

Press release: Next generation of artificial intelligence talent to be trained at UK universities

- New industry-funded AI Masters, and 16 dedicated Centres at universities across the country to train the next generation of AI PhDs
- prestigious Alan Turing Institute AI research fellowships now open – allowing Britain to retain and attract the very best global talent
- new figures show that inward investment to the UK AI sector has increased by 17% over the past year, more than the whole of Europe combined

Thousands of graduates to become qualified experts in artificial intelligence (AI) as part of a new joint government-industry package to drive up skills in the AI sector, Business Secretary Greg Clark and Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright announced today (21 February 2019).

For the first time, the UK will have a nationwide programme of industry-funded AI Masters courses coupled with work-based placements.

The new skills and talent package is a major milestone of the modern Industrial Strategy's [AI Sector Deal](#) which was launched in April 2018. It is supported by industry funding and up to £110 million government investment, including:

- up to 200 new AI Masters places at UK universities funded by companies such as DeepMind, QuantumBlack, Cisco and BAE Systems. The Masters programme marks the first nationwide effort to address the skills gap at this level, in collaboration with the Institute of Coding and British Computer Society
- 1,000 students will have the opportunity to enhance their skills with new PhDs at 16 dedicated UK Research and Innovation AI Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), located across the country
- up to 5 AI research Fellowships, created in collaboration with The Alan Turing Institute to both attract and retain the best research talent from around the world.

The announcement comes as new figures prepared for Tech Nation by Dealroom.co reveal the number of venture capital investments into the UK's rapidly growing AI sector leapt by 17% last year.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The UK has long been a nation of innovators. This AI skills and talent investment will help nurture leading UK and international talent to ensure we retain our world-beating reputation in research and development.

Artificial intelligence has great potential to drive up productivity and enhance every industry throughout our economy, from more effective disease diagnosis to building smart homes. Today's announcement is our modern Industrial Strategy in action, investing in skills and talent to drive high skilled jobs, growth and productivity across the UK.

Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright said:

The UK is not only the birthplace to the father of artificial intelligence, Alan Turing, but we are leading the way on work to ensure AI innovation has ethics at its core.

We want to keep up this momentum and cement our reputation as pioneers in AI. Working with world class academic institutions and industry we will be able to train the next generation of top-tier AI talent and maintain the UK's reputation as a trailblazer in emerging technologies.

As companies throughout the UK increasingly use AI in processes from manufacturing to fashion and construction to medical imaging, upskilling people to develop and maintain the new technology is crucial to its success in boosting productivity. This is part of the government's continued drive to be a world-leader in harnessing the economic benefits of AI and the data-driven revolution, as part of the modern Industrial Strategy.

The schemes, aimed at people of different stages in higher education and available to researchers at a variety of levels, helps to build advanced AI skills at all levels, a key commitment contained within the AI Sector Deal.

Dame Wendy Hall, AI Skills Champion said:

I'm delighted to see the recommendations of the review that Jérôme Pesenti and I wrote just over a year ago, coming to life in such a comprehensive set of skills and talent initiatives.

They provide a great impetus to developing AI skills and talent and I strongly encourage industry, universities and those of you who aspire to be part of putting the UK at the forefront of the AI and data revolution to get involved in these 3 initiatives.

Finally, to develop the best and brightest AI researchers in the UK, the government is funding a new globally prestigious Fellowship programme. The first wave has been launched by The Alan Turing Institute.

Adrian Smith, Institute Director, The Alan Turing Institute said:

Artificial intelligence represents an incredible opportunity to

transform our economy and our lives for the better. The Turing AI Fellowships will be crucial in building UK leadership capability, driving forward ambitious research and ensuring that the UK can attract, retain, and develop world-leading research talent.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport, said:

Artificial intelligence is a disruptive technology in a range of sectors, enabling new products and services and transforming data science. It allows us to develop new approaches to challenges as diverse as early disease diagnosis and climate change.

To maintain its leadership in AI, the UK will need a new generation of researchers, business leaders and entrepreneurs equipped with new skills. Working with partners across academia and industry, the centres announced today will provide the foundations for these future leaders.

The Industrial Strategy sets out [Grand Challenges](#) to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future, ensuring that the UK takes advantage of major global changes, improving people's lives and the country's productivity. Artificial intelligence and data is one of the 4 Grand Challenges which will see AI used across a variety of industries and put the UK at the forefront of the AI and data revolution. Exploring the best skills package to equip people with the expertise to make the most of AI was a key commitment of the AI and Data Grand Challenge's £950 million Sector Deal.