

A young woman with curly brown hair, wearing a white top and large hoop earrings, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is sitting at a desk in a classroom or office environment. In the background, other people are visible, including a man with glasses and a woman, all appearing to be in a learning or working environment. The background has a wooden wall and large windows.

**bcs**

The  
Chartered  
Institute  
for IT

# **BCS HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND EARLY CAREERS**

This handbook introduces you to BCS content which can support your first steps into the IT industry.

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# INTRODUCTION

You're part of one of the most important and exciting careers of the millennium. The IT industry is changing (and saving) lives, fueling economic growth, transforming cultures, keeping us all informed, connected and on the move.

We're confident the future is safe in your hands and we'd like to support you as your career partner in the best way we can and help you at every stage.

# BCS OVERVIEW

BCS is a professional membership organisation with a Royal Chartered obligation to make IT good for society. The work of our volunteers plays a huge part in helping us with this aim.

At BCS, we aim to ensure everyone's experience with technology is positive. It's something we've been committed to since 1957. Today we have over 60,000 members in 150 countries, and a wider community of business leaders, educators, practitioners

and policy-makers. They are all committed to our mission to lead the IT industry through its ethical challenges, to support the people who work in the industry, and ensure the digital journey is safe and positive for everyone.

Everything we do at BCS is built on our five strategic pillars, which make it possible for us to raise standards and realise greater potential in the technology industry.

## **SUPPORTING CAREERS**

We're creating a diverse and sustainable IT profession with opportunities for development and progression at every step

## **SHARING EXPERTISE**

We offer an inclusive environment; a space where you can communicate and collaborate, with like and unlike-minds, to kickstart innovation.

## **IMPROVING EDUCATION**

We're equipping society with the knowledge, skills and understanding to remain resilient and thrive in the digital world.

## **INFLUENCING PRACTICE**

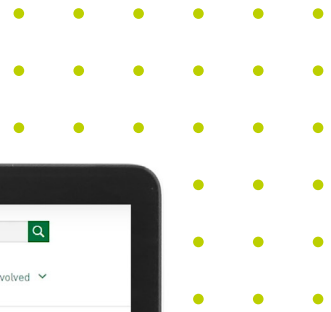
We tackle the big issues in IT, connecting industry, education and government to shape policy and bring about ethical change.

## **DRIVING STANDARDS**

We bring out the best in people recognising talent at every level through our professional registrations, qualifications and frameworks.

# MYBCS

Our member secure area is known as MyBCS. This is an online portal exclusively for members to access their member benefits. This **video clip** shows you a preview of MyBCS.





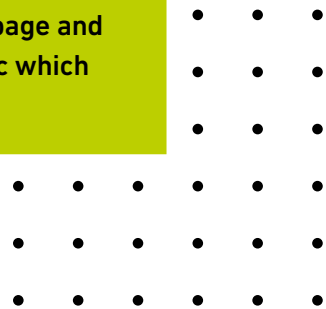


# SPRINGBOARD E-LEARNING PLATFORM

Within MyBCS you will find Springboard, an e-learning platform with articles, videos and interactive learning modules on business and employability skills. Springboard is your personal career centre for interactive learning, assessments, advice and so much more. You'll find bite size career management videos covering mentoring, job changes, performance appraisal tips and getting that promotion as well as resources and advice

on self-development, work-life balance and skills recognition. This [video](#) provides a short introduction to the Springboard platform.

**Explore Springboard for yourself, use the search bar at the bottom of the page and have a look for content on a topic which interests you.**



# YOUR CV

When it comes to employment, your CV is often one of the first things a recruiter and hiring manager will use to decide whether you're a good fit for a role. Whatever position you're going for, make sure your CV reflects your skills and experience which is most relevant to the role, you can expand and omit content based on the job you're going for, and we've got resources to help you make a great first impression.



## CV BUILDER

Our member exclusive cv builder tool (found within Springboard) will help you build a CV from scratch. You can also choose different templates such as 'skills based' or 'experience based' depending on what suits you best.

## CV 360

Our member exclusive **CV360 tool** checks your CV using applicant tracking system commonly used by recruiters. BCS members can use this to receive bespoke feedback on their CV and get ready for recruitment.

