

IBM survey: the greatest perceived barrier to professional or technical skill development in the UAE is that programs are too expensive

Compared to other countries, UAE Students report the highest familiarity with, and interest in pursuing, STEM jobs. To tackle these misconceptions and bring STEM education closer to underrepresented communities, IBM is adding 45 IBM SkillsBuild collaborations globally including Zayed University, Abu Dhabi University, and University of Wollongong in Dubai



DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, February 23, 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 programs are too expensive. At the same time, interest in STEM training remains higher in the UAE compared to other surveyed countries.

These were some of the global findings from a new study that IBM unveiled. 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.

“Technology training is the backbone of the United Arab Emirates’ numerous diversification initiatives which is why we are committed to continue raising awareness of the benefits and accessibility of STEM education and training,” said Shukri Eid, IBM’s General Manager for Gulf, Levant and Pakistan. “As we prepare for COP 28 later this year, STEM education has never been more important for the achievement of the country’s Net zero 2050 strategic initiative. Together with our IBM SkillsBuild partners, we’re highlighting the many pathways available for students, job seekers, and career changers looking to contribute to the ambitious sustainability goals of the UAE.”

To help tackle these misconceptions and bring STEM education closer to historically underrepresented communities in the field, IBM is announcing 45 new educational partners around the world, including Zayed University, Abu Dhabi University, and University of Wollongong in Dubai. 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):

Skills and education study: UAE results

- While 78% of respondents think that digital credentials are a good way to supplement formal education, 53% assume that these programs are too expensive
- **Compared to other countries, UAE Students report the highest familiarity with, and interest in pursuing, STEM jobs**
- Students (72%) report the highest levels of familiarity with STEM jobs compared to other UAE learners. However, about one-in-three Job Seekers (35%) and over four-in-ten Career Changers (44%) say they’re “not at all familiar” with STEM jobs
- A majority of respondents across all audiences do not currently work in a STEM job. More than half of Students (73%), Job Seekers (52%) and Career Changers (64%) say they’re interested in working in a STEM job
- Some uncertainty emerged among many respondents regarding what is considered to be a STEM job

IBM's 45 new collaborations around the world include Zayed University, Abu Dhabi University, and University of Wollongong in Dubai

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.

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.

<https://mea.newsroom.ibm.com/skillsbuild-UAE>