



# **STEM RETURNERS PROGRAMME**

## TOOLKIT

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This toolkit is designed to provide information and support to help you confidently apply for one of our STEM Returner programmes, and contains details about:

- ▶ *Who we are*
- ▶ *The purpose of our programme*
- ▶ *Support with writing and updating your CV*
- ▶ *Guidance for your interview*
- ▶ *How can we support you?*





# ABOUT US

## **WHO ARE DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT (DE&S)?**

At Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S), we're here to provide for the Army, the Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force, as they serve our country all over the world. We support those on the front line by providing smarter tech. Vehicles that go faster, and further. Newer, more effective equipment for land, sea, and air. We deliver the kit the UK military needs to maintain advantage and stay protected, as they protect life both at home and overseas.



**OUR SITE IN ABBEY WOOD, BRISTOL**

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME?

With our STEM Returners programme, we're dedicated to supporting individuals who have taken a career break to regain skills and confidence as they return to the workplace. At DE&S we promote an inclusive work environment where everyone is supported to be themselves and achieve their ambitions, so we've launched this programme to encourage talented individuals to do just this.



**MIN, D&I AND WELLBEING LEAD**

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*This programme will offer an incredible opportunity for re-entry into a dynamic and complex work environment, where the programme will build your confidence and prepare you for your future career at DE&S.”*

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*Diversity of thought and experience are proven to be directly linked with ‘disruptive’ thinking and innovation, so for DE&S, embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity is not just ethically right, it’s vital for our success. We’ve also learned from early adoption of remote working that factors such as in-person attendance and flexible working patterns do not prevent us from forming strong teams, achieving our goals, and enjoying what we do.*

*That’s why we’re committed to creating an inclusive workplace that inspires, attracts and retains people from diverse backgrounds and reflects the society we live in. And that’s why we’re dedicated to increasing the pool of talented people we work alongside through this programme, whatever their gender, but particularly women who are under-represented in STEM.”*



**MARY, ENGINEERING HEAD OF FUNCTION**



# UPDATING YOUR CV

Here are our tips for creating and updating your CV to showcase your skills and experience:

## 1 – REVIEW YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Read the advert for the programme you want to apply for thoroughly – you'll find all live programmes listed on [des.mod.uk/vacancies](https://des.mod.uk/vacancies)
- Think about how your skills and experience match what we're looking for, particularly noting the 'essential' and 'desirable' experience listed within the advert
- Gather the information you need in relation to your qualifications, past jobs and volunteering experiences, previous employers' details, and training courses you've completed
- Consider relevant and transferable skills that you may have acquired in your personal life as well as during your professional career
- Match your previous experience against what we're looking for - remember you don't need to tick every box.

## 2 – HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR CV

- Personal information – Include your name, telephone number and email address
- Profile – Background and context about your application and your motivations
- Experience – List your experience in chronological order, starting with the most recent. This is a great place to include your work history as well as relevant volunteering experience that demonstrates key skills. Also include details of your career break in this section. Include date ranges.
- Education – List your education/qualification history in chronological order, starting with the most recent. Include date ranges.
- Skills – We recommend include a brief section to highlight relevant transferable skills you've acquired during your career as well as during your career break, if you feel this has not been covered elsewhere on your CV

## 3 – TOP TIPS FOR CV WRITING

- Keep it simple and concise – a good CV should be no longer than 2-3 pages of A4, with clear headings. Ensure it's easy to pick out important information and achievements.
- When highlighting your experience, list key achievements rather than a description of duties
- Quantify your successes with figures wherever possible
- Use proactive language (action words) such as 'developed', 'organised' or 'achieved'
- Focus on what you achieved specifically, rather than what your team did
- Proof-read your CV! Check punctuation, spelling and grammar. Consider asking a friend or family member to read your CV before submitting it.



**MOLLY, TALENT ACQUISITION**

“

*My top tip when applying for a role at DE&S is ensuring you tailor your CV to the responsibilities and assessment criteria in the job advert”*

## PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

***Once you've submitted your CV, you may be invited to interview. Knowing what to expect and being prepared will help you feel confident in letting us know what you have to offer.***

Your interview will be held virtually – so no need to come onto site! During this call, we'll discuss your CV with you, including key achievements, relevant experience, and examples of where you have applied your skills and knowledge.

