What is computer support?

Computer support is a diverse field where technicians support non-IT users and their equipment. Support can be delivered in various formats: in-person, on the phone, or at a workbench. Technicians can perform jobs such as assisting a customer on the best way to use their office software, replacing faulty computer components, installing software, or advising a client on the best system to purchase for their specific needs.

What is the Computer Support Specialist Program?

HCC offers an A.A.S. for Computer Support Specialist. Students take courses in current popular office software so that they can help clients accomplish productivity tasks. Both Windows and Linux operating systems are taught, allowing students to learn to troubleshoot problems with various utilities, establish good file and disk management on systems in the workplace, design a system maintenance plan, and demonstrate for others how to perform system tasks. Working with servers to install, configure, and support them will help students earn their MCP (Microsoft Professional) exam. Students demonstrate their knowledge of hardware and system repair, and software installations and troubleshooting as they prepare for their A+ certification. They will acquire basic networking skills such as: cable making, setting up SOHOs, and drawing basic LAN and WAN topologies as they prepare for their Net+ certification. Students will study the theory of Help Desk technology as they job shadow a Help Desk technician; investigate how IT departments are organized and make decisions regarding software and equipment purchase; plan and execute training; develop disaster recovery plans; and sharpen their customer support skills.

What skills do computer support specialist need to have?

Student technicians need to develop strong oral skills for talking with clients either in person or over the phone; they often conduct or assist in training. Active listening skills are important when interacting with clients regarding their system malfunctions or software problems. Technicians need to develop a good sense of procedure and visualization as they talk users through problem solving steps. Good observation and critical thinking skills help to build troubleshooting skills. Technicians learn research skills in order to find solutions to hardware problems, make recommendations for purchases, updates, and installations. Proper documentation skills are necessary for recording logs, preparing instructions, and writing reports.

Essential Work Habits:

- Ability to work step-by-step, double-checking and testing results, and documenting them
- Active listening skills to assess the client's needs
- Good speaking skills to convey information to clients, coworkers, and supervisors
- Ability to research answers to questions
- Ability to keep up-to-date in the field of technology
- Good customer relations
- Willingness to work outside "normal" working hours

(source: *www.thebalance.com*)

What is the employment outlook?

Employment for computer support specialists is projected to grow 11 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations. As of 2014, there were 766,900 jobs in this field with an expected new 88,800 jobs over the next seven years. More support services will be needed as organizations upgrade their computer equipment and software. All areas of the economy need support technicians including medical, manufacturing, education, government agencies, financial, small businesses, and homeowners. (source: *www.bls.gov/ooh*)

What are the average earnings?

The median annual wage for computer network support specialists was $62,340 in May 2017. Specialists in the highest 10 percentile earn up to $105,230. Top industries include wired telecommunications carriers; data processing, hosting, and related services; finance and insurance; computer systems design and related services; and management of companies and enterprises. (source: *www.bls.gov/ooh*)

What are the program options?

Students can earn an A.A.S. degree in Information Systems Technology with a Computer Support Specialist Concentration in two years, or a Certificate in Information Systems Technology, Computer Support Specialist in just one year.

Types of jobs with a Computer Support Specialist Degree:

- Computer Support Specialist
- Desktop Support
- IT Support Specialist
- PC Field Support Specialist
- Help Desk (Tier 1)
- Computer Hardware Support

Computer Support Specialist Concentration, Information Systems Technology

The Computer Support Specialist concentration provides students with the skills necessary for a career in the computer support field. Courses will concentrate on current packages for word processing, spreadsheets, database management, Internet access, presentation, and web publishing. Two different operating systems will also be covered. Classes are conducted in hands-on labs. Upon completion of the program, the student will be prepared for MCSA, A+, and Net+ certification exams.

