Returning to STEM

No limits to age or experience

Natalie Desty
Founder and Director
STEM Returners
Careers are not linear!
The STEM Returners programme has returned over 460 STEM professionals specialising in over 20 STEM disciplines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCREASE</th>
<th>STEM professionals in a skills short market</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPROVE</td>
<td>workplace diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTRACT</td>
<td>highly experienced talent</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAISE</td>
<td>awareness of the impact of the unconscious bias</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROMOTE</td>
<td>good practice in inclusive recruitment and employee brand</td>
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- 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
Those attempting to return to work are:

- 45% female
- 39% from minority ethnic backgrounds

Compared to statistics of working in industry:

- 12% female
- 9% from minority ethnic backgrounds
The STEM Returners Index 2023

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.

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

12% of STEM returners in the process of returning to work have found it "difficult" or "very difficult.

51% of successful returners saying they would have preferred to enrol in a supporter returners programme, only 16% had the chance to take this route.
Barrier - Feedback

44% of candidates in 2023 say they receive feedback ‘never’ or ‘hardly at all’

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

#TheSTEMReturnersIndex

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

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

[Sample: 1,000 UK STEM returners, 2023]
2024 Index Survey

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.
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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