

Interview with Stefan Hancock

Technical Support Lead at the ITS Help Desk

September 19, 2025. Interviewed by Jo Brown

Stefan Hancock is my direct supervisor for my internship, so it only felt natural to interview him about why he chose this career path and any advice he has for me as a graduating senior. Stefan himself is a very approachable individual and is always willing to answer questions and help however he can. I sat down with Stefan on the 19th of September after the training session for the ITS Help Desk. The questions follow, with any analysis at the end of the answers. Questions are marked in red, answers in blue, and my own thoughts post-interview are uncolored.

What made you choose to enter the field of IT and the IT Help Desk?

I have been building computers for my entire life and have always kept up with the evolving nature of technology and have an interest in the latest that emerging technology has to offer. The IT Help Desk allows me to not only practice those skills but utilize them to help others who may not understand how to work on their own devices.

Personally, the reason I chose to enter this field is due to my own knowledge of computers and how to resolve the issues, the responsibility to help students, staff, and other people of ODU is a bonus. As for Stefan's words, we have very similar origins in this matter, wishing to practice and hone our technical skills.

What do you think some of the most important skills someone working within IT could have?

Some of the most important skills to have would include strong problem-solving abilities, the ability to research and comprehend new information, and strong listening skills.

Regarding technical skills, I included this question to see if my own assumptions were correct. Prior to this, I had assumed that problem solving and research skills were paramount, which they are, but the listening skills were novel to me, as I had not considered this as a possibility

Is there any special knowledge you think would be valuable to pass on?

I think one of the most valuable things you can do as a technician is keeping your own documentation on solving issues that you can refer to in the future.

This advice, above everything else I have learned in this interview, is probably the most important piece I will ever receive now or later. Documentation is everything in every IT field, and quite possibly will be the most important thing an IT professional could ever do, well beyond fixing technologies.

In your opinion what are the most valuable tech-related skills for a professional in the IT field should have?

The most valuable tech related skills would be familiarization with multiple operating systems, a strong understanding of what hardware performs what function, and a grasp on how a user's needs relate to hardware requirements.

What entry level experience do you think would be valuable for someone searching to obtain your position as a Help Desk Lead Technician?

The best entry level experience would be starting out as a technician and gaining the experience of assisting users through remote means and exercising the skill of being able to troubleshoot issues with a device that is not in front of you. The ability to walk a user through a process without being in control of the device is a valuable skill.

If you were to hire full-time employees from the interns currently working for you, what qualities are you looking for?

The qualities that I would look for would include outstanding customer service, taking the initiative to inform themselves about new technologies and how they may apply to our IT environment, and a strong use of documentation.

It does make sense that an IT lead would require these skills in order to excel, and developing them at a low level where mistakes are more permissible is going to provide a good experience so that

Regarding the IT Help Desk itself, what are some of the most valuable qualities for a worker to excel in this position?

The most valuable skills at the ODU IT Help Desk in particular are mostly customer service soft skills, including active listening and critical thinking. Keeping up with all facets of the issue that a user is having is the most important step in solving the problem.

How could someone seeking to improve their skills as an IT professional utilize a position here to improve said skills?

Working in a Help Desk environment will provide you with all of the scenarios and experiences that you would encounter as an IT professional in the field. Interfacing with customers, exploring new technologies, encountering new issues, and corresponding with other departments within IT are all things that you will be able to improve on.

This interview with Stefan has provided me quite a bit of insight into the field of both Information Technology as well as the position I will be holding at the Help desk in general. I am incredibly grateful to Stefan for giving me this opportunity to work at the ITS help desk as well as to get hands-on experience helping people with technical issues, as well as to get a good source on my resume for later employment. This has granted me a much deeper understanding of what duties I will be performing at the ITS help desk, and how I will cultivate my own personal knowledge base of troubleshooting issues related to technology and software. In addition, this interview has given me knowledge I otherwise would not have regarding the importance of being patient with someone dealing with technical difficulties when it is my duty to help them. Some of the conversation we had while the interview was in progress included the passing on of the knowledge that most people do not know half of what a technician knows when it comes to technology. I would like to thank Stefan again in this written form for taking the time out of his day to speak with me.