

# A more inclusive approach to visas, academic backgrounds and work-life balance can plug STEM skill gaps

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According to the latest whitepaper from global talent acquisition and management firm, Alexander Mann Solutions (<http://alexandermannsolutions.com/>), being less rigid with academic requirements can drastically increase employers' visibility amongst emerging STEM talent.

As discussed in the firm's new whitepaper, "Early careers recruitment: What are the opportunities from digitalisation, STEM and Diversity & Inclusion? (<http://go.alexandermannsolutions.com/l/73212/2020-01-27/np3j21>)", 89% of STEM businesses in the UK are experiencing difficulties in hiring talent, with recruitment processes taking on average 31 more days than expected. By offering visa sponsorships, or being more flexible towards academic requirements, businesses can tap into a wider pool of talent and help plug skills gaps in the sector.

Getting more women into STEM was also highlighted as a key factor to closing the demand for skills in STEM related disciplines. Despite an increasing number of initiatives that industry bodies and organisations are launching in a bid to promote STEM careers to young women, females are still severely under-represented in the field.

Flexible working has repeatedly been noted as a key motivator for millennials and Gen Zers, and this must be considered along with other factors, such as cultural fit and values, in order to attract emerging talent to the STEM sectors.

Commenting on how we can redress the balance and achieve better STEM outcomes, Global Head of Emerging Talent Consulting at Alexander Mann Solutions, Jane Clark, said:

"Over the years, we have seen growing support from the government and business leaders to encourage more young people to pursue a career in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths sectors. While this is certainly welcomed, there are still many obstacles to overcome and much more to do.

"Addressing the global shortage of available STEM skills will require businesses to adapt their talent attraction strategies, moving towards a more flexible model which is in line with the new demands of millennial and Gen Z workers. Being open to offering visa programmes and knocking down barriers to entry, such as academic backgrounds, can allow employers to access highly-skilled individuals and plug critical skill gaps."

Gisela Garcia Esteban, Talent Management Lead at Sanofi, said:

"For Sanofi, where STEM employees make up half of the workplace across diverse roles such as pharmacists, doctors, biologists and chemists, attracting the right type of candidate brings its challenges.

"A balance between personal and professional life is now more important than compensation, and so is finding a company that fits in with their values. We have to adapt to these needs and make Sanofi as

attractive as possible. If all we are talking about is a good salary, they won't choose our company.”

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