

[Press release: Return-to-work placements for scientists and engineers at Dstl](#)

Dstl, part of the Ministry of Defence, has teamed up with Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology (IMarEST) and the Women's Engineering Society (WES) to pilot the [STEM Returners programme](#). The programme is aimed at giving experienced science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) professionals the confidence to step back into their careers after time taking off or the opportunity to transfer into another field.

Natalie Desty from the STEM Returners programme, said:

The science and engineering industry has a shortage of skilled workers, but many highly qualified and experienced people are struggling to get back into work. We want to change employers' perceptions of CV gaps, remove barriers to returning to work and ensure the widest possible pool of talent is being considered for jobs. For example, female professionals returning from career breaks are often underemployed, with three in five likely to move into lower-skilled or lower-paid roles.

The Dstl pilot is open to any gender and offers individuals a paid 12-week placement, where they will work on challenging projects that make a real difference to the UK's defence and security. Successful applicants could work in areas such as platform systems, cyber and information systems, or defence and security analysis. Placements are also available with the [Defence and Security Accelerator](#), which manages the £800 million Defence Innovation Initiative.

As well as contributing to exciting and rewarding projects, the programme offers 1-to-1 mentoring, networking opportunities and further career support.

Helen Christie, Dstl Resourcing Specialist said:

We're thrilled to be involved in the STEM Returners programme and help break down barriers people face when coming back to work. Dstl has long been committed to a flexible and supportive workplace so that talented people of all backgrounds and circumstances can thrive here and contribute to our country's national security.

While we can't guarantee a permanent position with Dstl at the end of the placement, it's equally important that the wider science and engineering community is full of skilled and experienced people. About half of Dstl's work is delivered externally through industry, universities, and small-and-medium-sized enterprises, so we rely on

being able to collaborate with STEM workers all over the UK. We hope by participating in the programme, we can help grow the STEM workforce.

Dstl is also part of the STEM Futures consortium, which is proud to embrace the STEM Returners programme as part of its overall intent to develop talent while actively championing diversity and inclusion.

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