

Solar PV Installer

Role Specific Education Training Needs

Solar Photovoltaic Installers may enter the industry from other construction occupations, engineering and technical occupations, or directly through an apprenticeship or employment with training.

PV Installers may have worked as roofers, electrical labourers, electrician's mates, or be working towards being a fully qualified Electrician. There are no mandatory qualification requirements to be a Solar PV Installer but many customers and companies insist on using certified installers who are registered with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). MCS certifies low-carbon products and installations used to produce electricity and heat from renewable sources. The Solar PV standard for certification is available at: https://mcscertified.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MIS-3002_Solar-PV-Systems-V4.0.pdf.

Alternative entry routes

T Levels

If you're 16 and deciding what route to take, and you want a blend of academic and practical learning, you might be interested in the new Technical Qualifications (T Level) choices. T levels are a new 2-year long qualification. They bring classroom learning and an extended industry placement together. You'll spend 80% of your time in the classroom and 20% on a 45-day placement with an employer which will give you a great experience of the world of work in your chosen field. One T level takes 2 years of full-time study and is equivalent to 3 A levels. T Levels are rolling out across the country with many more coming online by September 2024. The Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction T – Level is currently offered in London by Newham College <https://www.newvic.ac.uk/>.

The Building Services Engineering for Construction is offered in London by Barking and Dagenham College

<https://www.barkingdagenhamcollege.ac.uk>.

Other colleges across London will begin to offer these courses from September 2022.

You can search for a relevant T Level delivered in your location here:

<https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/students/find?Postcode=&ShouldSearch=True&SearchedQualificationId=48&TotalRecordCount=22&SelectedQualificationId=0>.

Vocational Qualifications

There are various vocational qualifications that you can take at school or college to help you gain entry into this occupation. Make sure you choose a qualification that will give you good options in the future. You will need to check what the qualification qualifies you to do.

MCS states the following qualifications can help an employer determine competency, so you might consider one of these qualifications if you want a career as a solar PV Installer, or your employer may send you on one of these courses to help you gain recognition. Make sure you understand the entry requirements or pre-requisites for these courses.

Level 3 Award in the Installation and Maintenance of Small Scale Solar Photovoltaic Systems (IMSSSPV) – offered by LCL Awards, BPEC, EAL and City & Guilds:

- <https://eal.org.uk/quals-finder/qualifications/2640-eal-level-3-award-in-the-installation-of-small-scale-solar-photovoltaic-systems>.
- <https://lclawards.co.uk/qualifications/rqf/lcl-awards-level-3-award-in-the-installation-and-maintenance-of-small-scale-solar-photovoltaic-systems/>.
- <http://bpec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/QUALIFICATION-GUIDE-L3-Photovoltaic.pdf>.
- <https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/building-services-industry/electrical->

[installation/2399-installation-service-and-maintenance-of-environmental-technology-systems#tab=information.](#)

These are only a few of the vocational qualifications on offer in this area.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a common and popular route to take at age 16, 18 or older. This is because during your apprenticeship you are employed and earn a wage while you study to learn your profession. There are many apprenticeships relevant to this occupation at Level 2 or 3. Your employer will help you decide which one is right for you depending on your career aspirations, or you could look for an employer who offers the apprenticeship you wish to take.

Career Prospects and Progression

After gaining experience in solar PV installation you may wish to progress your career by becoming a fully qualified Electrician. There are a number of ways to do this explained here at the electrical careers website:

<https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/joining-the-industry/training-routes/>

This explains the different requirements in each of the UK nations. For England and London, the routes to becoming a fully qualified Electrician are:

Route 1

[https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TESP-England-Route-1-Apprenticeship.pdf.](https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TESP-England-Route-1-Apprenticeship.pdf)

Route 2

[https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TESP-England-Route-2-Full-Time-Education-14-19.pdf.](https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TESP-England-Route-2-Full-Time-Education-14-19.pdf)

Route 3

<https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TESP-England-Route-3-Self-Funded.pdf>.

Route 4

<https://www.electricalcareers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TESP-England-Route-4-Experienced-Worker-Assessment.pdf>

All these routes will prepare you to undertake the correct version of the mandatory professional assessment known as the AM2 from the NET. NET stands for National Electrotechnical Training (NET) and it is a registered UK charity that owns, manages and develops End Point Assessments and Assessments of Occupational Competence for the electrotechnical industry: <https://www.netservices.org.uk/candidate-guidance/>.

There is a lot of information about how to be an electrician, so it is important to get the right advice from industry bodies such as <https://www.the-esp.org.uk>.

The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership (TESP) is a not-for-profit industry partnership formed by the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA), Joint Industry Board (JIB), National Electrotechnical Training (NET), SELECT and Unite the Union to support electrotechnical employers to develop and drive the industry's skills agenda.

Skills Needed

- Knowledge of building and construction.
- Good product knowledge.
- Electrical / technical knowledge.
- The ability to work at height.
- Good attention to detail.
- Patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations.
- Ability to work well with others.
- Excellent customer service skills.

Number Employed (UK)

There are 39,000 specialist roofers (SOC 5313) in the UK,
There are 265,000 electricians and electrical fitters (SOC 5241) working in
the UK as of 2018.

Typical Salary Range

Many Solar PV Installers are self employed and work as contractors. Others work for solar installation companies. A typical salary is in the £20,000 - £40,000 range with the higher end reserved for installers who can inspect and commission solar systems.

Fully qualified electricians earn an average of just over £32,000 in London, with basic salaries in excess of £60,000 not being unknown.

ENDS

Please note that the information contained on this page is accurate to the best of Solar Energy UK's knowledge. Solar Energy UK welcomes additional information and will aim to update any errors or omissions.