clearly outline the main duties of the role, starting with the most critical responsibilities.

Be Specific: Include measurable or specific tasks (e.g., "Develop and execute social media strategies to increase engagement by 20%").

Limit to 5-8 Key Tasks: Focus on the most important aspects of the job without overwhelming the candidate with minor details.

Example:
- Lead the creation and execution of marketing campaigns across various channels.
- Analyse market trends, review and adjust strategies to stay competitive.
- Manage the marketing team, providing direction and professional development.
- Collaborate with sales and product teams to ensure aligned messaging.
- Track performance metrics and report on campaign effectiveness.

4. Required Skills, Certification and Qualifications

Core transferable skills, attitudes and behaviours ("Soft Skills"): Include important skills (e.g., "attention to detail, strong listening skills, leadership abilities, problem-solving, etc.").

Technical Skills: List the essential technical skills (e.g., Proficiency in Google Analytics, Adobe Creative Suite.
Certification: List certification, particularly those deemed as a licence to practice (e.g. Construction Skills Certification Scheme card in construction, forklift licence, etc.).

Education and Experience: Take time to reflect on what qualifications (if any) are really required and you are not limiting applicants by recruiting in your own likeness or doing what you have always done in the past.

Specify the required education level, years of experience (again, challenge this), and any specific qualifications or certifications.

Example:
- Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Communications, or a related field.
- Minimum of 3 years of experience in a marketing management role.
- Proven expertise in digital marketing and social media strategy.
- Strong analytical skills to interpret data and optimize campaigns.
- Excellent leadership and team management capabilities.

5. Preferred Qualifications (Optional)

Bonus skills or experience that are not essential but might be beneficial (e.g. experience with CRM software like Salesforce, etc.).

6. Company Overview

Brief Description: Include a short paragraph about your company's mission, values, and culture. Help candidates understand why your company is a great place to work.

Unique Selling Points: Highlight any unique aspects that would attract top talent, such as your innovative approach, team culture, or commitment to sustainability.

Example: "ABC Corp is a fast-growing tech startup, committed to innovation and empowering our employees to make impactful decisions. We foster a collaborative and inclusive work environment and offer opportunities for career growth and development."

7. Salary and Benefits
Salary Range (Optional): If appropriate, include a salary range to attract candidates who meet your budget and expectations.
Perks and Benefits: Highlight key benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plans, remote work opportunities, professional development, and vacation policies.

Example:
- Competitive salary with performance-based bonuses.
- Health, dental, and vision insurance.
- Flexible working hours and remote work options.
- Opportunities for ongoing learning and career advancement.

8. Location and Work Conditions
Workplace Location: Clearly state if the role is on-site, remote, or hybrid.

Travel Requirements (If applicable): Mention any travel requirements or work conditions specific to the role.

Example: "This is a full-time position based in our Milton Keynes office with the option for hybrid remote work. Occasional travel may be required for industry events."

9. Equal Opportunity Statement
Inclusivity: End with an equal opportunity employer statement to encourage applications from diverse candidates.

Example: "ABC Corp is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

By following these steps, you can create a clear, comprehensive, and attractive job description that will help attract qualified and motivated candidates while setting realistic expectations for the role.

Impactful Job Adverts

Creating an impactful job vacancy advert is key to attracting the right talent and making your company stand out from the competition. Here's how you can write an effective, attention-grabbing job advert:

1. Engaging Job Title
Clear and Specific: Ensure the job title accurately describes the role and avoids company language, acronyms and jargon or overly creative titles that may confuse applicants.

Eye-Catching: Keep it concise, and make sure it reflects the key responsibility or appeal of the role. For example, "Marketing Manager – Lead Strategic Campaigns" is more engaging than just "Marketing Manager."

2. Compelling Opening Hook
Start Strong: The first few sentences should immediately capture the reader's attention. This could be a powerful question, a bold statement about your company's mission, or what makes this role exciting.

Example: "Do you want to lead transformative marketing campaigns in a fast-growing tech company? At XYZ Ltd, we're looking for a creative and data-driven Marketing Manager to help us shape the future of digital innovation."

3. Highlight Key Selling Points
Why Work with You: Emphasise why your company is a great place to work. Mention company culture, work environment, growth opportunities, or any unique perks that set you apart.

Career Growth: Describe how this role can lead to advancement or personal development, appealing to candidates seeking growth.

Example: "Join a team where innovation and creativity are at the forefront. At XYZ Ltd, you'll have the chance to lead cutting-edge projects, grow your skills, and shape the future of our industry."

4. Clear Job Summary

Concise Overview: Summarise the role in a few sentences. Describe the purpose of the position and what the candidate will achieve.

Balance of Expectations: Focus on what the candidate will do and learn, not just what they will give to the company.

Example: "As a Marketing Manager, you will drive our multi-channel campaigns, manage a dynamic team, and collaborate with top executives to push creative boundaries and grow brand recognition."

