

Career Center Career Choices

Application Development

Application Developer positions generally require a college degree, a community college degree, or certificate at a technical institute. In all cases, courses should have a strong emphasis on application development, rather than on technical support or software engineering. Having hands-on experience as a user of applications programs can also be very helpful; this includes applications such as bookkeeping, warehousing, order entry and processing, etc. Experience in any basic business application can help qualify you for that first computer-related job.

Application Programmer

Writes, tests and maintains "code", the detailed instructions called programs or software that direct computers to perform processing functions. Application programmers write software to handle a specific job, such as to track inventory or to process information in a specific way. To build this software, application programmers analyze the specifications for the program (how it is to be constructed); design the logical flow of the program and write, test and debug the code.

Business Analyst

Develops general specifications for a computer systems solution to a business need. In other words, business analysts learn about a company's specific business needs and 'translate' those needs into a description of how the software must work. These are called "specifications." Using these specifications as a guideline, the company's management then decides either to purchase a packaged solution or to have the software developed. Because business analysts understand both sides (technical and business sides), they provide an important communications link between the users and the programmers during the development and installation of the software. This work does not require technical training or experience but does require a good understanding of how computer systems work from the user's point of view. Business analysts may have developed this understanding by being experienced users of a business-related application system. This is an entry-level position for someone entering the workplace for the first time, but it can be a great opportunity for an experienced businessperson to move into the technical side of the industry.

PC Programmer, PC Software Specialist

Supports the ongoing operations of a department or a small company by providing PC-based solutions for business. Programmers/PC software specialists interview the future users to determine what the software needs to do, then use word processors, spreadsheets, PC databases and programming languages to develop the programs and test the results, making sure that the business need is met.

Test Developer, Testing Specialist

Designs test plans and uses software tools to test programs, making sure that the programs operate as intended. Test developers/testing specialists use tools to create test "scripts" and sample data for testing. These scripts are then executed automatically to test each step of a program's operations. The results - how the sample data has been changed by the program - are then compared to the original design. Testers may also conduct system or integration testing, seeing that a series of programs works together correctly. They may require training or experience with specific skills such as regression testing, black box testing, white box testing, hi-volume testing, etc. This is a good entry-level position for persons who have some training or

experience in programming but no computer-related college degree and want to acquire the skills and experience to become a programmer or software developer.

QA Engineer, QA Specialist - see Test Developer, Testing Specialist