## CV ADVICE

In this **video**, a recruiter provides their professional opinion on what makes a good CV. There's some useful tips and advice on preparing your CV one of your first professional technology roles and ensuring it reflects you in the best possible way.

# YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

## LINKEDIN

As well as your CV, a recruiter will sometimes look at your online presence as part of the hiring process. LinkedIn is the most popular professional social network online. If you don't have a presence on LinkedIn, consider setting up a profile. Our member exclusive platform Springboard also has lots of resources to support your LinkedIn usage.

In this **video** a career coach shares lots of practical hints and tips to leverage LinkedIn and get your ideal job.

## DIGITISING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

This **talk** by Ahsana Nabilah Choudhury from JP Morgan entitled "*Digitising your Personal Brand*", provides details and examples about how you can leverage your online presence to maximise opportunities, including specifics on using LinkedIn, Twitter and blogging.







# JOB INTERVIEWS

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION

To help you prepare for interviews our member exclusive Springboard platform has a curated learning pathway with research and preparation tips for interviews, guidance on how to answer interview questions, insight into assessment centres, and advice on the negotiation stage.

Within Springboard there is also an interview simulator tool which allows you to take an auto-generated mock interview or browse the questions employers voted the most trustworthy. You can practice your interview technique against the clock and record your answers as you go. The simulator also allows you to compare your responses against video advice from employers, explaining why they ask these questions and how good answers differ from poor ones.

As mentioned above, for some roles you may be invited to an assessment centre as part of the recruitment process. This [article](#) from our website explains more detail about what to

expect from an assessment centre and how to perform at your best. In addition we have a selection of aptitude tests on Springboard to give you a taster of some of the activities you may be asked to complete at an assessment centre.

## INTERVIEW TIPS

We interviewed a recruitment professional who specialises in hiring within the technology sector. Many more organisations are taking their interview process online so this [video](#) shares some tips on how to approach and prepare for a remote interview.

You may be asked to complete a technical interview, if so, this [article](#) contains some example tasks and some tips for success.

If you're asked to attend an assessment centre as part of a recruitment process, this [video](#) explains what an assessment centre is and how to prepare for one.

And finally, this [video](#) contains some general interview advice from a hiring manager.

# EMPLOYER ADVICE

If you're looking for tips and advice from employers BCS members can access the video hub on Springboard is a valuable resource. The hub allows you to browse hundreds of films from experienced hiring managers and career coaches, demystifying career challenges and providing you with practical tips based on the reality of the workplace.

There is content on a range of topics including CV's and interviews, starting a new role and getting into management.



# BROWSE SFIAPLUS

The SFIA (Skills for the Information Age) framework is the most comprehensive definition of IT skills in global business, regularly updated by the SFIA Foundation to remain relevant in our fast-paced industry. Made up of skills and tasks at levels, the framework is used by individuals and organisations across the profession to develop talent and inspire performance.

BCS has developed SFIAPlus to help you get more out of the SFIA framework. Fully aligned with our membership grades and professional certifications, SFIAPlus is a 3D model which adds real-world detail to the frameworks skills

and levels – such as typical work activities, technical and behavioural skills, training activities and more.

With Browse SFIAPlus BCS members can explore every skill, level and detail to plan, map and accelerate your development.

You can learn more in this short [video introduction](#).







# YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the organised process of continually improving and developing your knowledge, understanding and skills. It's something you probably do without realising but, to carry out CPD effectively, it helps to identify your development needs and then plan how you're going to meet them.

At BCS, we're committed to raising the standards of competence and conduct across the industry. It's at the heart of our mission and key to building a trusted and ethical IT profession so every BCS member has a personal responsibility to keep their skills and knowledge up to date by carrying out CPD activity.

Undertaking CPD is a clear indicator of professionalism, and getting it right can enhance your employability. By keeping up to date and broadening your skills and understanding, you'll:

- be able to recognise and evaluate your learning and its real value
- identify your knowledge gaps and ways to address them
- plan more effectively to achieve your career goals
- demonstrate your commitment to your self-development, your career and to the wider IT industry.

Have a look at this [page](#) to see some examples of CPD activity.