5. Responsibilities and Day-to-Day Tasks

Bullet Points for Clarity: List the top 5-7 key responsibilities in bullet points to make it easier to scan. Focus on the core tasks without overwhelming the candidate with too much detail.

Use Action Verbs: Start each responsibility with an action verb (e.g., "Lead," "Manage," "Develop") to convey a sense of ownership and achievement.

Example:
- Lead the development and execution of marketing strategies across digital and traditional channels.
- Analyse campaign performance and present insights to senior management.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams to align marketing goals with business objectives.

6. Essential Skills and Qualifications

List What's Necessary: Include the required skills, experience and qualifications. Be realistic about what's essential to perform the role versus "nice to have" skills and ensure that you really need the qualifications being listed.

Focus on Skills, Not Just Credentials: If possible, highlight specific skills (e.g., creativity, problem-solving) rather than only formal qualifications (e.g., a degree).

Example:
- Strong analytical skills with experience in digital marketing tools like Google Analytics.
- 3+ years of experience in managing marketing campaigns.

7. Company Overview

Brief and Exciting: Provide a snapshot of your company's mission, vision, and culture. Use this section to showcase your values and what makes your organisation unique.

Culture Fit: Appeal to candidates by aligning your company's culture with their values, such as work-life balance, innovation, inclusivity, or sustainability.

Example: "XYZ Ltd is a dynamic and forward-thinking company committed to driving innovation in the tech industry. We value creativity, collaboration, and continuous learning and offer a supportive environment for growth."
If appropriate, you may wish to include reference to contributions to protecting the environment, sustainability and/or corporate social responsibility.

8. Salary

Include the salary being offered. Evidence shows that not including a salary will deter people from applying.

Be careful when using terms such as "pro rata". It will be better to show the actual salary and the time per week worked.

9. Benefits and Perks

List Key Benefits: Mention salary range (if possible), benefits, and perks that will entice candidates, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, healthcare, professional development opportunities, and a great work culture.

Unique Selling Points: Focus on what makes working at your company special, like a commitment to innovation, sustainability, or diversity.

Example:
- Competitive salary with performance bonuses.
- Flexible working hours and the option to work remotely.
- Health insurance and wellness programs.

10. Location and Work Conditions

Be Transparent: Clearly state the job location (on-site, hybrid, remote) and any travel or relocation expectations.

Flexible Work Options: If you offer remote work or flexible hours, highlight that in the job advert since it's highly appealing to many candidates.
You may also include the fun side of working within your organisation including social and community activity.

11. Call to Action

Encourage Action: Clearly guide candidates on how to apply and provide a specific call to action (e.g., "Apply now by submitting your CV and cover letter to [email address]").

Application Deadline: If there's a deadline for applications, make sure it's clearly stated to create urgency.

Example: "Ready to take your career to the next level? Apply now by sending your CV and a brief cover letter to [email address]. Applications close on [deadline]. We look forward to hearing from you!"

12. Equal Opportunity Statement

Inclusivity: Include an equal opportunity employer statement to show that your company values diversity and encourages applications from all backgrounds.

Example: "XYZ Ltd is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees."

13. Concise and Optimised Formatting

Easy to Read: Use short paragraphs, bullet points, and clear section headings to make the ad easily scannable.

Mobile Friendly: Ensure the job ad is optimised for mobile devices, as many candidates will view it on their phones.

14. Prospects and Personal Development

If possible, provide some examples of what training would be offered for personal development in the role and what progression routes may be possible or have been taken before.

Where to Advertise

Use multiple sourcing channels to access relevant and diverse talent pathways and groups of people. It can also be more efficient use of resources and time and save money.

Job Boards
Job Boards are websites that serve the same function as classified ads used to. Using a Job Board is one of the most efficient ways to publicise a vacancy. Popular examples include:
- Indeed
- Reed
- Monster
- LinkedIn
- Find a Job
- Find an Apprenticeship (you will require an Apprenticeship Service Account)
- FlexJobs (Remote Jobs)
- Wellfound (Startup Jobs)
- Get Work (Trades)
- Snagajob (Hourly Work)

Employee Referrals
Encourage your employees to refer candidates. This can lead to faster hires, saving time and lowering recruiting costs.

Internal Hiring
Promote internal mobility by offering opportunities for current employees to grow within the company. This will increase workforce retention and motivation.

Social Media

The advantage of promoting a vacancy on social media is that you are addressing a group of people who are engaged with your company and being active with social media channels helps followers understand what you do, your values and culture, helping shape a candidate's opinion of your business and brand awareness.

When used in parallel with Job Boards, social media activity can make a candidate more inclined to click as they have gained an understanding of what your company does and what it stands for.

