

What does 2024 look like for development and testing?

New research from Reed has revealed that advertised salaries in the development and testing sector have seen a 4.2% rise over the past year, showing the sector's growth.

In the past year, the UK's tech sector has witnessed the rise of several new job roles, mirroring the dynamic nature of the tech landscape. These include roles such as AI ethics experts, blockchain programmers and architects for the Metaverse. The prominence of these roles reflects how fast changing the industry is, and how businesses need to keep up in order to stay relevant.

The roles in demand

2023 saw increased demand for professionals with expertise in full-stack development, automation testing and DevOps/cloud technologies. In fact, across the UK the salary package for manual test analysts grew the strongest, with the average salary increasing by 33.8% in a year.

On the other hand, software engineer roles were the only ones to experience a salary decrease of 0.2% – a minute dip, but still one to note, as the rest of the industry shows signs of growth.

There were also different demands and spikes across various regions in the UK. For example, in London, the sharpest salary increases were seen for software architects (23.5%) and manual test analysts (20.2% increase) – whereas in the

Midlands, the biggest increases were in automation test analyst (16.3%) and full-stack developer (18%) roles.

On top of this, looking at where such roles are more competitive is important, especially with the rise of remote-based jobs. Over the past year, for example, businesses looking for .NET developer roles are presenting a 20.4% salary increase in Northern Ireland, but a 6.9% decrease in Scotland.

The development and testing area has also witnessed a growing focus on automating testing processes to further improve the efficiency and speed of development cycles. Professionals who can show how they have undergone efficiency projects such as these will be highly sought after.

It's hard to predict how the market will change in the coming 12 months, but if the current trends continue, it's likely that the demand for development and testing professionals with expertise in automation and DevOps will persist. Staying adaptable and continuously learning will be key for candidates in this field.

What this means for businesses

One of the biggest challenges for businesses over the next 12 months will be finding the professionals they need, with the right skill sets to drive growth, keep up with market changes and embrace new, innovative technologies.

This fluctuation has resulted in employers having to compete to find the most skilled development and testing professionals. But as many technology roles are often remote, businesses can also tap into talent across the UK.

However, it's also challenging for businesses to retain their skilled employees, and the need to keep them engaged and motivated is crucial in this competitive labour market. If employees are receptive to the various different salaries different regions can offer, businesses can see talented people leaving to go elsewhere. As a result, many employers have begun to offer higher remuneration packages.

Where raising salaries isn't an option, the benefits businesses offer can potentially tip the balance when people are considering changing jobs. Surprisingly, however, three in 10 workers (30%) say they don't receive any workplace benefits at all. It's still important to offer competitive compensation and benefits packages; we'd recommend providing opportunities for professional development and the chance to upskill, offer flexibility in working arrangements, such as remote or hybrid work, and promote a positive workplace culture that's inclusive and diverse.

But there are other solutions at hand. One way businesses can keep professionals engaged is to embrace new and innovative technologies, as those in this sector will seek out the chance to work on exciting projects.

The prominence of shift-left testing, for example, is one way that tech companies are improving efficiency – products can be developed quicker and with higher quality because issues are caught and fixed early. This can save time and resources and result in better products for consumers – meaning the types of talent such businesses will be eager to hire will also change as the industry progresses.

In 2024, the tech sector is expected to continue its rapid evolution. The convergence of technologies like AI, IoT and 5G is likely to drive innovations in areas like smart cities, autonomous vehicles, and personalised healthcare. These areas will all result in a more diverse labour market, and professionals with new skills will need to be engaged. Look at upskilling your existing workforce to prepare for future demand and embrace these new technologies as they come.

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