This [video](#), Managing Your Own IT Career, brings our SFIA plus skills framework to life and demonstrates how you can plot your career progression against an industry-defined benchmark, showing you your current technical skills, uncovering your latent skills and helping you identify career next steps and learning opportunities.

As you complete your CPD activities, it's essential you keep a record of them so you can track what you've done and monitor how your knowledge, skills and competencies improve over time. This will also help you to plan your future development goals. The [BCS personal development plan](#) is a useful tool to do this and is freely available to both members and non-members of BCS

BCS membership provides lots of opportunities to enhance your personal development, including volunteering opportunities. This [brochure](#), 'Beyond Membership', outlines the main ways you can get involved.



# NETWORKS

BCS have over 100 community groups which are broken down into two main types, **local branches and specialist groups**. These communities are run by members, for members. These groups provide a great opportunity to network and learn, and they're always keen to have new BCS members volunteer to help out as well.

## BRANCHES

BCS local branches are UK based groups running activities for members in the local area. They're a great place to make new contacts and stay up to date with developments in your region.

## SPECIALIST GROUPS

Our specialist interest groups are a great place for members to share discussion, ideas and enthusiasm for their chosen subject.

## EARLY CAREERS

We are forming a BCS Early Careers group. The group will be formed of a core committee and we are encouraging each branch and specialist group to appoint an early career advocate to their committee to champion the views and needs of those entering the IT industry. You can find out more about this group [here](#) and the leadership of this group can be contacted directly at: [earlycareers@bcs.org](mailto:earlycareers@bcs.org)

## EMBRACE

BCS **Embrace** is a specialist group looking at race and ethnicity in the IT industry. Their focus is on making the IT profession more racially **diverse** by supporting BCS and external initiatives.

## BCSWOMEN

**BCSWomen** offer a range of opportunities, services and support to women working in computing and IT, in related professions and also to students of computing. They have a large and energetic network of members and welcome all women whether in work, in education, on career breaks or retired.

## DISCOURSE COMMUNITY FORUM

Our **online community forum** allows all members from across the globe to network, ask questions and share advice - networking with boundless potential!

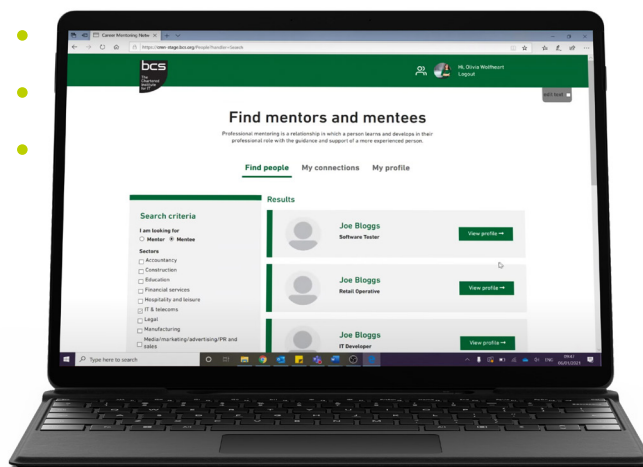
## MENTORING

Another great way of networking with IT professionals is through our member exclusive Career Mentoring Network (CMN).

Mentoring is a way for individuals to reach their potential and can be a valuable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity for both the mentor (who shares their knowledge and experience) and the mentee (who learns from the knowledge and experience shared with them).

The BCS CMN enables mentees to locate potential mentors, and vice versa. This matching is controlled entirely by the users and is driven by the recording of held and desired competencies; and choosing who the individuals feel is a good match for them.

We have created a short [walkthrough video](#) to show you around the platform.



## BCS BOOKSHOP

**BCS bookshop** has some useful titles to help support your learning and performance in the industry. The bookshop includes **BCS Rolebooks** which are a collection of go-to books to help anyone looking to step into a new role, develop their current one or understand the deeper function of a colleague's role. Content includes tools, techniques and tips to help the successful execution of the role, these books will also support your career progression and the steps needed for role advancement.

It's also worth noting BCS members receive **25% off** all books!

## DELL DISCOUNT

BCS members can also enjoy discounts on Dell products including laptops, desktops and accessories.