Before using social media have a clear understanding of your ideal candidate profile, and which platform they are most likely to use. LinkedIn as a social platform designed for business and professionals is popular, but your strategy should be designed to fit the role. For example a more graphic or visual role could be promoted through a more image based platform such as Instagram, a media role via YouTube. For a younger audience, using TikTok with appropriate hashtags may work. Whichever platform is used it must be relatable to your business and match the values of your company.

Social media can also be used to learn a candidate's career/professional history (LinkedIn) and fit with your organisation through their social media presence (X, Facebook, TikTok, etc).

Jobs Hubs

There are a number of other opportunities within the South Midlands to promote vacancies:
- The Jobs Hub, Bedford - The Jobs Hub - a quick guide to our services | Bedford Borough Council
- Employability Hub, Northampton - Employability Hub Weston Favell Library | West Northamptonshire Council

Work Experience, Internships and Work Placements

Offering opportunities for temporary positions within the organisation can be a great way to see if somebody is going to be suitable for the role. More information on on work experience internships and work placements can be found in "Developing a Talent Pipeline".

Recruitment Agencies

The advantages of using recruitment agencies:

- Pay on success: Most agencies charge only when they successfully introduce a candidate, meaning you can work with multiple agencies simultaneously and only pay the "winner."
- Access to a larger talent pool: agencies often have extensive networks and databases of potential candidates. This allows them to target individuals with the specific skills and experience needed, including potential candidates not actively seeking employment.
- Time-saving: Recruitment can be a time-consuming process. Recruitment agencies take on tasks including advertising jobs, sorting through applications, conducting preliminary interviews, and employment reference checks, freeing up your organisation's resources, allowing focus on core business activities.
- Market knowledge: Recruitment consultants often have specialised knowledge of the sectors including salary rates, available skill sets, and current hiring challenges.
- Screening: Recruitment consultants can conduct preliminary telephone calls and checks, ensuring that only suitable candidates are forwarded to the employer.
- Flexibility and speed: Recruitment agencies can provide temporary or contract workers at short notice, beneficial for covering unexpected staff shortages or peaks in demand.
- Reduced risk: Many recruitment agencies offer guarantees and rebates if a recruit does not work out within a specified period, reducing the risk to the employer.
- Confidentiality: For sensitive roles, such as replacing a current employee or hiring in a competitive environment, agencies can manage the recruitment process discreetly.

There are some potential disadvantages of using recruitment agencies:

- Cost: One of the most significant drawbacks is the expense. Recruitment agencies typically charge a percentage of the hired candidate's annual salary.
- Quality and relevance of candidates: Some recruitment consultants might prioritise quantity over quality, sending many candidates in the hope that one will be suitable rather than carefully matching candidates to the job's specific requirements.
- Limited understanding of company culture: If recruitment consultants do not visit employers to understand the organisation's culture this can lead to candidates who are a poor cultural fit despite having the necessary skills and experience.
- Potential conflict of interest: As agencies earn their commission when a candidate is placed, their primary motive can sometimes be to fill a position rather than find the ideal candidate.
- Dependence and lack of control: Relying on recruitment agencies can lead to a lack of control over the recruitment process, with employers having to trust the recruitment agency's judgement in screening and selecting candidates.

- Risk of misrepresentation: The agency must havea clear definition of the position so as not to oversell a position to a candidate, leading to dissatisfaction on both sides.
- Potential for duplication: If multiple recruitment agencies are used, this can result in agencies presenting the same candidate, leading to administrative complications.

Establishing a long-term relationship with a recruitment consultant can be beneficial for future hiring needs. Becoming more familiar with the company's culture and requirements can improve the effectiveness of their service.

More guidance can be found at Using a recruitment agency to find staff - GOV.UK.

Job Centre Plus
A typical view of Job Centres by employers is rows of job vacancy cards is a room.

Jobcentre Plus has a range of recruitment services including:
· Recruitment advice, including support with your vacancies
· Help setting up work trials to give you the opportunity to try out potential recruits
· Advice about offering work experience and apprenticeships, including using the sector-based work academy programme
· Support if you employ someone with a disability (Access to Work)
· Advice and guidance on employing someone with a disability or health condition
You can also advertise a job with the 'Find a job' service.

Local Offices:

Bedfordshire
- Bedford, 57 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2EH
- Biggleswade, 73 High Street, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 0JH
- Leighton Buzzard, Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1DA
Luton
- Cheviot House, Guildford Street, Luton, LU1 2ER

Milton Keynes
- Southgate House, 449-499 Midsummer Blvd, Milton Keynes, MK9 3BN

Northamptonshire
- Corby, Thoroughsale House, George Street, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 1PH
- Daventry, Civic Offices, Lodge Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 4FP
- Kettering, Derbyshire House, Lower Street, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN16 8BG
- Rushden, 71 Rectory Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 0AF
- Northampton, Frances House, 21 Lower Mounts, Northampton, NN1 3LY
- Wellingborough, Lothersdale House, West Villa Road, Wellingborough, NN8 4NE

More information at Jobcentre Plus help for recruiters: Recruitment advice and support - GOV.UK.
Employer Services Line - Telephone: 0800 169 0178

University and College Careers Services
Our local universities and colleges offer support and opportunities for recruitment.

