



Retail

Job Information Sheet

What is Retail?

Organisations in the retail sector range from huge department stores or supermarkets to small boutiques. Modern retail offers a wide range of career paths and excellent opportunities to progress.

When we are out shopping most of us do not stop to think about what goes on behind the scenes in any shop or large store. It all starts with the original concepts and designs of a store. It is a responsibility of the staff to ensure that the products and services are consistent with the demand, they are easy to find and to buy. This is a people driven industry, so you must enjoy having contact with the public and have excellent communication skills, remembering that you must have patience especially with demanding customers.

Within the retail industry you will be required to work the weekends and possibly with early starts or late finishes. Because of the nature of the job, the work can be very physically tiring - many staff spend most of their time on their feet.

Are there jobs for 16-19 year olds?

There are plenty of opportunities for young people in retail. Some retailers ask for GCSE's but good personality, smart appearance and good communication skills are usually more important. Many of the supervisory positions are open to those who show potential.

Most stores recruit graduates for trainee management positions, but these are sometimes available to those who are entering with A Levels (or the equivalent). Many managers start as sales assistants and work their way up. Below is a selection of jobs that could be available to 16-19 year olds living in Central London. Further details of these and many other jobs can be found at www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u/.

A College or 6th form course?

If you are interested in retail staying on in full-time education can be a good option. However, many stores will also look for some retail experience, so finding part-time or temporary work while you study will help - see the 'Part-Time and Temporary work' below.

You will normally need a couple of grade E GCSEs to enter Foundation, Introductory or Level 1 courses in retail or retail and administration. Intermediate or First Diploma or level 2 courses will usually ask for four GCSEs at grade D and vocational A Level or National Diploma courses grades A-C. On many of these courses you will spend some time on a work experience placement, which can really help when it comes to getting a job or a university course.

For details on the vast range of education and training courses on offer throughout London go to www.mychoicelondon.co.uk

Jobs for 16-19 year olds in retail

- **Sales assistants** are the face of the company and are in direct contact with the public. They must be enthusiastic, enjoy working with people and have excellent knowledge of the product they are selling. The work can involve, assisting the customer to make a decision on a product, offering them advice and information, packaging the merchandise, taking the payment, arranging displays, monitoring stock levels as well as general house keeping. You can work on a full time, part time or temporary basis. There are no specific requirements to become a sales assistant, although some employers require GCSE's.
- **Shelf Fillers/Replenishment Assistants** are responsible for cleaning, restocking, and maintaining the displays mainly in large supermarkets, stores and superstores. This position is often part-time and can involve night time work.
- **Warehouse Assistants/Operatives** ensure that there are sufficient goods to stock the shelves, without holding surplus stock which may be perishable or taking up space, as well as sending transporting the goods. They help load and unload lorries, keep the warehouse tidy, order and maintain stock – often using a computerised system. Employers will sometimes ask for good GCSEs, but usually good literacy and numeracy.
- **Store managers** are responsible for the day-to-day running of a store. Their goal is to improve commercial performance, and job involves making sure that sales targets are reached, attracting and keeping customers, and staff management. Most retailers have a retail management training scheme. These are often aimed at graduates but some take those with A Levels or the equivalent. It is also possible to move into management by starting as a sales assistant and proving yourself.
- **Call centre operators** work in company call centres helping to sell goods or services, or dealing with enquiries. They might also phone possible new customers to persuade them to buy the company's products or services.
- **Builders' merchants** and workers in DIY stores sell building and do-it-yourself products to the building trade and the general public. They stock thousands of items such as timber, tools and electrical supplies, as well as kitchen and bathroom units and garden furniture and equipment. Employers will sometimes ask for good GCSEs, but usually good literacy and numeracy.
- **Florists** design and make up floral arrangements, bouquets, wreaths and floral tributes, and sell them to the public. They also usually sell cut flowers and pot plants, as well as dried and artificial flowers, gifts and decorations.
- **Visual merchandisers** follow the instructions of a display designer to decorate displays in shop windows and inside stores. Employers usually ask for a relevant art or design qualification.

The Fashion Retail Academy (www.fashionretailacademy.ac.uk) based in London W1 was the first National Skills academy to be opened in the UK in September 2006 and is backed by the retail industry's big hitters Arcadia Group, Marks & Spencer, Next and Tesco. Lecturers at the Academy all have retail experience, offering a wealth of knowledge about the fashion retail industry.

