

Returning to STEM

No limits to age or experience

Natalie Desty
Founder and Director
STEM Returners



In partnership with



Careers are not linear!



What we do & our impact



The STEM Returners programme has returned over 460 STEM professionals specialising in over 20 STEM disciplines.

INCREASE	STEM professionals in a skills short market
IMPROVE	workplace diversity
ATTRACT	highly experienced talent
RAISE	awareness of the impact of the unconscious bias
PROMOTE	good practice in inclusive recruitment and employee brand

96%
**MADE
PERMANENT**
AFTER THE PROGRAMME

46%
WOMEN

34%
MINORITY
ETHNIC
GROUPS

100%
OF
COMPANIES
WHO HAVE
TAKEN PART
HAVE
RECRUITED
RETURNERS

Returners Barriers

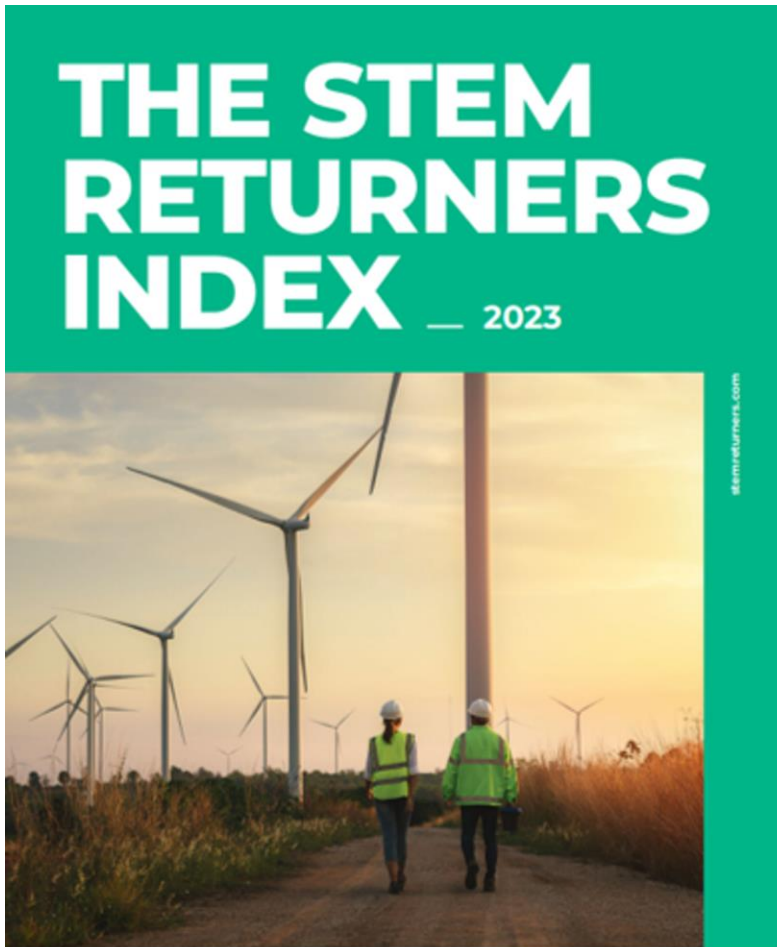


Barriers returners can face:

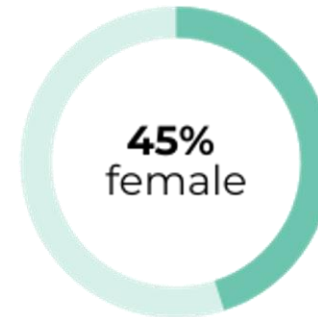
- Needing to refresh industry knowledge
- Lack of feedback
- Unconscious bias
- Lack of flexibility
- Age
- Perception that a career break leads to a deterioration of skills
- Career break candidates filtered out through standard recruitment channels
- Low confidence
- Recognition of transferrable skills
- Managing ongoing caring responsibilities



The STEM Returners Index 2023

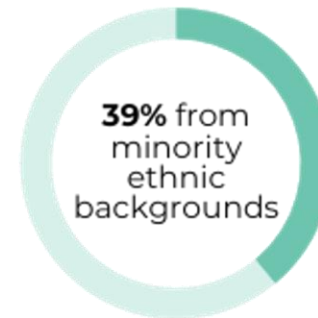
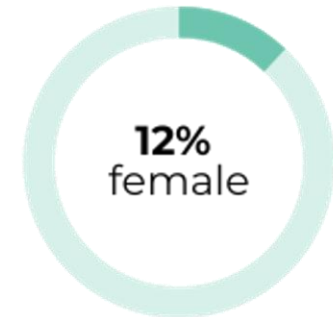


Those attempting to return to work are:



VS

Compared to statistics of working in industry:



VS



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33%
**OF RETURNERS
FELT THEY HAD
EXPERIENCED BIAS IN THE
RECRUITMENT PROCESSES**

We need change today

**THE UK
ENGINEERING
WORKFORCE IS
88% MALE AND
91% WHITE**

We need change today

**STEM PROFESSIONALS FROM
MINORITY ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS
ARE TWICE AS LIKELY AS
ALL OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS
TO FEEL THEY HAVE
EXPERIENCED BIAS IN A
RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

We need change today

#TheSTEMReturnersIndex

Balancing caring responsibilities is the main reason for career breaks among STEM professionals. Only 12% taking one out of personal choice.