Most hold careers fairs/shows during the year and there are many opportunities to engage with work placements, apprenticeships and internships for longer term recruitment.

For more information go to:
- Further Education Colleges - Colleges of the South East Midlands – Delivering Skills, Boosting Business
- South Central Institute of Technology - Hire an apprentice - South Central IoT
- University of Bedfordshire - Business Engagement | University of Bedfordshire
- The University of Northampton - Recruitment | University of Northampton
- MK:U - MK:U apprenticeships
- Cranfield University - Recruit our students
- The Open University - Professional Learning & Development at The Open University

Opening Up Recruitment

"Open Recruitment" refers to recruiting which makes applications accessible to all potential candidates, both internal and external. This method should prove to be more inclusive and transparent, aiming to attract a broad range of applicants and ensure the best possible fit for the role.

Benefits of Open Recruitment:

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- Increased talent pool.
- Enhanced diversity and inclusion.
- Transparency and fairness enhancing the organisation's reputation.
- Opportunity to innovate, introducing talent with new ideas and perspectives, fostering innovation.
- A better role fit through a broader talent pool increasing the likelihood of finding a candidate with the right skills, experience, and/or cultural fit.
- Improved loyalty and staff retention.
- A social impact.

Bias-Free Hiring

Ensure that the hiring process is free of unconscious biases by adopting structured interviews, using diverse interview panels, and employing blind resume screening where possible.

Target Underrepresented Groups
Actively reach out to diverse candidates by ensuring your process is inclusive and open.

There are opportunities to post on niche job boards or participating in diversity job fairs.

Sources of useful information:
- Five Keys for Inclusive Recruitment - Business in the Community
- How To Ensure Online Recruitment Is Accessible And Inclusive - Business in the Community
- Positive action in the workplace - GOV.UK
- A guide to inclusive recruitment for employers

Underrepresented groups and resources to help target them include:
- Young people
  - Future Proofing Youth Recruitment - create inclusive recruitment processes
  - How to Recruit Young People Furthest From the Labour Market
  - Self assessment tool to help businesses to improve the engagement between young people and employers Employer Standards - South Midlands Careers Hub
- Women
  - o The six most important ways to support women in the workplace
  - Workplace Gender Equality
- Aged 50+
  - Supporting Age Inclusive Recruitment and Retention - Business in the Community
  - Becoming an Age Friendly Employer - Business in the Community
- Ethnic groups
  - Let's Talk About Race - Business in the Community
  - Diversity Objectives And Performance Appraisal - Business in the Community
- LGBTQ+
  - A guide to LGBTQ+ inclusion for employers | Totaljobs
- Disability (incl. Access to Work)
  - Engagement | Track
  - Employing people with a learning disability | Mencap
  - Toolkits | Ambitious about Autism
  - Disability Inclusion in the Workplace - Business in the Community

- Socially disadvantaged
  - [Reducing Intersectional Bias in Recruitment Toolkit - Business in the Community](#)
- Care leavers
  - [Find training and employment schemes for your business - Care Leaver Covenant](#)
- Carers
  - [Supporting Carers in the Workplace](#)
- [Ex offenders](#)
  - [Find training and employment schemes for your business - Employing prisoners and prison leavers](#)
  - [Reducing Reoffending Through Employment - Business in the Community](#)
- [Recovering dug and alcohol misuse](#)
  - [Recruiting people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse - GOV.UK](#)
- [Ex-services personnel](#)
  - [Recruiting ex-services personnel - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Capitalising On Military Talent: Everything You Need to Know About Employing Armed Forces Veterans - Business in the Community](#)
  - [Capitalising on Military Family Talent - Business in the Community](#)
- [Refugees](#)
  - [Employing Refugees; guidelines to help UK businesses](#)
- [Homeless](#)
  - [Designing Out Homelessness: Practical Steps for Business](#)
- [Returners to work](#)
  - [Employer guidance: helping people return to work - GOV.UK](#)
  - [For employers - STEM Returners](#)

Are you recruiting in your own likeness?
Are you recruiting in a way because that is what you have always done or because you feel you need to seek someone like you? Take a step back and be honest with yourself and ask "what do I need to perform the role" and write a clear and concise job description that includes relevant qualifications, skills, responsibilities, and any specific experience needed.

Use appropriate pathways

There are a number of educational/training pathways that can be used as an integral part of inclusive recruitment.