General Education Requirements   **21-23**

Arts and Humanities
Select from approved General Education course list .. 3

Behavioral/Social Sciences
Select from approved General Education course list .. 3

Biological/Physical Science
Select from approved General Education course list 3-4

Diversity
Select from approved General Education course list .. 3

English
ENG 101   English Composition 3
Minimum grade of a "C" or better is required for ENG 101 and ELL 101.
(ELL 101 English Composition for English Language Learners is an approved substitution for ENG 101)
ENG 102   Composition and Literature 3
OR
ENG 112   Technical Writing I ....(3)

Mathematics
Select from approved General Education course list .. 3

Program Requirements   **30 credits**
CSC 102   Introduction to Information Technology... 3
CSC 109   UNIX/Linux Operating System 3
IST 105   Fundamentals of Word Processing 3
IST 106   Spreadsheet Software............................ 3
OR
IST 107   Database Management ....(3)
IST 108   Microsoft Operating System.................. 3
IST 150   PC Tech: Repair and Troubleshooting.... 3
IST 151   PC Tech: Operating Systems 3
IST 154   Networking Basics................................. 3
IST 204   Help Desk Technology and Services...... 3
IST 261   Server Management............................... 3

Restricted Electives   **8-9 credits**
CYB 246   Introduction to Cloud Computing......... 3
IST 103   Presentation Software 1
IST 106   Spreadsheet Software............................ 3
IST 107   Database Management 3
IST 160   Introduction to Security Fundamentals.. 3
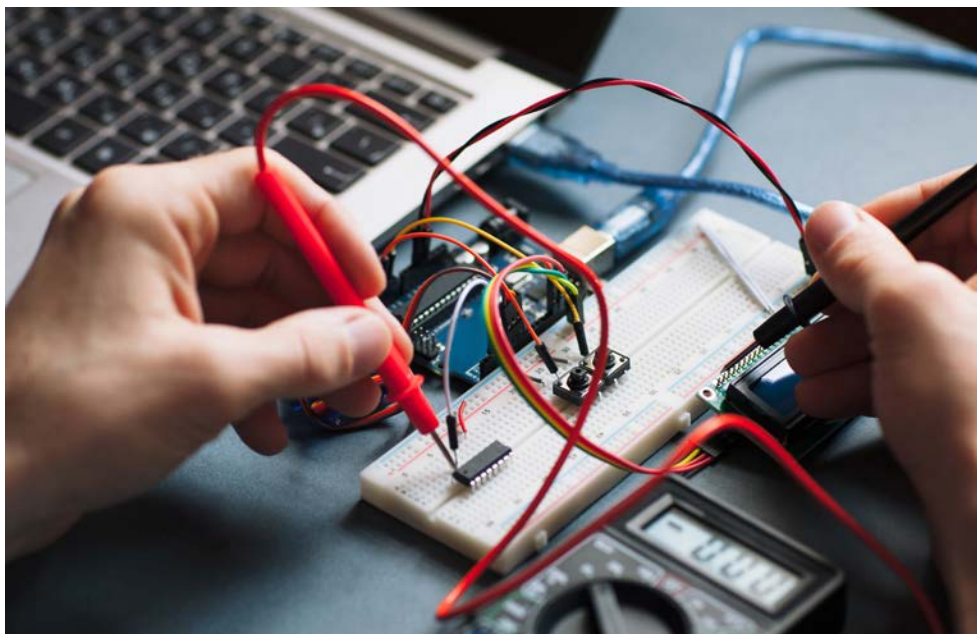
IST 166   Computer Forensics I – Principles and Practices 3
IST 264   Server Management II............................. 3
IST 269   Internship I... 3
STU 106   Professionalism in the Workplace.......... 1
WEB 101   Web Design I 3

Degree Requirement................................ 60

Computer Support Specialist, Information Systems Technology

The Computer Support Specialist Certificate program provides students with the skills necessary for a career in the computer support field. Courses will concentrate on current packages for word processing, spreadsheets, database management, Internet access, presentation, and web publishing. Two different operating systems will also be covered. Classes are conducted in hands-on labs. Upon completion of the program, students will be prepared for MOS, A+, and Net+ certification exams.

Program Requirements   **38 credits**
CSC 102   Introduction to Information Technology.. 3
CSC 109   UNIX/Linux Operating System 3
IST 103   Presentation Software 1
IST 105   Fundamentals of Word Processing 3
IST 106   Spreadsheet Software............................ 3
IST 107   Database Management 3
IST 108   Microsoft Operating System.................. 3
IST 150   PC Tech: Repair and Troubleshooting.... 3

IST 151   PC Tech: Operating Systems 3
IST 154   Networking Basics................................. 3
IST 204   Help Desk Technology and Services...... 3
IST 261   Server Management............................... 3
STU 106   Professionalism in the Workplace.......... 1
WEB 101   Web Design I 3

Certificate Requirement 38

Contact Information:

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