12%

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51%

of STEM professionals on a career break are finding the process of returning to work to be 'difficult' or 'very difficult'

40%

of successful returners saying they would have preferred to enrol in a supporter returners programme, only **16%** had the chance to take this route

THE STEM RETURNERS INDEX 2023

#TheSTEMReturnersIndex

Barrier - Feedback



“

Then I would hear absolutely nothing back, not even a rejection, just nothing at all. To say it was disheartening is an understatement.

Karen

”

“

I was unemployed from Sept 2020 to March 2022. I tried everything to find a job, even applying for trainee engineering positions. After the frustration and exasperation, I gave up looking for a job related to engineering.

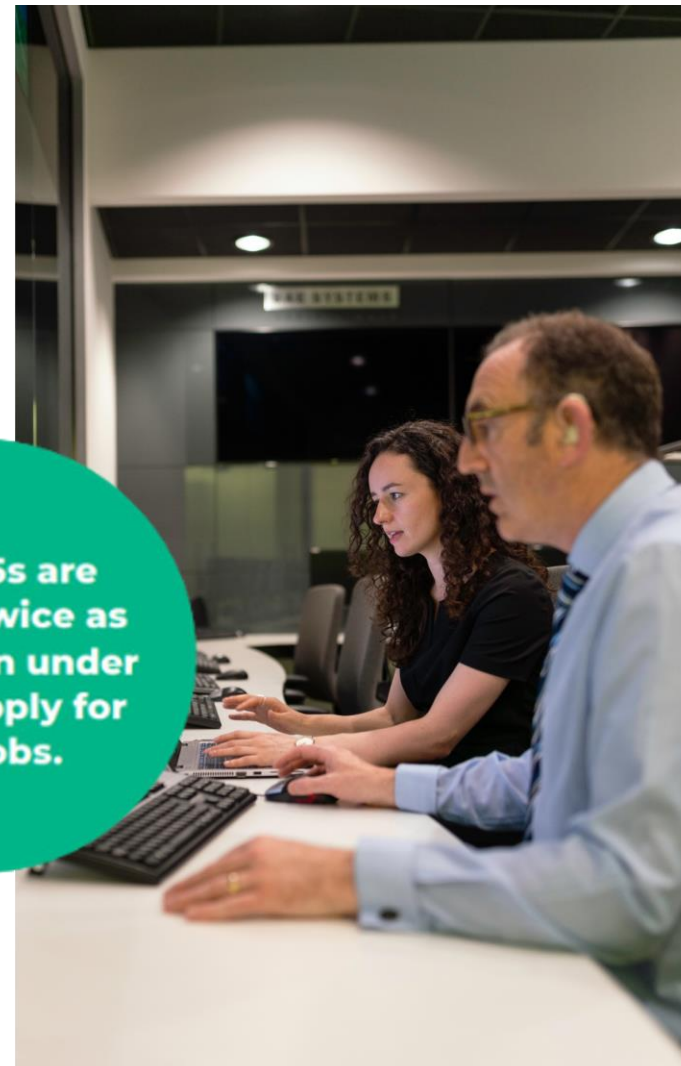
Francis

”

Barrier - Age

Over 45s are most likely to experience bias in a recruitment process

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% OF CANDIDATES APPLYING FOR 50+ JOBS, BY AGE (2023)



[Sample: 1,000 UK STEM returners, 2023]

Over 45s are almost twice as likely than under 45s to apply for 70+ jobs.

2024 Index Survey



**STEM RETURNERS
INDEX SURVEY 2024
IS NOW LIVE**

By taking part, you can enter into our free prize draw for a chance to win:

1st prize – £100 Amazon voucher

2nd prize – One of ten complimentary 1-hour career coaching sessions.



SCAN TO COMPLETE
The STEM Returners
Index Survey 2024

Tips for returning



“If you are changing careers, enter that new field with a positive mindset and tell yourself all things are possible, no mountain is too high to climb.”

“Be prepared to learn and research if you are changing careers.”

“Do it! It is hard and often scary to believe in yourself.”

“Never give up”

“You’ve got this far to the point where you’re THINKING about returning. What have you got to lose? The ladies I spoke to during the whole process were 100% in my corner, it felt like they were almost cheering me on. Just shy of a few pompoms.”

“A little break doesn’t mean end of your career, your skills and expertise need little bit brush up and STEM returners programme is one of the best platforms to restart.”

“To the STEM Returner like me, don’t stop hoping that, there is a career for you.”

A Returners Story



Any Questions?

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