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State of the UK's AI Job Market in 2024



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The gears are shifting in the UK job market. [Artificial intelligence < https://www.techopedia.com/definition/190/artificial-intelligence-ai >](https://www.techopedia.com/definition/190/artificial-intelligence-ai) (AI) is rapidly transforming how businesses operate, and businesses are scrambling to adapt. This has created a burning need for workers with AI skills.

This is not surprising following reports showing that more [businesses are eager to hop on the AI train to drive their businesses forward < https://www.techopedia.com/do-investments-in-generative-ai-deliver-business-value-in-2024 >](https://www.techopedia.com/do-investments-in-generative-ai-deliver-business-value-in-2024). However, the same businesses need humans to man AI tools and turn them into productivity machines. This situation leaves businesses looking for skilled workers to fill select roles.

However, AI use in businesses is still in its infancy, meaning not all aspects of the technology are in demand now. This is why workers who wish to position themselves for quicker hire in the UK labor market may need to focus more on adding certain AI skills under their belts.

Key Takeaways

- Companies are facing a significant AI skills shortage, particularly in areas like Natural Language Processing and AI content creation.
- Organizations are willing to offer higher salaries to attract and retain professionals with in-demand AI skills.
- Job applicants with AI expertise have a higher chance of getting interviews and can earn up to 45% more than those without AI skills.
- Despite high demand for AI skills, only 13% of employees report receiving AI training in the past year.
- The UK is lagging behind in digital skills education and AI course enrollment compared to other countries.

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The Most In-demand AI Skills in the UK

[Fiverr's 2024 UK Workforce Index < https://fiverr-res.cloudinary.com/image/upload/attachments/generic_asset/asset/129b1038727d50b5e4d1c016aec62c8e-1719214303229/The%202024%20UK%20Workforce%20Index%20copy%20%281%29.pdf >](https://fiverr-res.cloudinary.com/image/upload/attachments/generic_asset/asset/129b1038727d50b5e4d1c016aec62c8e-1719214303229/The%202024%20UK%20Workforce%20Index%20copy%20%281%29.pdf) [PDF], surveying over 2,000 freelancers, business leaders, and knowledge workers, reveals that most UK businesses are experiencing a significant shortage of AI expertise, with 32% of companies reporting a lack of skilled professionals.

This skills gap is acute in high-demand areas such as [natural language processing < https://www.techopedia.com/definition/653/natural-language-processing-nlp >](https://www.techopedia.com/definition/653/natural-language-processing-nlp) (NLP), **AI content creation**, and [chatbot < https://www.techopedia.com/definition/16366/chatbot >](https://www.techopedia.com/definition/16366/chatbot) development.

While there have been [growing cases of lawsuits < https://www.techopedia.com/news/nvidia-faces-lawsuit-for-alleged-copyright-infringement-in-ai-training >](https://www.techopedia.com/news/nvidia-faces-lawsuit-for-alleged-copyright-infringement-in-ai-training) and outcry over copyright infringements due to [training data < https://www.techopedia.com/definition/33181/training-data >](https://www.techopedia.com/definition/33181/training-data) used in creating [AI models < https://www.techopedia.com/top-10-trustworthy-ai-models >](https://www.techopedia.com/top-10-trustworthy-ai-models), the rise in the demand for AI content creation suggests a growing need for people who can utilize AI chatbots like [ChatGPT < https://www.techopedia.com/is-chatgpt-memory-worth-turning-on-exploring-openais-little-known-feature >](https://www.techopedia.com/is-chatgpt-memory-worth-turning-on-exploring-openais-little-known-feature) to generate different content formats, like [marketing copy < https://www.techopedia.com/120-best-chatgpt-prompts-for-marketing >](https://www.techopedia.com/120-best-chatgpt-prompts-for-marketing) or [social media posts < https://www.techopedia.com/news/best-llm-according-to-social-media >](https://www.techopedia.com/news/best-llm-according-to-social-media).

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The scarcity of talent in these fields has prompted companies to adopt aggressive recruitment strategies.

Fiverr's UK Workforce Index shows that a striking **83% of organizations are willing to offer substantial salary increases** to attract and retain professionals with the necessary AI skills.