You'll be asked questions about the technical competences and behaviours shown on the job advert, so we recommend reviewing these and making a list of examples where you have illustrated these skills and behaviours in your work or personal life, and what you have delivered. We recommend using the 'STARR Technique' (on p7) to ensure the interviewers really understand your efforts and recognise the outcomes you achieved.

Pre-interview nerves are normal! Why not try doing a mock interview with a friend or family member? This can help you prepare for what to expect so you feel more comfortable on the day, and will help identify areas where you may need to do a little more preparation.

At DE&S, we embrace flexible and remote working, and understand the challenges of balancing work with family commitments. We would recommend finding a quiet space to speak with us but, in case this isn't possible, please don't worry about background noises during your interview. Many of our interviewers have experienced these challenges themselves and will be supportive to ensure we make the most of the interview.

We're really interested in talking to people with your experience, so please take the opportunity to prepare and highlight why you are the perfect person for the role. Remember to talk confidently. Before the interview, take time to review your evidence and remind yourself why you're a great fit for the role. Most importantly, relax and be yourself. We look forward to speaking with you!

Discover more at

**[des.mod.uk/interview-tips](https://des.mod.uk/interview-tips)**

# THE 'STARR' TECHNIQUE

When you're asked a question that starts with 'Tell me about a time when you...', you're being asked a competency-based question. These questions are generally used to find out what you did in a particular situation, by using a real-world example. The STARR technique is designed to help you keep your answers structured and concise. It stands for: Situation; Task; Action; Result; Reflect.

Here's how to use the **STARR** technique:

## ► SITUATION

Set the scene, giving a brief background of the situation. Try to be specific where possible – this helps give your answer credibility and helps your interviewer understand the context.

## ► TASK

Based on the situation you've outlined, what was the specific task you had to undertake? What was the goal? Include any constraints you were faced with.

## ► ACTION

What did you actually have to do to resolve the situation? What was your approach? Outline the steps you took to achieve a successful outcome. It's great to talk about how you collaborated with other stakeholders to help achieve the end result, but ensure you focus on specific actions that you carried out.

## ► RESULT

What was the outcome? Ensure you quantify the results as much as possible – back up what you achieved with facts and figures.

## ► REFLECT

It's good to discuss what you learned from the experience, too. Perhaps the end result wasn't exactly what you'd envisaged, so tell us what happened and how it's impacted your approach moving forward.

*Use the STARR technique as a guide to help you feel prepared, but make sure your responses flow naturally. Keep it conversational and concise, and this method will help you to showcase the valuable experience you are bringing to the table.*





# HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOU?

*There's plenty to consider when returning to work – here are just some of the benefits we can offer*

## ► **Flexible and remote working**

We're proud to champion flexible working, with a family-friendly approach in mind. This means that successful candidates can take advantage of hybrid working, combining working at home with working at their contractual location. We'll discuss hybrid working with you prior to you taking up your new post, to find a balance that suits your needs and those of the organisation.

## ► **Market-leading pension schemes**

When you join our team, you'll be eligible to join one of our market-leading pension schemes, and can benefit from an employer pension contribution of c. 27%.

## ► **Holiday**

You'll start with a generous 25 days of holiday a year, increasing one day each year up to 30 days after five years. In addition to all the usual bank holidays, you'll get an extra day off for the Queen's birthday. There's also options for paid special leave, including public duties, volunteering, study leave and reservist training.

## ► **Workplace Nursery**

We also offer a subsidised workplace nursery at our headquarters in Abbey Wood, with high-quality care for children from three months to five years old.

## ► **Childcare Support Schemes**

You may be eligible for government childcare support schemes, including tax-free childcare. Determine your eligibility at [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk).

## ► **Wellbeing**

We want to help you look after your wellbeing, and know how important it is for you to feel at your best. That's why we offer employee wellbeing and occupational health services, as well as discounts through our partner organisations on private health care. In addition, a number of our sites have subsidised on-site gym and sporting facilities.

## ► **Discounts**

Everyday savings can help your money go further. You can sign up to our partner organisations to save on eating out, groceries, travel, entertainment and days out, sports and leisure, clothes and shoes, motoring, home and garden – and more!

Discover more at

[des.mod.uk/interview-tips](https://des.mod.uk/interview-tips)

## **GOT A QUESTION?**

Contact the recruiter listed on the job advert – who will be happy to help. Good luck with your application, we'll look forward to hearing from you soon.



DISCOVER  
**MORE AT**  
[DES.MOD.UK/STEM-RETURNERS](https://des.mod.uk/stem-returners)