

Supporting our diversity and inclusion agenda by creating additional routes into our summer internship programme

At BAE Systems we value diversity because it benefits our people and helps our business grow. A diverse workforce, with employees drawn from all backgrounds encourages innovation, improves productivity and brings us closer to our customers. As a result, we aim to create an inclusive environment where every one of our employees is valued and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribute to our business success. However, like many companies notably in the Engineering sector, we also recognise that we have underrepresented groups therefore see it as important to take positive action to improve the diversity within our Company.

There are many ways in which we are supporting a more diverse and inclusive environment, and one such opportunity we saw was to create an additional route into our summer internship programme. Consequently, we were extremely pleased that as part of the Employer Ownership of Skills initiative, we successfully secured funding from the government department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to turn this into a reality and offer 25 summer intern places as part of our 2014 internship programme to individuals who are female and/or from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group. In order to do this however, we recognised that it would be useful to have support in reaching out to people who may not consider us as an employer of choice so the first challenge was to find such support. Consequently, we spoke to a number of organisations and decided to partner with the Windsor Fellowship, a unique charitable organisation that design and deliver innovative personal development and leadership programmes, which enables talent from diverse communities to be realised. The Windsor Fellowship were not only able to support us but also well placed to support the individuals through the recruitment process in order to give them the best chance of securing an internship.

*“We are proud of the partnership we have with the Windsor Fellowship and consider this element of our internship programme to further strengthen our commitment to diversity and inclusion. Equally, we are pleased to be able to offer undergraduates and graduates an invaluable opportunity to get paid to learn and develop core employability skills; through enabling our interns to have an insight into the inspiring work that we as a company do, we hope that many of them will go on to join the company or the Engineering industry on a permanent basis.”* Ayesha Godigamuwe, HR Manager – Graduate Programmes at BAE Systems.

As the internship is still taking place at the time of writing, the full impact of this activity is yet to be understood but we do know that this year the overall percentage of interns who are female and/or from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group is higher compared to last year and this is as a result of this additional route into the internship programme. It is also reassuring to hear from the interns who have taken up an internship through this way.

*“Being given the responsibility to undertake my own projects under expert guidance at such a large company has helped me to develop greatly as an engineer and gain valuable workplace experience. This internship has given me great insight into the engineering industry and inspired me to further pursue my interest; overall an amazing experience.”*  
Habiba Daggash, Engineering Science Undergraduate at the University of Oxford and current Intern at BAE Systems.

In terms of next steps, we plan to offer over 100 internships next year and again partner with the Windsor Fellowship to support us ensuring we continue to reach out to as a wide a talent pool as possible. For more information on the undergraduate and graduate opportunities at BAE Systems, including how to apply, please visit [www.baesystems.com/graduates](http://www.baesystems.com/graduates).