- Apprenticeships - hiring an apprentice allows you to invest in the future by inducting and developing a person age 16+ to fit your business needs.
- Skills Bootcamps - training courses age 19+ including a job interview on completion.
- T-Levels - T Levels are for learners aged 16 to 19 and combine classroom learning with an industry placement. This provides an opportunity to evaluate potential future employees.
- Supported internships - combine studying with a work placement. They are available for people, aged 16 to 24, with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and offer an opportunity to hire at the end of the programme.
- Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) - offers jobseekers the opportunity to train and work with your business. You can offer a SWAP to individuals 16 and over who are claiming benefits.
- Employing prisoners and prison leavers - Work with New Futures Network and provide job opportunities to serving prisoners and prison leavers aged 18 and over

Flexibility in the workplace

Offering flexibility in the workplace has become a key factor for attracting and retaining talent, increasing productivity, and promoting a healthy work-life balance. Here are some good practices for offering flexibility in the workplace:

1. Clearly Define Flexibility Options
- Remote Work: Offer the option to work from home or other locations.
- Flexible Hours: Allow employees to choose when to start and finish work, as long as core hours or business needs are met.
- Compressed Workweeks: Enable employees to work their full hours in fewer days (e.g., four 9-hour days instead of five 7.5-hour days).

Job Sharing: Allow two people to share the responsibilities of one full-time job.

Part-Time and Reduced Hours: Offer part-time schedules to accommodate personal needs such as adult care and childcare responsibilities.

2. Focus on Output, Not Hours
Shift from tracking the number of hours worked to focusing on results and deliverables. This performance-based approach emphasises productivity and achievement over presenteeism.

3. Personalisation
Understand that each employee's needs differ, and one-size-fits-all flexibility may not work. Offer a range of flexible options that cater to individual circumstances, like family commitments, health needs, or personal preferences.

4. Promote a Healthy Work-Life Balance
Encourage employees to disconnect during non-working hours and respect time off. Ensure flexibility does not turn into overwork, especially in remote settings.

5. Utilise Technology
Implement the right tools for communication, collaboration, and project management (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Slack, Asana, etc.) to ensure employees remain connected and productive regardless of location.

6. Open Communication and Trust
Establish clear communication channels and expectations. Managers should trust employees to manage their own schedules and ensure flexibility policies are applied fairly.

7. Training for Managers
Provide training to help managers support remote teams and flexible workers effectively. This includes managing performance, building team cohesion, and providing feedback in a flexible environment.

8. Review and Adjust Policies Regularly
Evaluate your flexibility policies based on employee feedback and changing business needs. Flexibility should evolve as the company and its workforce do.

9. Inclusivity
Ensure that flexibility options are available to all employees, including those in roles where remote work may not be feasible. Explore alternatives like staggered shifts or part-time options for on-site workers.

By integrating these practices, you create an environment that supports both employee well-being and organizational productivity, positioning your company as a modern, employee-focused workplace.

Sources of information and guidance
- Inclusive Flexible Working Toolkit - Business in the Community
- Inclusive Remote Working - Business in the Community

Salary Benchmarking

Conducting salary benchmarking is crucial for ensuring that your company offers competitive compensation, attracts top talent, and retains employees. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you perform effective salary benchmarking:

1. Identify Key Roles to Benchmark

Focus on Critical Roles: Prioritise benchmarking for high-impact positions, common roles in the industry, or those difficult to recruit for and/or experiencing high turnover.

Job Matching: Ensure you're comparing like-for-like positions across different organisations, considering factors like job title, responsibilities, and required skills.

2. Determine Compensation Factors

Geography: Salaries can vary significantly by location, so ensure relevant local comparisons are made.

Industry: Different industries have unique salary structures; ensure you're benchmarking within your specific industry.

Company Size: Consider how company size and revenue might impact salary levels. Larger organisations might pay more for similar roles compared to smaller ones.

Skills and Experience: Adjust salaries for varying levels of experience, certifications, and unique skill sets.

Additional Benefits: Consider non-monetary benefits like bonuses, healthcare, and paid time off, as they can affect total compensation.

3. Choose Reliable Data Sources
Industry Reports: Use salary surveys and industry reports from professional organisations (e.g. <u>Indeed</u>, <u>Robert Half</u>) or salary benchmarking services (e.g., <u>Payscale</u>, <u>Glassdoor</u>, or <u>Mercer</u>).

Government Data: Public salary data from government sources (e.g., <u>Office for National Statistics</u>) is useful for broad benchmarks.

Third-Party Consulting Firms: Hire compensation consultants who provide in-depth, custom salary benchmarking reports for specific roles and industries.

Internal Data: Analyse your company's historical salary data to see how your current pay compares to market trends.

4. Collect Market Data
Gather Salary Ranges: Use multiple sources to collect salary data for comparable roles, ensuring you cover base salary, bonuses, and benefits.

Determine Percentiles: Look at percentiles (25th, 50th, 75th) to understand where your company wants to position itself in the market—whether you want to pay at market average (50th percentile) or above.