Courses available at the FRA include • Level 2 Diploma in fashion Retail (1 year) • Level 3 Diploma in Fashion Retail (1 year) • Level 4 Diploma in Buying and Merchandising (1 year) • Level 4 Diploma in Visual Merchandising (1 year) • Foundation Degree In fashion Retail management (2 years) • Short courses

For UK students aged between 16 and 18 on the 31st August in the year they start their course there will be no fees.

Live retail vacancies (on 1st July 2010)

Young people in Central London can search for job and training opportunities at www.mychoicelondon.co.uk/choicejobs. When this information sheet was published the following vacancies were available:

LOIS Ref	Vacancy	Organisation	Location	Notes
L19001483	Customer Service Adviser	Sport and Leisure Centres	Tower Hamlets	Must have customer service experience
L19001851	Sales Assistant	Jewellers	Hatton Garden	
L19001868	Stockroom Assistant	Fashion Retail	Oxford Circus	Must be a resident of the borough of Westminster
L19001869	Stockroom Assistant Part-Time	Fashion Retail	Oxford Circus	Must be a resident of the borough of Westminster
L27002332	Customer Service Assistant	Florists	Kennington	
L18000091	General Assistant	Retail	Throughout London	Retail experience preferred
L18000094	Store Assistant	Retail	Throughout London	
L12001990	Customer Service Advisers	Leisure Centres	Throughout London	Must have customer service experience
L12002439	Apprentice Sales/ Telesales	Training Provider	Upper Norwood	
L12002572	Sales Operator – Seasonal	Theme Park	Chessington	
L12002573	Sales Operator – Seasonal Weekends	Theme Park	Chessington	
L12003071	Full-Time Sales Staff	Fashion retail	Hammersmith	
L12003075	Sales Consultant	Mobile Phones	Fulham	

Vacancies in red are new this month. To find out more about any of these vacancies either speak to your Personal Adviser or contact the nearest centre listed at the bottom of this page. If you do not live in any of the areas listed below you can find your local Connexions centre at:

www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?go=localServices

This information sheet covers jobs for 16-19 year olds in Central London. It does not cover graduate jobs or jobs that are rare in Central London. For details of the whole range of jobs go to www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u/

Other Vacancy Sites

Retail employers don't only employ young people. Many will look for people with experience and/or qualifications. Because employers recruit people of all ages many vacancies will not be on the LOIS site (which is just for young people) but on the sites listed below. In addition the Evening Standard has some suitable vacancies from Monday to Thursday.

In retail.co.uk (www.inretail.co.uk)	This site offers a search engine for positions with companies such as River Island, Gap, Tesco etc.
Retailcareers.co.uk (www.retailcareers.co.uk)	This site is specifically for Retail jobs where you can specify, position, salary and location in a search engine.
Workthing.com (www.workthing.com)	This website offers a search engine for jobs within the Retail Industry, full time, part time and casual.
Retail Choice (www.retailchoice.com)	This site offers a search engine for numerous retail jobs for companies such as Elizabeth Arden and Pepsi.
Jobcentre Plus (jobseekers.direct.gov.uk)	The national Jobcentre Plus site has a lot of vacancies (select 'Looking for a job' then 'Search for a job'). However, many of the vacancies ask for at least some relevant experience. The site also has links to jobs from other sources, such as employment agencies.

Part-Time and Temporary Work

Retail employers in Central London are constantly recruiting part-time and temporary staff. Many vacancies are never advertised but are filled by people who call into the store or apply online. For hints on how to look for part-time and temp work, as well as a comprehensive list of recruitment websites see the Part-Time and Temp Job Information Sheet at www.centrallondonconnexions.org.uk.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer training to young people who want to learn while working. Apprenticeship opportunities in retail and customer service will be listed in the vacancies above. For more general information on apprenticeships go to www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

In addition to any apprenticeships listed above the following companies are likely to recruit trainees every summer (you can apply to all of these online):

- **Arcadia Group** (www.arcadiagroup.co.uk/careers/schoolleavers/retail.html) have a retail management programme for those with A Levels or the equivalent in stores including Burton, Dorothy Perkins, Evans, Miss Selfridge, Outfit, Topshop, Topman and Wallis