IBM UK Newsroom

New IBM survey reveals the greatest perceived barrier to professional or technical skill development is that programs are too expensive

As global respondents look to change jobs in the next 12 months, awareness of career and training options is low

IBM SkillsBuild is helping to tackle these misconceptions and bring STEM education closer to under-represented communities



London, 14th February 2023 — Job seekers, students, and career changers around the world want to pursue roles related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) across different industries, but say they are not familiar with career options. At the same time, online training and digital credentials are emerging as a recognized pathway to opportunity as respondents plan to seek new jobs in the year ahead.

These were some of the global findings from a new study that IBM unveiled today. The study*, administered by Morning Consult and commissioned by IBM, is based on more than 14,000 interviews of students, people seeking new jobs, and people seeking to change careers, located across 13 countries. Respondents also cited concerns that career options may not be available to them. In the UK, students reported relatively high familiarity with STEM jobs, and optimism about the growth of STEM jobs in the years ahead.

“Technology training can have a transformational effect on a person’s life,” said Justina Nixon-Saintil, IBM's Chief Impact Officer. “There are many misconceptions about what's needed to pursue a rewarding and lucrative career in today’s rapidly advancing workplace. This is why we must raise awareness of the breadth of science and technology roles that exist across industries. Together with our IBM SkillsBuild partners, we’re highlighting the many pathways that exist for underrepresented communities to pursue futures in tech.”

To help tackle these misconceptions and bring STEM education closer to historically underrepresented communities in the field, IBM is announcing today 45 new educational partners around the world. These IBM SkillsBuild collaborations across social service, economic development, and vocational organizations, as well as government agencies, and universities, will make free online learning widely available, with clear pathways to

employment. Many of these organizations focus on specific communities that are underrepresented in technology and will help skill women, including mothers returning to the workforce, ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, and refugees.

Study Shows Misconceptions and Opportunities in Tech and Beyond

The IBM / Morning Consult study revealed perceptions from interviewed students, career changers, and job seekers who are interested in a role in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM):

UK students are more optimistic about STEM career opportunities and claim high familiarity with STEM jobs

- 73% of UK students think there will be an increase in career opportunities in STEM jobs in the next ten years. This is a larger percentage than the global average.
- UK students claim higher familiarity with STEM jobs compared to the global average.

Global Misconceptions around STEM training: it's too expensive, learners don't know where to start, and don't know enough about digital credentials.

- 61% of respondents think they are not qualified to work in a STEM job because they don't have the right academic degrees
- 40% of students say the greatest barrier to professional or technical skill development is that they don’t know where to start
- 60% of respondents worry that digital credentials may be costly to obtain
- Being able to continue to work while earning a credential is particularly important to career changers

Learners and workers around the world are planning to make a change, with about 60% of respondents looking for a new job in the next 12 months.

- 61% of students and career changers are actively looking for a new job now or plan to within the next year
- More than 80% of all respondents have plans to build their skills in the next two years
- At least 90% are confident they can develop skills or learn something new from an online program

Globally, awareness of options around different STEM roles across industries is low, and many are concerned these careers won’t pay enough.

- 50% of respondents are interested in pursuing a STEM-related job
- 64% of career changers are not familiar with STEM jobs
- Many respondents are unsure of which careers are considered to be a STEM job
- 62% of respondents share concerns that they won’t be able to find a STEM job that pays enough to support themselves or their family

Respondents around the world are optimistic that roles in STEM fields across sectors will increase in the future, and that digital credentials are a good way to supplement traditional education and

increase career opportunities.

- 66% of all respondents think that STEM jobs across industries will increase over the next decade
- 86% of those respondents who have earned a digital credential agree that it helped them achieve career goals
- 75% of all respondents agree that digital credentials are a good way to supplement traditional education
- Increased career opportunities and qualifications were the top reasons why respondents across the globe said they wanted to earn digital credentials

45 New Collaborations Around the World

Through a holistic approach to investing in the future of work, IBM is supporting learners and helping tackle their misconceptions about technology and STEM careers. IBM SkillsBuild is bringing free technology training available to learners all over the world, with a focus on underrepresented communities in tech. Online training, like the courses offered by IBM SkillsBuild, is most effective when it is delivered collaboratively with local partners. Community experts enrich course content through project-based learning and connect learners with real career opportunities. To this end, today IBM SkillsBuild is proud to announce 45 new and expanded collaborations around the world.

Through collaborations like these, IBM continues to progress towards its commitment to skill 30 million people globally by 2030.

*Methodology: This study was conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of IBM from November 2 - December 20, 2022. The study was conducted among a sample of 4,926 Students, 4,629 Job Seekers, and 4,628 Career Changers in 13 countries (Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, Spain, UAE, UK, and the US).

About IBM SkillsBuild

IBM SkillsBuild is a free education program focused on underrepresented communities in tech, that helps adult learners, and high school and university students and faculty, develop valuable new skills and access career opportunities. The program includes an online platform that is complemented by customized practical learning experiences delivered in collaboration with a global network of partners.

The open version of IBM SkillsBuild is an online platform that offers over 1,000 courses in 19 languages on cybersecurity, data analysis, cloud computing, and many other technical disciplines — as well as in workplace skills such as Design Thinking. Most important, participants can earn IBM-branded digital credentials that are recognized by the market.

The enhanced partner version of IBM SkillsBuild may also include workshops, expert conversations with IBM coaches and mentors, project-based learning, access to IBM software, specialized support from partners through the learning process, and connection to career opportunities.

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https://uk.newsroom.ibm.com/2022-02-13-New-IBM-survey-reveals-the-greatest-perceived-barrier-to-professional-or-technical-skill-development-is-that-programs-are-too-expensive