IT Service Desk Agent

FF09 IT infrastructure, operations and security · ISCO-08 3512 · CBS 0821 ICT User Support · seniority junior · Also known as: Help Desk Technician, IT Support Specialist, Service Desk Analyst

Receives user reports, resolves common IT problems and escalates more complex disruptions to specialists in good time.

The service desk agent is the first contact between user and IT organisation and records, assesses and either resolves or routes every report. Unlike the system administrator, this role has limited rights and works within fixed procedures and resolution times. Selection weighs technical knowledge too heavily, while attrition comes from combining client focus with pace: someone must handle an irritated user politely, leave a clear record and dare to escalate when they cannot solve it themselves.

Key figures for this profile

25 skills · 6 competencies to measure · 4 knockout skills · centre of gravity: Digital, data and AI 53%, Communication and influence 14%, Self-management, drive and resilience 13%

1 Competencies to measure

These are the behavioural and ability constructs in this profile. Each one shows which hrmforce questionnaire measures it.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Client focus Competency (50-framework): Customer Focus	N3	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	360-degree feedback	Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Accuracy and attention to detail Competency (50-framework): Accuracy	N3	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.
integrity and dependability Competency (50-framework): Integrity	N3	Big Fifty (Integrity Scale), 360 Feedback, Structured interview	Personality questionnaire	Reports a possible conflict of interest on own initiative and asks for review before a decision is taken.
Discipline and keeping commitments Competency (50-framework): Discipline	N3	Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.
Stress tolerance Competency (50-framework): Stress resilience	N3	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)	Personality questionnaire	Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.
Switching between tasks and roles Competency (50-framework): Flexibility	N3	Big Fifty, Colour Profile (Jung), Competency Check	On-the-job observation	Switches independently between execution and consultation tasks, keeps notes per role and correctly resumes interrupted work.

2 Full skill profile

Every skill in this profile, sorted by weight. The behavioural anchor under each skill belongs to the target level.

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Service calls and telephone contact Settles unusual questions within a single call, keeps call time under control and audibly summarises the agreement made.	N4	5	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Communication Styles
V	Incident management and troubleshooting Sets an investigation line for an unfamiliar disruption, restores the service and records cause and solution for reuse.	N4	5	yes	Work sample test	Work sample test, Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Problem analysis Splits a recurring complaint into possible causes, tests these with own data and names the most likely cause.	N3	5	yes	Assessment centre	Competency Check, Ability Scan
G	Client focus Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.	N3	5	no	360-degree feedback	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
K	Basic networking knowledge Deduces from symptoms in which network layer a problem sits and supports that with own measurements.	N3	5	yes	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Access and identity management Designs roles and permissions for an application, carries out the periodic review and corrects excessive access.	N3	5	yes	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
G	Accuracy and attention to detail Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.	N3	4	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback
G	integrity and dependability Reports a possible conflict of interest on own initiative and asks for review before a decision is taken.	N3	4	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty (Integrity Scale), 360 Feedback, Structured interview
G	Discipline and keeping commitments Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.	N3	4	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Stress tolerance Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.	N3	4	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)
G	Switching between tasks and roles Switches independently between execution and consultation tasks, keeps notes per role and correctly resumes interrupted work.	N3	4	no	On-the-job observation	Big Fifty, Colour Profile (Jung), Competency Check
V	Information security in the work process Weighs security risks when setting new working agreements, adjusts measures and addresses colleagues on unsafe behaviour.	N3	4	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Using cloud platforms Independently configures cloud services for an application, arranges permissions and backups and keeps costs and usage in view.	N3	4	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
K	Information security awareness Explains to colleagues how threats work, judges doubtful cases independently and adapts own behaviour to new threats.	N3	4	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Security incident response Reports a suspected incident immediately, touches nothing and follows the coordinator's instructions.	N2	4	no	Simulation	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
V	System administration and monitoring Independently manages a system environment, sets monitoring thresholds and removes recurring causes of disruptions.	N3	3	no	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
V	Complaint handling Records a complaint fully in the system, offers an apology and hands the file over according to procedure.	N2	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	Conflict Styles, Work sample test
V	Learning from mistakes and incidents Reports an own error to the supervisor at once and repeats the task following the corrected instruction.	N2	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	360 Feedback, Competency Check
V	Professional currency and specialist literature Reads the professional information received and names which part matters for the own work.	N2	3	no	Portfolio or evidence	Portfolio, Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Digital identity and password hygiene Uses an own strong password and the prescribed verification step and shares credentials with no one.	N2	3	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Writing technical documentation Completes a documentation template with the steps of a task and has the text checked by a colleague.	N2	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Portfolio
V	Process automation Runs an existing automation and reports when the outcome differs from what was expected.	N2	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Portfolio
V	Functional and application management Handles user questions about an application as instructed and records requests in the designated register.	N2	3	no	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
V	Data classification and retention Assigns a classification label according to the scheme and refers unclear cases to the administrator.	N2	2	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Threat and risk analysis Completes a risk inventory using a given list of threats and submits the outcome to the specialist.	N2	1	no	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test

3 Levels per seniority

The same profile with the job family seniority adjustment applied. Target levels are clamped to 1 to 5.