Incorporate Benefits: Include any non-salary compensation, such as retirement contributions, profit sharing, or health insurance, to get a fuller picture of total compensation.

5. Analyse the Data
Compare Salaries: Place your company's salaries alongside the data you've gathered. Are you paying at, below, or above market rates?

Look for Discrepancies: Identify any significant gaps between your compensation package and the market. These might signal areas where adjustments are needed to remain competitive.

Industry Trends: Consider current trends in the market, such as remote work adjustments, inflation, or demand for certain skills, which could impact salary expectations.

6. Set Compensation Strategy

Competitive Positioning: Decide how you want to position your company in the market. Do you want to pay slightly above market rates to attract the best talent or match the market to maintain balance?

Adjust Salary Bands: Create salary ranges (low, mid, high) for each position based on your analysis. Ensure these bands reflect the market rates you've benchmarked, allowing flexibility within each range.

Update Benefits: If necessary, adjust benefits to complement salary packages and make your company more attractive, even if salary adjustments are limited.

7. Communicate Changes Transparently

Internal Communication: If salary adjustments are necessary, communicate them clearly and transparently to your team. Employees value understanding how decisions are made.

Recruitment Transparency: Advertise competitive salaries in job postings when applicable, as it may help attract better talent.
8. Review and Update Regularly

Annual or Bi-Annual Reviews: Markets and roles change over time, so it's important to review salaries regularly to ensure they remain competitive.
Monitor Market Trends: Keep an eye on industry salary surveys and reports, especially in fast-moving industries where compensation can change rapidly.

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9. Adjust for Budget and Business Needs

Budget Constraints: Align salary benchmarking with your company's budget. If there's a gap between your budget and market rates, explore alternative compensation options like bonuses or flexible benefits.

Employee Retention: Use benchmarking data to retain talent by offering competitive salaries and benefits. Ensure top performers are compensated accordingly to reduce turnover.

10. Leverage Technology for Salary Benchmarking
Use compensation management tools like PayScale or Mercer to automate data collection and analysis, ensuring real-time access to market data.

An Example Process of Salary Benchmarking
Benchmarking a Marketing Manager role in Northampton:
1. Identify Job: You're comparing the Marketing Manager role, which focuses on managing campaigns, overseeing teams, and working with digital platforms.
2. Use Sources: Use salary reports from sources like Glassdoor, Robert Half, and Mercer for marketing roles in Northampton. Also check data from UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) for public benchmarks.
3. Analyse Data: You gather data showing that the median salary for a Marketing Manager in Northampton is £50,000, with the 25th percentile at £45,000 and the 75th percentile at £60,000.
4. Compare to Current Salaries: Let's say your Marketing Managers currently earn £46,000. You realize your compensation is close to the 25th percentile, indicating that you're slightly below market average, which could impact retention.
5. Adjust Strategy: You decide to bring the Marketing Manager salary closer to the 50th percentile (£50,000) to remain competitive and retain your best employees.

By following these steps, salary benchmarking will provide your company with the insights needed to remain competitive in the talent market, reward employees fairly, and align compensation with overall business strategy.

Recruiting without CVs

Recruiting without using CVs is an innovative approach that focuses more on candidates' skills, competencies, and potential rather than their work history or formal qualifications.

The benefits of recruiting without CVs can include:
- Reduced Bias: Focusing on skills and competencies reduces the chances of unconscious bias affecting hiring decisions.
- Focus on Potential: Skills-based recruitment helps you identify high-potential candidates who may lack experience but possess the necessary skills.
- Increased Diversity: By removing traditional requirements (e.g., specific job titles or years of experience), you open up opportunities to a more diverse talent pool.
- Improved Quality of Hire: Candidates who pass skills assessments are likely to be better fits for the role than those hired based on their CV alone.

Here are some effective methods to help you recruit without relying on CVs:

Skills-Based Assessments
- Use assessments that directly test the skills required for the job. For example, if you're hiring a software developer, you can ask candidates to complete a coding challenge.
- For creative roles, ask candidates to complete a project or assignment related to their potential job tasks. This demonstrates their abilities more accurately than a CV.

Structured Interviews
- Conduct structured interviews with predefined questions related to the role's core competencies. Structured interviews reduce bias and help you assess candidates based on job-relevant criteria rather than previous job titles or employers.
- Use behavioural and situational questions to evaluate how candidates approach challenges, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Work Trials or Job Simulations

- Offer short work trials or job simulations where candidates can demonstrate their abilities in a real or realistic job setting.
- Job simulations help both the employer and the candidate understand if there is a good fit between the candidate's skills and the role's requirements.

Group Assessments and Team-Based Exercises

- Organise group assessments or team-based exercises where candidates work together on a problem. This can reveal their communication skills, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities.

