QA

THE FUTURE FIT WORKFORCE PROGRAMME

The Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund is a DCMS-funded skills programme that aims to help employers in the Greater Manchester and Lancashire areas recruit hard-to-fill digital roles and move local people into better quality employment.

To support this, QA worked in partnership with several organisations to deliver a specialist DevOps training programme aimed at upskilling a diverse pool of talent across the region that met an (employer-verified) skills gap matching up to the regional economic and skills strategy.

Our solution was heavily based around research that showed that general and specialist digital skills are required across almost all jobs and sectors and they continue to grow in importance for employers.

We also know that a number of employers are unable to fill vacancies, often due to a lack of specialist digital skills. For example, Manchester Digital's 2019 Skills Audit reported that 31% of respondents had turned work away due to being unable to recruit the right talent. Hence everything about the programme was tailored to the socio-economic barriers to the growth of the region.

200ft digital billboard promotion in the centre of Manchester

- Aged from 23 to 54 with an average age of 37
- 50% female 50% male
- 1/3 unemployed
- 1/3 recent non-stem graduate
- 45% BAME
- 1/3 looking for a career change

1 INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE OUTREACH ACTIVITY

QA has an established recruitment engine – attracting over 200,000 applications for its technical talent programmes every year. We leveraged this recruitment network to publicise the Fast Track Digital Workforce programme – specific activity included:

- Specially constructive Inclusive job posting using our augmented writing tool – checks for gender neutrality and ensures specifications are inclusive – particularly important when recruiting for technical programmes
- Leveraged our partner network in Manchester to promote the programme – including an eblast and promotional campaign by the Sunday Times No1 Company to work for in Manchester
- Promoted across QA's wider specialist recruitment networks (including Manchester-based Universities, Council Work & Skills Teams, NW Jobcentre plus Network, Working Mums, Tech UK returners, Women Returners Professional Network)

workingmums
jobcentreplus
Totaljobs
indeed
jobsite
reed.co.uk

2 RECRUITMENT & ASSESSMENT

QA used a strengths-based approach to identify applicants most likely to have the innate strengths to succeed in a technical career.

We find that this approach is the most unbiased and inclusive, it levels the playing field and identifies candidates who really want to work, are committed to tech skills and who are most likely to deliver a long-lasting personal social mobility growth as a result of the programme.

Activity included:
- Online application process management
- Coding and technical benchmarking assessments
- Accessible face-to-face strengths-based assessment centre
- Interview and offer management

This resulted in: 20 learners recruited onto the programme...

523%
Skills growth over the duration of the programme

3 12 WEEK TECHNICAL BOOTCAMP DELIVERY

Candidates joined our 12 week bootcamp programme in February 2020. During the programme delegates were taught:

In addition to the teaching element of the programme, QA also provided:

- Job Centre Support (Travel Subsidy and Universal Credit check)
- Safeguarding & Learner Services Support including Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Coaching & Mentoring from employer & QA network

DevOps Training Pathway

- Week 1 - **Agile**
- Week 2 - **Networking**
- Week 3 - **Linux Fundamentals**
- Week 4 - **Linux intermediate and Jenkins**
- Week 5 - **HashiCorp Stack**
- Week 6 - **Ansible**
- Week 7 - **Docker and Kubernetes**
- Week 8 - **Introduction to Cloud**
- Week 9 - **Azure and Project Work**
- Week 10 - **AWS and Project Work**
- Week 11 - **GCP and Project Work**

Certifications unlocked (issued by QA Cloud academy): 17 (1 Introduction to Java, 5 Introduction to Python, 3 Building Cloud Solutions, 6 DevOps Foundations, 1 Scrum Product Owner, 1 Benefits of Cloud Technology for Business)

Platform Focus: AWS, and Microsoft Azure

Domains of Expertise: Cloud Fundamentals, Migration, DevOps, Compute, Security, Storage, Databases, Analytics, Development, Configuration Management, Disaster Recovery, and High Availability

Activities Started: 714

Time spent on the platform: 363 hours

Activities Completed: 552

Software/Tools: Git, Docker, and Linux

cloud academy A QA COMPANY

4 PIVOT TO FULLY VIRTUAL DELIVERY MODEL

In week 6, in response to the escalating Covid 19 pandemic, we pivoted all of the training delivery to a virtual classroom model. This involved live trainer delivery to a virtually connected class. It was hosted on Microsoft Teams and supported by QA's Cloud Academy platform.

The Cloud Academy platform enabled learning to continue beyond the classroom. Delegates were able to access virtual labs, additional learning materials and apply their learning from the classroom

All of this additional support and activity meant that despite having to pivot a fully face-to-face programme online (at very short notice) NPI and feedback scores were not negatively impacted.
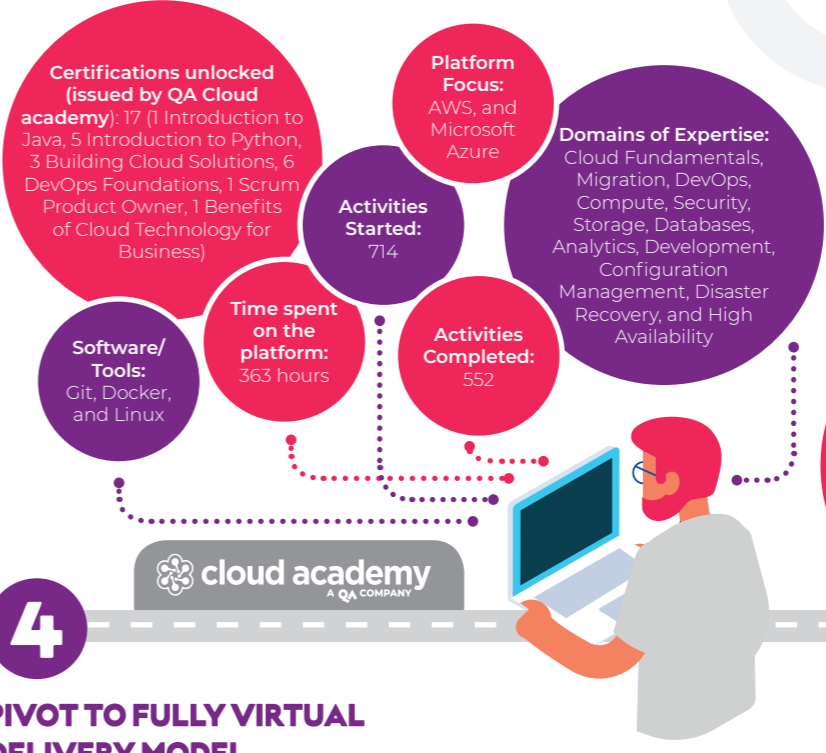
10 moved into employment or an apprenticeship

5 ONGOING CANDIDATE SUPPORT (12 MONTHS)

The training element of the programme may have come to an end but QA's work with these delegates has only just begun. We have targeted to secure 80% of delegate's interviews.

We will achieve this by:
- Supporting with CV prep
- Utilising our Manchester employer network to marry up to tech employers/roles
- Interview and Recruitment workshops (With employers)

HM Revenue & Customs
DHL
AND Digital
QA
THEHUTGROUP
Department for Work & Pensions
UKFast
Bloomberg
Manchester Metropolitan University

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