Skill	junior	medior
Service calls and telephone contact	N4	N4
Incident management and troubleshooting	N4	N4
Problem analysis	N3	N4
Client focus	N3	N4
Basic networking knowledge	N3	N4
Access and identity management	N3	N4
Accuracy and attention to detail	N3	N4
integrity and dependability	N3	N4
Discipline and keeping commitments	N3	N4
Stress tolerance	N3	N4
Switching between tasks and roles	N3	N4
Information security in the work process	N3	N4
Using cloud platforms	N3	N4
Information security awareness	N3	N4
Security incident response	N2	N3
System administration and monitoring	N3	N3
Complaint handling	N2	N3
Learning from mistakes and incidents	N2	N3
Professional currency and specialist literature	N2	N3
Digital identity and password hygiene	N2	N3
Writing technical documentation	N2	N3
Process automation	N2	N3
Functional and application management	N2	N3

Skill	junior	medior
Data classification and retention	**N2**	**N3**
Threat and risk analysis	**N2**	**N2**

4 The proficiency scale

Level	Label	Autonomy	Complexity	Scope	Depth of knowledge
N1	**Guided**	works under supervision and follows instruction	routine, one variable at a time	own task	basic understanding of terminology
N2	**Applying**	works independently within set frameworks	familiar situations with limited variation	own role	working knowledge, applies standard approach
N3	**Proficient**	sets own approach and seeks input proactively	several variables, some ambiguity	own team or process	thorough knowledge, weighs alternatives
N4	**Advanced**	directs others and decides on the approach	complex, with conflicting interests	several teams or a department	in-depth knowledge, advises others
N5	**Leading**	sets the standard and the policy	strategic, under high uncertainty	organisation, value chain or profession	authority, advances the profession

