

Boost STEM education to close engineering skills and diversity gap, says HVM Catapult boss Katherine Bennett receiving UWE honours



UWE Bristol Vice-Chancellor Professor Steve West (left); HVM Catapult CEO Katherine Bennett CBE (centre); and Professor Elena Marco, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of College of Arts, Technology and Environment (right).

- Katherine Bennett CBE has been made an Honorary Doctor of Engineering by the University of the West of England
- Speaking at the awards ceremony, Bennett said only 16% of engineering graduates are women
- Bennett said more should be done to make STEM subjects accessible as UK demand for engineering and manufacturing skills increases

29 November 2022: Katherine Bennett, chief executive of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult, has called for STEM education to be made “more attractive and accessible” to help meet future demand for skills in industry.

Speaking at the University of West England to accept an Honorary Doctorate in Engineering, Bennett applauded the university's Digital Engineering Technology and Innovation (DETI) skills development scheme and specialised courses like Robotics.

Pointing to the work of the National Composites Centre, an HVM Catapult centre also located in Bristol, Bennett said that helping companies to de-risk manufacturing innovation will require far more skilled engineering graduates to be trained.

During her speech, Katherine Bennett said:

“Our future depends on the next generation of engineers and scientists, building innovations that can help solve climate change and prevent the next pandemic.

“We need the right skills in the right places to deliver these innovations across our country. For this, we need to make our STEM education system more accessible and more attractive, encouraging more students to pick up the baton. And when only 16% of engineering graduates are women, we need to change our message too.”

UWE Bristol Vice-Chancellor Professor Steve West said:

“We're delighted to recognise Katherine's incredible contribution within the aviation and manufacturing industries. Not only is she an exceptional leader and role model, but is also passionate about the communities she serves and the power of education and business working together to transform lives.

“At UWE Bristol we are supporting the next generation of engineers to ensure they have the skills they need to thrive as they start their careers. We want to inspire our students and graduates and help them to reach their full potential. Their innovations will build the future.”

Cllr Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council and Vice Chair of the Western Gateway Partnership, said:

“As Chair of the Western Gateway Partnership, Katherine has taken her experience of working at the top level of the aerospace and manufacturing sector to bear, to promote our area as an innovation powerhouse. Bringing together business, research and local leaders from across South Wales and Western England, we are working collaboratively to attract new opportunities and reach net zero harnessing our great engineering expertise in the process.

“On behalf of the rest of the partnership, I’d like to congratulate Katherine on receiving this well-deserved honorary degree and look forward to continuing to work together to promote the great skills we have across our area.”

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Pictured: UWE Bristol Vice-Chancellor Professor Steve West, Katherine, and Professor Elena Marco, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of College of Arts, Technology and Environment (left to right).

Notes to editors

About HVMC

The High Value Manufacturing Catapult is the go-to place for manufacturing technology innovation in the UK. Our seven centres across the country cover the full range of manufacturing technology capabilities, from materials to biologics and from automation to virtual reality, from additive manufacturing to metal forming.

Our centres offer open access to the latest industrial scale equipment, leading expertise and an environment of collaboration between industry, academia and government. We work with businesses of all sizes and all sectors to help turn ideas into commercial applications by addressing the gap in, and accelerating the activity between technology concept and commercialisation.

The HVM Catapult’s centres are

- National Manufacturing Institute Scotland ([NMIS](#))
- University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre ([AMRC](#))
- [CPI](#)
- [Manufacturing Technology Centre](#)
- [National Composites Centre](#)
- [Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre](#)
- [WMG](#)

The Western Gateway Partnership

The Western Gateway is the Pan-Regional Partnership for South Wales and Western England. Bringing together business, research and local leaders to add



£34bn to the UK economy by 2030 and reach net zero. Read more about their work:
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