



SIP Cambridge: united we stand on scientific skills

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Science Industry Partnership (SIP) Cambridge is a forum created by employers for employers working in the life science sector. Together, we've formed a collective approach to science industry skills in the Cambridge Life Science Sector.

We want to ensure that science-based employers and regional skills partners are strongly connected, and we are determined have an effective regional voice on skills with both local and national government. Our next meeting is on 28th April and we'd be delighted if you could join us (details in the footer)

So what is driving us?

We know that there has been an incredible expansion in Cambridge of science and technology-based companies, forming a global hub of knowledge and expertise in cutting edge research and innovation. This has driven a massive demand for scientific and technical jobs, with a 60.8% increase from 2003-2016.¹

The latest Office for Life Sciences (OLS) data shows that there are 37,260 people employed in East of England in the life sciences sector (and that's excluding the services and supply chain!)

The Fourth Industrial Revolution sees a merging of technologies across the physical, digital, and biological realms, leading to new and exciting jobs in our sector, including those involving big data and informatics.

Understanding and developing the skills needed for those jobs will be a critical success factor in the next decade and beyond. Our membership is aligned to the [SIP's Life Sciences 2030 Skills Strategy](#) which gives us robust evidence upon which to develop and plan for our workforce needs.

The wide-ranging Skills Strategy (a deliverable from the [Life Science Sector Deal 2](#)) forecasts the sector's demand for 133,000 skilled scientific staff through to 2030, all in highly specialised roles across the sector which embraces Biopharmaceuticals, Medical Technologies (both in R&D and Manufacturing) and the services and supply chain.

The Life Sciences 2030 Skills Strategy highlights that a number of sector-wide skills issues need to be addressed to fulfil the sector's full potential. These include:

- Computational skills
- Statistical literacy
- Leadership



- Effective communication
- Inter-disciplinary working
- Translation and commercialisation skills
- Holistic sales and marketing skills.

SIP Cambridge is working to roll out this Strategy's new Action Plan, developing local solutions, building excellence in local workforce skills to support continued economic growth, and opportunity for all. I am delighted to be able to Chair the [SIP Futures Delivery Group](#) responsible for the national roll out.

In these times of Global crisis we need to be on the front foot – and of course science has never been more important. Science is a critical factor for us to be able to change the course of this pandemic and get economies around the world going again.

All of this will see us developing clear pathways into key roles, making them available to young people and ensuring that take-up is encouraged.

Our work includes developing expert skills through higher level apprenticeships, ranging from technicians to masters level. As a result of the recommendations made in the Skills Strategy, one of the programmes we are developing for government funding will focus on driving the uptake of apprentices by Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). It will support SMEs with a full range of support services for recruiting apprentices and sourcing the right local educational provision. This is incredibly exciting, so watch this space.

We also want to widen participation in our fantastic [SIP Ambassador Programme, which provides science employers and their staff with the skills and resources](#) to engage local schools, building a better understanding of careers in the science industries and the local talent pipeline. We now have 650 trained SIP ambassadors nationally. And, of course, we also have a clear focus on the continuous up-skilling and re-skilling of the current workforce, equipping people with the skills they need to deploy these new technologies effectively.

SIP Cambridge looks forward to working with all of its partners in the region, including government, local authorities, other membership organisations, skills providers and higher education institutes, to address the skills challenges and opportunities we face as a sector, and as a region.

We are holding our next meeting on Tuesday 28th April 2020, from 9.30am - 11.00am, as an open-house virtual meeting and we are inviting local employers to join. This meeting will be held via Skype, to help local employers find out more about the [Life Sciences 2030 Skills Strategy](#) and how you can benefit from being part of the SIP Cambridge network as we deliver the Action Plan. To register for this event and to find out more information please email: kate.hutchins@cogentskills.com

SIP Cambridge members meet every three months. Through this network members will gain direct insights into what others are doing and the benefits they are gaining from their approach to skills, as well as keeping up-to-date with skills funding and policy.