5 Behavioural anchors per skill

Anchors sit at N1, N3 and N5. N2 and N4 are deliberately not anchored: raters interpolate between them, following the O*NET convention.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Service calls and telephone contact Handling client contacts by telephone and chat with a fixed structure, controlled questioning and a closing that contains a concrete agreement.	Answers according to the script, registers the question in the system and transfers the caller to the right colleague.	Settles unusual questions within a single call, keeps call time under control and audibly summarises the agreement made.	Designs conversation models and quality standards for the contact centre and reviews recordings to support coaching and system choices.
Incident management and troubleshooting Takes in disruptions, establishes the cause through targeted steps, restores the service and keeps reporters and stakeholders informed.	Logs a disruption completely, works through the standard steps and escalates as soon as own steps do not work.	Sets an investigation line for an unfamiliar disruption, restores the service and records cause and solution for reuse.	Designs the organisation's incident process, leads the response to major disruptions and accounts for it to management and clients.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Problem analysis Breaks a problem into parts, separates causes from effects and states which information is needed to move forward.	States precisely what deviates in a malfunction and which data are missing, and puts this to the supervisor.	Splits a recurring complaint into possible causes, tests these with own data and names the most likely cause.	Traces persistent organisational problems back to a few root causes and sets the analysis method that other teams will use.
Client focus Acting from the question and interest of the client, keeping agreements and visibly directing own work towards usefulness for that client.	Responds to client questions within the agreed term and refers on when the answer falls outside own task.	Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.	Translates client signals into changes in services and policy and holds the organisation accountable for the promised client experience.
Basic networking knowledge Knows how networks work at a high level such as addressing, routing, ports and name resolution and states where a connection problem may arise.	Explains which parts make up a connection and performs a provided check such as a connectivity test.	Deduces from symptoms in which network layer a problem sits and supports that with own measurements.	Disseminates networking knowledge in the organisation, sets design principles and reviews network designs from suppliers.
Access and identity management Grants permissions based on role and necessity, periodically reviews who can access what and withdraws rights on change or departure.	Processes access requests according to the established role scheme and records every change.	Designs roles and permissions for an application, carries out the periodic review and corrects excessive access.	Sets the organisation's access policy and accounts for the control of permissions in audits.
Accuracy and attention to detail Works carefully, checks own work for errors and keeps to agreements about completeness and correctness of data.	Goes through the own work with a checklist and repairs errors found before the work is passed on.	Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.	Sets the standards for completeness and correctness, has samples checked and addresses teams on structural sloppiness.
integrity and dependability Acting in line with applicable standards and agreements, also without supervision, and being transparent about own interests, mistakes and doubtful cases.	Keeps to agreements and rules of conduct made and reports an own mistake to the manager.	Reports a possible conflict of interest on own initiative and asks for review before a decision is taken.	Sets the organisation's integrity standards, enforces them also with influential parties and explains the resulting choices publicly.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Discipline and keeping commitments Sticks to agreements, procedures and commitments even without supervision, and reports in good time when a commitment turns out to be unachievable.	Arrives at the agreed time with the agreed work and reports any delay to the supervisor.	Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.	Anchors the standard for reliable follow through in working agreements and addresses anyone at any level who lets that standard slip.
Stress tolerance Keeps delivering work of the same quality under time pressure, opposition or unexpected turns and maintains a businesslike tone with others.	Keeps working on the current task as pressure rises and asks the supervisor which task can wait.	Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.	Keeps the organisation workable in crises, takes decisions under high uncertainty and sets the standard for composed action under pressure.
Switching between tasks and roles Alternates between tasks, roles and counterparts within a working day and matches content, tone and pace to the situation at hand.	Switches task when instructed and uses the given work instruction per task without mixing in the previous task.	Switches independently between execution and consultation tasks, keeps notes per role and correctly resumes interrupted work.	Fills roles in several bodies with clashing interests at the same time and keeps role clarity visible for the organisation.
Information security in the work process Applies security measures in daily work such as safe sharing, classifying and storing information and flags risky working practices.	Follows the security rules for sharing and storing information and reports a suspected incident immediately.	Weighs security risks when setting new working agreements, adjusts measures and addresses colleagues on unsafe behaviour.	Sets information security policy and monitors organisation wide that processes meet the requirements set.
Using cloud platforms Sets up and manages services in a cloud environment, arranges permissions and costs and chooses between available service types based on requirements.	Uses existing cloud services as instructed and reports unusual behaviour or unexpected costs to the administrator.	Independently configures cloud services for an application, arranges permissions and backups and keeps costs and usage in view.	Determines the organisation's cloud strategy and decides which workloads are placed where.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Information security awareness Knows the most common threats such as phishing, ransomware and deception, recognises their signals and knows which action is then expected.	Recognises an obvious phishing message, does not click and reports the message through the designated channel.	Explains to colleagues how threats work, judges doubtful cases independently and adapts own behaviour to new threats.	Designs the organisation's awareness programme, measures its effect and adjusts the approach based on measured results.
Security incident response Acts on a security incident following the runbook by containing it, preserving evidence, recovering and informing the right parties in time.	Reports a suspected incident immediately, touches nothing and follows the coordinator's instructions.	Independently limits damage during an incident, preserves evidence and delivers a traceable timeline of events.	Leads the organisation wide response team, decides on external communication and improves the runbook after every exercise.
System administration and monitoring Keeps systems running by managing settings, updates and permissions, sets up monitoring and acts on signals before users are affected.	Performs scheduled maintenance tasks and updates according to the runbook and reports deviations in monitoring signals.	Independently manages a system environment, sets monitoring thresholds and removes recurring causes of disruptions.	Sets the organisation's administration and monitoring standards and decides on the design of the system environment.
Complaint handling Receiving a complaint, tracing its cause and reaching a solution that the client accepts and that prevents the error from recurring.	Records a complaint fully in the system, offers an apology and hands the file over according to procedure.	Calms an angry client, separates emotion from facts and offers a solution with a deadline within own mandate.	Handles escalated cases with legal or publicity risk and uses complaint analysis to change processes structurally.
Learning from mistakes and incidents Investigates after an error or incident what happened, names the cause without shifting blame and changes the working method on that point.	Reports an own error to the supervisor at once and repeats the task following the corrected instruction.	Analyses own errors and those of the team, discusses the cause openly in the work meeting and adjusts the agreements.	Ensures incidents are reported safely across the organisation, has causes analysed structurally and works the lessons into policy and standards.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Professional currency and specialist literature Follows developments in the own profession through literature, guidelines and networks and works relevant new insights into own practice.	Reads the professional information received and names which part matters for the own work.	Tracks sources and guidelines structurally, weighs their quality and adapts the own working method to new insights.	Assesses the state of the field, weighs conflicting research and determines which guidelines the organisation will follow from now on.
Digital identity and password hygiene Manages own accounts and credentials securely, uses multi factor verification and keeps visible online behaviour in line with work agreements.	Uses an own strong password and the prescribed verification step and shares credentials with no one.	Manages own accounts and permissions in a password manager, recognises phishing and reports suspicious requests immediately.	Sets policy for account use and digital identity and monitors compliance across the entire organisation.
Writing technical documentation Writes manuals, support documentation and decision records that a reader without prior knowledge can follow step by step and that stay current.	Completes a documentation template with the steps of a task and has the text checked by a colleague.	Writes complete documentation for a system or process, tests it with an unfamiliar reader and maintains versions.	Sets the organisation's documentation standard and ensures documentation is part of every delivery.
Process automation Analyses a recurring work process, builds or commissions automation of its steps and checks that the outcome stays reliable.	Runs an existing automation and reports when the outcome differs from what was expected.	Describes a process in steps, automates the repeatable steps and builds in checks on errors and exceptions.	Determines the organisation's automation agenda and decides which processes are and are not automated.
Functional and application management Keeps an application working and fitting for users by collecting needs, managing settings and coordinating changes with the supplier.	Handles user questions about an application as instructed and records requests in the designated register.	Independently manages an application, prioritises change requests with users and tests new versions before they go live.	Determines how functional management is organised and decides on the lifespan of applications.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Data classification and retention Classifies information by sensitivity and importance, links retention periods to it and ensures deletion and archiving actually happen.	Assigns a classification label according to the scheme and refers unclear cases to the administrator.	Determines classification and retention period for an information flow and checks whether clean up happens as planned.	Designs the organisation's classification and retention policy and accounts for it in audits and supervision.
Threat and risk analysis Maps threats, weaknesses and consequences for a system or process, weighs likelihood against impact and names appropriate measures.	Completes a risk inventory using a given list of threats and submits the outcome to the specialist.	Independently performs a threat analysis on an application, prioritises risks and advises on measures with costs and effect.	Determines the organisation's risk appetite and analysis method and accounts for the security risk picture to the board.

