Increasing connections and interchange

This theme is all about providing systems that allow scientists and engineers to be better connected and to gain broad experience in and out of government. Scientists and engineers are collaborators by nature and something our profession is keen to do is help connect our members! We are an incredibly diverse profession with a variety of roles and specialisations, who are joined by a passion to ensure the delivery of inspirational and trusted evidence and solutions into decision making. Bringing people together allows networks to grow, peer support, collaboration and learning through sharing knowledge and opportunities.

In the new GSE Profession strategy, we commit to supporting government science and engineering (GSE) members in getting experience across industry, academia and across government and similarly bringing people into government from different sectors. We want to do this by aligning how we talk about skills and technical capabilities, so personal development is evident and consistent; and also by exploring and investing in programmes that already make technical secondments achievable.

Work is already going on in this area! The GSE profession has been working with Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) to develop a joint GSE Skills Framework. This framework will be a simplified, systematic skills taxonomy and will be general enough to be relevant across GSE whilst still having enough fidelity to map across government. DSTL are part of the National Laboratory Alliance (NLA), a group of public sector research establishments (PSREs), so they are in a great place to pilot the GSE Skills Framework. DSTL saw through the pandemic that efficiently understanding the capabilities across the alliance can enable rapid support when needed.

A science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) interchange scheme that already exists is called STEM Futures; a collaborative development programme across many government organisations, universities and industry enterprises. It provides technical skills, knowledge and experience including expert mentorship, technical lectures, learning, and even on-the-job experience through placements. It currently covers technical areas including: data, quantum, reliability, sensing, space, and Weapons, Ordnance, Munitions and Explosives (WOME). The GSE Profession want to build better links with STEM Futures and see what more we can do to promote it and encourage use of the scheme.

Finally, the GSE profession are working hard over the next year to investigate establishing a hosting platform where GSE members can access and connect with communities of interest. We want to scope out platforms by next Summer; in the meantime, keep connected by becoming a member and receiving our newsletter which signposts STEM learning and opportunities from across government.

The best way you can get involved is by being a bridge between the GSE profession and your department or team. So, if your department is trying to

map capabilities – get in touch and work with us! If you know of a secondment, shadowing or fellowship scheme operating in or out of government – let us know about it!

You can reach us at gse@go-science.gov.uk and we really appreciate any contribution you can offer.

If you're interested in finding out more about the STEM Futures scheme, you can also contact stemfutures@dstl.gov.uk.