



RAIL INDUSTRY FACT SHEET

Introduction

The rail industry offers high speed travel opportunities for travel around the UK. It provides services not just for passengers, but also to organisations who need to move freight around the country; and can be more economical, and environmentally friendly than long car or lorry journeys. The industry is also technically advanced, utilising latest developments to offer services that are increasingly comfortable, and fast.

Usage of UK rail services has increased over the past decade and there are now over 160000 employees working across all aspects the rail industry.

The rail industry comprises several areas – mainly rail operating services and rail engineering. Within rail operating services, there are many functions; train driving, customer services, station services and timetabling are just a few. Rail engineering also splits into many functions – such as signalling, track maintenance, rolling stock maintenance and electrification for example.

As there is such a wide variety of job functions, there is an even wider range of job opportunities for the right people. The industry sets itself high standards at every level. From the person who keeps the stations clean and tidy to the engineer who designs signalling systems, everyone knows that their professional contribution is a vital part of ensuring that customers have a pleasant and safe journey or that freight is transported efficiently.

Employers

There are hundreds of employers in the rail industry. Some of the key companies in rail operating services are the Train Operating Companies (TOCS), who provide passenger services across the UK. There are 25 main TOCS and these include First Scotrail, CrossCountry and Virgin.

There are also freight train companies, such as EWS (English, Welsh and Scottish) Railway and GB Railfreight.

Working alongside the operating companies are businesses such as Network Rail, who maintain the rail infrastructure, making sure that trains can run safely. Other engineering companies include First Engineering, Jarvis and Balfour Beatty.

Employment

There are many functions where you could gain employment. Below are just a few of the types of opportunities available.

Operations	Customer facing	Technical & Engineering	Management & Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- driving- dispatching- planning & scheduling- announcing- shunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- sales- revenue protection- ticketing- catering- station staff- on board crew	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- engineering - civil, mechanical, electrical & electronic- signalling technicians- overhead line workers- fitters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- supervisory management- operational management- marketing, sales, hr, finance etc

Skills

The key skills in the rail operating services side of the industry are based around customer service. It is critical that customers are satisfied with their journeys, so much emphasis is put on making sure that customers' needs are met and that any problems are dealt with efficiently. Customer facing employees have to be confident in their abilities to communicate with a wide variety of clients, who may not always be happy!

Many employees in the rail industry, both in the operating services and the engineering functions, must have a good understanding of technology. From basic ticketing machines, to using complex signalling systems, it is important to use technology to ensure the smooth running of rail services.

Engineers need more specialist skills, such as fitting, signalling or maintaining overhead power lines. These can be learnt through on the job training, apprenticeships or at college/university.

Across the whole industry there is also need for a good understanding of health and safety and how important is it to follow procedure, not just for your safety but for that of the passengers too.

Key Facts

Recruitment difficulties are reported in some operational and customer facing roles, however this is not the case with train driving where hundreds of applications can be received for each advertised trainee train driver position. There is also a shortage of suitable candidates in rail infrastructure/engineering.