6 Assessment methods and validity

The validities are the corrected meta-analytic estimates from Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens (2022) in the Journal of Applied Psychology, which replace the older Schmidt and Hunter (1998) figures. The spread matters as much as the mean: with a high SD, validity varies strongly by context.

Assessment method	rho	SD	What it is
Work sample test	**0.33**	**0.09**	The candidate performs a representative work sample under standardised conditions.
Assessment centre	**0.29**	**0.09**	Multiple exercises, multiple assessors, dimension-wise scoring.
360-degree feedback	**-**	**-**	Multiple raters around the person rate behaviour against behavioural anchors.
Knowledge test	**0.40**	**0.13**	Test of declarative job knowledge, usually assembled per client.
Personality questionnaire	**0.40**	**0.15**	Self-report of behavioural preferences. At hrmforce the Big Fifty and the 15PF.
On-the-job observation	**-**	**-**	Structured workplace observation with a form based on behavioural anchors.
Simulation	**-**	**-**	Simulated work situation, usually digital, with standardised scoring.
Situational Judgement Test	**0.12**	**0.11**	Scenario with response options, scored on knowledge or behavioural tendency.
Portfolio or evidence	**-**	**-**	A collection of prior work or results, assessed against fixed criteria.

7 Assessment instruments for this job

hrmforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Knowledge test (client-specific)	**13**	Professional knowledge test, customized for each client
Work sample test	**11**	Representative work sample under standardized conditions
Big Fifty	**5**	Personality questionnaire, 150 items, 25 factors
360 Feedback	**5**	Multiple assessments based on behavioral anchors
Competency Check	**4**	Behavioral-Level Competency Assessment
Portfolio	**3**	Evaluation of prior work against fixed criteria

hrmforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
15PF	2	Personality Profile, a shorter alternative to the Big Fifty
Communication Styles	1	Preferred communication style
Ability Scan	1	Aptitude Test: Verbal, Numerical, and Abstract Reasoning Skills
Big Fifty (Integrity Scale)	1	
Structured interview	1	Behavioral interview with a fixed structure
Mental Resilience (4C)	1	Mental Resilience According to the 4C Model
Colour Profile (Jung)	1	Four color types, linked to Big Fifty factors
Conflict Styles	1	Preferred style in conflict situations

8 How to use this profile

1. Agree the profile with the hiring manager before the first candidate is measured. Weights shifted afterwards make the outcome indefensible.
2. Choose the assessment method per skill from the Assessment method column. Combine at most three methods per candidate.
3. Calibrate the assessors in a two-hour session using the anchors in chapter 5. Anchors without rater training deliver little.
4. Fill in the match calculator and discuss the gaps in the development conversation. Type A and type G are selection criteria, not one-quarter development goals.

Source: hrmforce Skills Framework 2.0, version 2.0.0, built 2026-09-08. Crosswalks to ESCO v1.2.1, O*NET 31.0, Lightcast Open Skills, SFIA 9, DigComp 3.0, EntreComp, LifeComp, GreenComp, AILit, WEF Future of Jobs 2025, ISCO-08 and the Dutch CBS occupational classification BRC 2014 edition 2025. This profile is a starting point, not a standard: align it with your own organisation before selecting on it.

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