

Automotive



514,000
PEOPLE WORK IN
THIS INDUSTRY

MORE THAN
39,700
BUSINESSES MAKE UP
THIS SECTOR

QUALIFIED
MECHANICS CAN
EARN OVER
£30,000 PA

Okay, so cars are totally awesome. From the Mini to the Murcielago, cars come in all shapes and sizes and require a fair old bit of work to keep them roadworthy. If you're a regular old petrol-head, then this is definitely the career for you!

You ask us...

WHAT'S THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR ALL ABOUT?

It's all about fixing stuff that breaks down. Anything that has an engine, from a basic 50cc moped to a £300,000 supercharged sports car, that breaks will be down to you to fix. This might involve something simple like doing an MOT or a service, to more complicated procedures such as replacing internal engine parts or restoring panels on the vehicle that have become damaged or dented.

WHAT KIND OF SALARY CAN I EXPECT TO EARN?

Your salary will vary massively on your experience and your area of expertise. Many garages are privately owned businesses that have a good register of customers; these returning customers mean they have faith in your work and will pay (and possibly tip) more. Your starting salary will be between **£9000** and **£13,000**, but will quickly rise as you become more established. If you choose to work in sales, you can also earn commission on top of your salary.

WHAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENT WOULD I BE WORKING IN?

In this sector you'll be working in one of three environments depending on your choice of career; if you choose fitting, repairs or body work, you'll be in a mechanical garage working with tools and machinery to fix vehicles. If you choose roadside assistance, you will be out and about on roads recovering stranded vehicles. Finally, if you work in sales, you'll find yourself in a shiny showroom full of clean cars and those weird fake plants they have in every car salesroom for some weird reason.

HOW DOES THIS SECTOR COMPARE TO OTHERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY?

This sector generates a whopping **£6.5 million** to the UK economy each year! There are over **32 million** vehicles on the roads in this country alone, to which **740,000** people work to maintain and service. There are also **8 F1** teams based in the UK, who employ staff in a whole range of job roles, from pit technicians to performance analysts.

WHERE IS THE WORK MOST CONCENTRATED?

You will find mechanics garages and workshops in nearly every town in the UK. Car show rooms are also found nationwide, but are mostly concentrated on business parks located on the outskirts of towns and cities.



Careers Choices

Cars, motorbikes, buses, campervans, transit vans and lorries all have one thing in common; they'll all inevitably break down at some point and leave you standing by the road waiting in the rain for a man in an orange jacket to take you to a garage. However, if you're a mechanic, you can fix the issues without a problem (not necessarily by the road if it's something major like a wheel falling off, you'll probably be at a garage for that). Fixing automotives is a highly skilled trade that requires a fair amount of knowledge; from engines to exhausts, each part of a vehicle requires a different set of skills. This sector also covers body and paint work, roadside assistance and the selling of automotives.

a practical role as they learn while gaining valuable employment experience. Here are some of the Apprenticeship Frameworks for this sector and all of these will result in a Level 3 qualification such as a BTEC, a Diploma or an NVQ.

Roadside Assistance and Recovery • Vehicle Body and Paint Operations • Vehicle Fitting • Vehicle Maintenance and Repair • Vehicle Parts Operations • Vehicle Sales

A-LEVELS

A-Levels are the most popular gateway into university and are sought after by employers. However, for this industry it's a less popular pathway to take due to the lack of practical learning the student receives. It could, however, be used to get onto a **Foundation Degree in Mechanical Engineering**.

FOUNDATION DEGREES

A Foundation Degree combines university lifestyle with practical, hands on work. It's sort of like a cross between an Apprenticeship and an Honours Degree. They are often used as gateway qualifications to a full time Degree as they count towards the first two years of an Honours Degree. They usually take two years to complete and you'll be both in the work place and on the university campus. There are a wide range of Foundation Degrees available for this sector, such as **Mechanical Engineering** and **Motor Vehicle Performance**.

COLLEGE COURSES

A college course is another way to get into this sector. For more information, check out www.careersworld.co.uk

VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

This is the most popular route into the automotive industry, as it allows students to combine practical and theoretical study. In this way, students gain working experience while also learning about things like Maths, Science and English. **GW**

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

This is all about keep vehicles on the road. You might specialise in cars, buses, motorcycles or campervans, but every vehicle needs a different sort of attention as the engines, tyres, transmission and the other parts differ depending on what you're working on. You might be doing a routine service, or replacing whole mechanical systems in your daily routine; either way, I hope you like the smell of petrol! You're looking at a starting salary of around **£13,000** here.

BODY AND PAINT TECHNICIAN

From the tiniest chip to the biggest smash, prangs, knocks and little accidents are commonplace in the driving world and when the unexpected happens, people need their cars fixing up. This is where Body and Paint technicians come in; it might be a full body rework or it might just need a touch up of paint but no two jobs will ever be the same. This is

quite a specialised field, so the salary is a little higher, usually between **£13,500** (starting out) and **£20,000**.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

You can guarantee that at some point in the future, you'll be in a vehicle that breaks down. 50 years ago, this would have meant walking miserably to the nearest town, but becoming stranded now is a thing of the past. Roadside Technicians fix broken down vehicles and if the repairs can't be done there and then, they'll tow your stricken vehicle to the nearest garage for you. Salaries here range from **£13,000** to **£16,000**.

FITTING TECHNICIAN

Fitting involves the installation things such as tyres, exhausts, batteries and brake pads while the customer waits. You'll have to have a familiarity with a wide range of vehicles and makes so that you can fit the right parts to the right model of car. Salaries start at around **£12,000** and rise to **£15,000** when fully qualified.

PARTS OPERATIONS

Selling parts is an important part of the automotive industry, as most people from customers right up to car dealerships and garages require parts to sell in their workplaces. You'll be in charge of stock checking, dealing with customers (so best customer service voice on!), processing payments and organising distribution. Salaries are fairly low to start with, at about **£9,000**, but your income will increase quickly as you progress.

AUTOMOTIVE SALES

Selling cars isn't easy; your earnings will be based on commission, so you'll have to sell honestly but productively in order to please both your employer and your customers. Cars are expensive, so you'll have to make sure the customer is getting exactly what they want for the price offered. You get a base salary of around **£12,000** which is boosted by commission you make on sales. As you progress and grow in the industry, both your salary and your commission rate will significantly rise.

Where to begin

APPRENTICESHIPS

If you are aged 16 and over you could enter an Apprenticeship, which would teach you the skills you need while you work and earn a salary. You'll spend half your time in the classroom and half out on the job. Listed below are the apprenticeship frameworks for this sector, which when completed will give you a Level 2 qualification in the form of a BTEC, Diploma or NVQ:

Roadside Assistance and Recovery • Vehicle Body and Paint Operations • Vehicle Fitting • Vehicle Maintenance and Repair • Vehicle Parts Operations • Vehicle Sales

ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIPS

These are the equivalent to A-Levels and can usually be joined after completing the associated Intermediate Apprenticeship. They are ideal for people who want