Personality and Cognitive Ability Tests

- Use psychometric assessments to measure personality traits, cognitive abilities, and emotional intelligence. For roles requiring strong interpersonal skills, these assessments can help identify candidates who will thrive.
- These tests are not used in isolation but they can complement other methods to provide a well-rounded view of the candidate's suitability.

Portfolio or Sample Work Submissions

- Ask candidates to submit a portfolio or samples of relevant work. This is particularly useful for creative or technical roles where work samples demonstrate skill level better than job history.

Blind Hiring Techniques

- Use blind hiring platforms that focus solely on skills assessments and omit personal details. Platforms like Applied allow candidates to complete tasks related to the job while keeping personal information hidden.
- Blind hiring can help reduce unconscious biases by focusing only on skills and competencies without the influence of education or employment history.

Gamified Assessments

- Gamified assessments, which use game-based tests, are an engaging way to measure skills and cognitive abilities relevant to the role. For instance, you can use problem-solving or logic-based games for analytical roles.

References or Endorsements
- Ask candidates for professional references or endorsements from people they have worked with, rather than a formal CV. This can include testimonials from previous colleagues, clients, or even academic mentors.
- This works well in small, close-knit industries where professional reputation is a good indicator of performance.

AI-Powered Talent Matching Platforms
- Use AI-driven platforms that match candidates based on their skills and potential, rather than experience. Platforms like HireVue assess candidates based on responses to scenario-based questions or skill assessments.
- These tools can screen candidates' problem-solving, adaptability, and role-specific skills.

Hackathons or Competitions
- Host a hackathon, design competition, or other challenge where potential candidates can demonstrate their skills. This is particularly effective for tech roles, but can also work for marketing, design, or business development positions.
- These competitions provide an engaging and interactive way to assess candidates' skills and team collaboration.

Example Process: Hiring a Marketing Associate without CVs:

1. Skills Test: Candidates complete a short digital marketing assessment, where they outline a strategy for a hypothetical product launch. They're asked to create a sample social media post and a brief outline for a marketing plan.
2. Portfolio Review: Instead of a CV, candidates submit examples of relevant work, such as social media posts, blog entries, or any project they've worked on that showcases their marketing skills.
3. One-Way Interview: Candidates record a short video explaining why they're interested in the role and their approach to managing a successful campaign. Questions focus on creativity, initiative, and collaboration.
4. Structured Interview: Candidates who pass the first stages are invited for a structured interview, with questions around handling marketing challenges, working in teams, and adapting to fast-paced environments.
5. Team Exercise: Finalists participate in a mock brainstorming session to develop a quick marketing campaign idea with the team, allowing the employer to assess their collaboration and problem-solving skills.

Improving the Process

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The recruitment process through to induction should be structured and professional as it is how the candidate/employee will gain first impressions of the organisation and people within it.

The Application and Interview
- Provide timely communication throughout the process. Keep candidates informed about where they stand and next steps, whether they proceed to the next stage or not.
- Ensure that the application process is user-friendly. Lengthy or complex forms may deter candidates.
- If using interviews, conduct structured, consistent, and respectful interviews. Ensure interviewers are trained and prepared to assess both technical and soft skills effectively.
- Ask standardised questions that are relevant to the role, and ensure all candidates are evaluated using the same criteria.
- Pre-Screening through phone or video interviews can be a useful tool to help filter out unsuitable candidates early on.
- Use relevant assessments such as aptitude tests, technical assessments, or situational judgment tests to evaluate the candidate's abilities, but only where necessary.
- It is good practice to respond to applicants that have not been successful. Peoples impressions of organisations are shared easily via social media and company reviews are shown on websites such as Glassdoor.

Induction and Onboarding
- Once the candidate is hired, ensure a smooth transition by offering a structured induction program that familiarises new hires with the company culture and team, and their role within the organisation, including relevant training.
- Do not overload the new recruit with too much information in a short time-frame.
- Regular check-ins during the onboarding period will help to ensure the new hire is adapting well and feels supported in their role.

Evaluate and Improve the Process
- Collect feedback from candidates and hiring managers after the recruitment process to identify areas for improvement.
- Regularly review and optimise recruitment practices to adapt to changes in the industry, candidate preferences, and company needs.

ACAS Guidance
A great source of advice on employment law, HR processes and good practice at work can be found at Work and employment law advice | Acas which includes templates and example policies.

What are Employability Skills?

In the South Midlands, employability skills are defined as:

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Work ethic
- Detail oriented
- Willingness to learn
- Enthusiasm
- Self-motivation
- Independant working
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Honesty
- Reliability
- Politeness
- Humilty
- Empathy
- Curiosity

CORE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

- Expressing yourself/Active listening
- Organisation
- Digital literacy/Interaction with computers
- Planning
- Problem solving
- Decision mkaing
- Creativity/Innovation
- Leadership/Developing teams
- Time management
- Collaboration
- Resilience

TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL

- Job specific
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Maths (STEAM)
- Specialist digital skills
- Education
- Commerical acumen
- Financial awareness
- Customer service
- Sales
- Management
- Working with hands
- Driving

BASIC SKILLS

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- English
- Basic digital

QUALIFICATIONS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Technical qualifications
- Academic qualifications
- Technical certifications
- Vocational Certifcations

The use of plain English with clear definitions ensures all stakeholders understand the skills needed and their importance.