# CAREERS IN TECH

Digital technology is everywhere. It's an integral and indispensable part of our lives. From mobile phones to Instagram and Snapchat, from silicon chip design to apps, websites and mobile banking - technology is always on, it's always there and it's always changing.

Little wonder then, that people who understand how technology works - and how to use it creatively - are in huge demand. The size of the digital technology industry also means there's a huge variety of careers to be found.

Digital technology is in every industry - including retail, financial services, manufacturing, the creative industries, energy and healthcare - as well as the not-for-profit and public sectors.

Job roles are just as wide-ranging - from data analysis, ethical hacking, computer aided design and app development to digital marketing.

**You'll have lots of opportunities to work in lots of different types of organisations, whether you want to:**

- work for a large international business
- make a difference to society
- be part of a fast-moving small business
- set up your own business
- contribute to a global brand, or
- find a role in the public or voluntary sectors.

No matter which you prefer, you'll find an opportunity to suit you, and digital careers will continue to offer a wealth of exciting opportunities. Technology is developing at an incredible pace - and so are the jobs opportunities! Developments such as big data, artificial intelligence, cyber security, the Internet of Things, health informatics, mobile networking, augmented reality and machine learning are driving the demand for new IT professionals.

## ROLES AND SKILLS

This **video** shows Dale Titcombe, Head of IT at BCS speaking about why software development is an exciting career. Dale explains what attracted him to a career in software development and whether it has lived up to his expectations. He also discusses the balance between work experience and formal learning, the creativity in coding, what he looks for in a team, and much more.

This **video** shows Holly Grace Williams from Secarma Cyber Experts discussing what it's really like to work in cyber security. Holly speaks about why she chose to get into cyber security, some examples of her work and the importance of cyber security in business.

Artificial Intelligence is a fast-growing and exciting discipline. For some insight into a career in Artificial Intelligence (AI) you can view this **panel discussion** which covers topics including: how to get into AI, what it's like to work in AI, what AI skills are in demand and progression options within AI.

Business Analysis (BA) is a popular topic among our early career members. This **video** brings together a leading change professional and two BA apprentices to examine why BA is such a good career choice. There is a large demand for business analysts, and they play a vital role in successful change and transformation. Discussion topics include: how to get into BA, what the day-to-day is like, what skills are needed to be an outstanding BA, and the progression options within BA.

Our Consultancy specialist group recently held a **programme of events** for new and aspiring consultants. The sessions include information of what is different about being a consultant, key methods, tools and resources, managing projects, problem solving and ethics. If you are interested in finding out more about the world of consultancy and an insight into what's involved this is a useful resource for you.

Our Birmingham branch held a **programme of events** called Real IT Bites, which was focussed on supporting early career professionals with interviews, case studies and insight into different areas of the industry. Two sessions from this series which may be of particular interest are **Future Skills for Tech** which conveys the importance of non-technical skills essential to the future of work and **Early Career Success Stories** which contains examples of how you can add value in the workplace, what makes success happen and the benefits of collaboration.



## JOB HUNTING

To optimise your job hunt, Springboard have curated a range of content to support you on hunting for jobs, researching employers, working with recruiters and enhancing your employability.

When hunting for jobs and looking for new opportunities it's often useful to consider what drives you and what is meaningful to you. This **video** contains some useful information on finding and harnessing your purpose.

## JOB BOARD

For anyone looking to change careers, take a step up, or find new opportunities, BCS have a **jobs board** to help you find your future role.



# TO THE FUTURE

BCS hope to be your lifelong career partner and we have support for people at all stages of their career journey. Our **professional certifications** can help you develop your skills and knowledge while our membership grades and standards including **RITTech** and chartered status (below) demonstrate your experience and competence. There are also a variety of ways you can get involved with BCS activity, including volunteering to help run a branch or specialist group. Volunteering is a great way to boost your profile and skills, using your power for good. This **talk** explains more ways you can get involved and give back to the community.

## CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL IT

Our **Chartered IT Professional** status demonstrates professional credibility and commitment to the IT industry. This **webinar** explains more detail about the value of chartered status with a panel discussing their personal motivations for taking the standard as well as how it has positively impacted and shaped their careers.

Find out more about Chartered status [here](#).

## BCS PATHWAY

You can view the BCS pathway [here](#).



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