Definitions

- Analysing/Evaluating – Looking at or examining something methodically and in detail, to explain and/or interpret it.
- Basic digital – The ability to conduct a search online, access a bank account, send/receive emails, conduct purchasing transactions and staying safe and legal.
- Certification – Technical award for a specific role or activity following training/course. This includes CSCS cards for construction, HGV licences, etc.
- Collaboration – Action of working with someone or organisations working together to achieve/produce something.
- Commercial acumen – The ability to understand how a business works, the functions within it, how it makes money and the relationship with customers. This can include understanding the market, identifying opportunities and developing strategies to improve the organisations performance.
- Creativity/Innovation – The ability to think about something in a new or different way, or the ability to use the imagination to generate new ideasor look at things from a unique perspective.
- Curiosity – A desire to learn or know about something.
- Customer service – Skill sets to help customers, clients or others in a positive way. Skills used for customer service can include communication, empathy, reliability, problem solving, patience and a knowledge of products/services.
- Decision making – Involves choosing between possible solutions to a question or problem.
- Detail orientated – Being able to focus on a task with precision and attention, with a high level of accuracy, taking care and pride in work.
- Digital literacy/Interaction with computers – The ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information through digital technologies, predominately Microsoft Office software.
- Driving – This includes holding a conventional driving licence and/or heavy goods vehicle licences.
- Education – Techniques and processes for teaching or learning and includes occupational groups for adult, special education needs and disability, preschool, primary, secondary, further and higher education.
- Empathy – The ability to listen to, understand and share the feelings of another person.
- English – The ability to understand and speak English. This includes English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Enthusiasm – Being interested in a subject or activity with energy and/or a desire to be involved.
- Expressing yourself/Active listening – Use of words, facial expressions, body language andmovements/ Active listening is the practice of physically listening, observing what verbal and non-verbal messages are being sent, and providing feedback demonstrating understanding.
- Financial awareness – Understanding of the implications of actions to the organisation financially including budgeting, the value of products and services.
- Flexibility/Adaptability – The ability to change and/or be changed to fit changing conditions or circumstances

- Honesty - Being truthful.
- Humility - Listening and//or accepting others' opinions and a quality of having a modest view of one's importance.
- Independent working - The ability to work on one's own on assigned tasks.
- Job specific - Technical skills you need to do a job or to do the tasks a job requires.
- Leadership/Developing Teams - A combination of employability skills utilised to oversee processes, guide projects/initiatives and create, manage and steer teams of people toward the achievement of goals.
- Literacy - The ability to read and write.
- Management - The process of organising or controlling operations, workflow, plans and/or people to meet the organisations goals.
- Numeracy - the ability to understand and work with numbers.
- Organisation - Ability to manage time effectively, prioritise tasks, set goals, and plan to achieve them. Includes conducting multiple tasks, working to deadlines and efficiently.
- Planning - Process of deciding in detail how to do something and can include setting goals, management of time, prioritising tasks, identifying risks, use of resources, setting strategies, decision making, how to measure impact and results.
- Politeness - Behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people.
- Problem solving - The ability to identify issues/challenges, propose and analyse answers, and implement the best solutions.
- Qualifications - Official, recognised evidence of a pass of an examination or completion of a course usually hosted by a recognised education establishment/organisation or professional body.
- Reliability - Being present or able to perform or deliver something to time and/or to a quality.
- Resilience - Ability to withstand adversity and bounce back and can include the ability to work through emotional suffering.
- Sales - Includes retail and business to business and utilises many other employability skills including customer service.
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths (STEAM) - A collective term for the areas of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics related to education subjects and related job roles. Occupational groups included are Construction and Built Environment , Creative and Design, Digital, Engineering & Manufacturing, Health, Finance and Accounting.
- Self-motivation - Internal-drive or force that keeps people going to achieve something.
- Specialist digital skills - Digital based skills for programming, DevOps, digital hardware & infrastructure support, data analysis, computer aided design, customer relationship management, digital marketing, advanced manufacturing and cyber security.
- Teamwork - A group working together to achieve a common goal or complete a task in an effective and efficient way. Usually comprises people within the same organisation.
- Time management - Process of organising and planning how to divide time between different activities and/or a schedule.
- Willingness to learn - Having a desire and being open to develop skills and method to improve work performance and efficiencies.
- Work ethic - Personal set of standards for acceptable behaviours in the workplace that influences how someone approaches work.