Freelancers With AI Skills More Likely to be Hired and Paid More

Not only are companies willing to offer higher pay for workers with these AI skills, they are turning to freelancers with [in-demand AI skills < https://www.techopedia.com/top-10-tech-skills-to-learn-in-2024-to-make-a-six-figure-salary >](https://www.techopedia.com/top-10-tech-skills-to-learn-in-2024-to-make-a-six-figure-salary) to offset the AI skill gap within their employee pool.

Fiverr's latest UK Workforce Index shows freelancers now constitute 22% of the UK workforce, marking a 5% increase from the previous year and saving companies an average of 15 hours weekly. A substantial 40% of businesses view freelancers as essential in managing staff workloads.

The Fiverr report also highlights regional disparities in the number of freelancer pools in UK cities, with London and Liverpool leading in freelancer integration. Software and Technology sectors were noted to hire more freelancers in the UK.

Apart from the advantage of getting hired quicker than those without AI skills, possessing AI skills can boost candidates' earning potential in the UK. Candidates with expertise in AI were said to command a 45% salary premium compared to their counterparts without these skills, according to the Fiverr survey.

Correlating the Fiverr survey is a [study by Anglia Ruskin University < https://www.aru.ac.uk/news/ai-knowledge-gets-your-foot-in-the-door >](https://www.aru.ac.uk/news/ai-knowledge-gets-your-foot-in-the-door), published in the journal Oxford Economic Papers, which found key advantages for job applicants with AI knowledge:

1. Male applicants with AI skill sets received interview invitations 54% of the time, compared to 28% for those without.
2. Female applicants with AI skillsets were invited to interviews 50% of the time, versus 32% for those without.
3. Applicants with AI qualifications were shortlisted for jobs offering wages that were, on average, 12-13% higher than those without AI capital.

AI Skills Demand Soars, But Training Lags Behind

While there is an increasing demand for those who possess AI skills, Randstad's latest Workmonitor Pulse [survey < https://www.randstad.com/press/2023/over-50-believe-ai-will-future-proof-their-careers-only-13-have-been-offered-ai-training >](https://www.randstad.com/press/2023/over-50-believe-ai-will-future-proof-their-careers-only-13-have-been-offered-ai-training) unveils a striking disparity between this surging demand and the training provided by employers. The study, which gathered insights from over 7,000 employees globally, reveals that job postings requiring [generative AI < https://www.techopedia.com/definition/34633/generative-ai >](https://www.techopedia.com/definition/34633/generative-ai) skills have skyrocketed by 2,000% since March 2023. However, only 13% of employees report receiving AI training in the past year, highlighting a critical skills gap in the workforce.

The survey speaks to the growing importance of AI in the workplace, with 52% of workers believing AI will enhance their career prospects and 53% expecting AI to impact their industries and roles.

Already, 33% of workers incorporate AI into their daily tasks, indicating its increasing prevalence across various sectors, Randstad's Workmonitor Pulse found.

AI Skills Shortage a Threat to the UK Economy

Despite the UK government's optimistic projections for AI growth, with the sector already [employing over 50,000 people and contributing £3.7 billion < https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vote-of-confidence-in-uk-economy-as-british-ai-company-wayve-secures-over-1-billion-to-develop-ai-for-self-driving-vehicles >](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vote-of-confidence-in-uk-economy-as-british-ai-company-wayve-secures-over-1-billion-to-develop-ai-for-self-driving-vehicles) annually to the economy, recent reports indicate worrying AI skills shortage. This gap may hinder the UK's economic growth and could potentially limit the realization of the Government's projected \$1 trillion AI market value by 2035.

In a [recent Coursera study < https://blog.coursera.org/presenting-the-2024-coursera-global-skills-report >](https://blog.coursera.org/presenting-the-2024-coursera-global-skills-report) that measured the rate of generative AI course enrolment globally, the UK came distant 45th, ranking below the likes of Switzerland, and Japan. This goes to show a lack of urgency to enroll in courses that could equip UK residents with AI skills.

Microsoft in a recent study highlighted that despite government investments, [the country lags behind in digital skills < https://info.microsoft.com/rs/157-GQE-382/images/Unlocking-the-UKs-potential-with-digital-skills_131120_v3.pdf >](https://info.microsoft.com/rs/157-GQE-382/images/Unlocking-the-UKs-potential-with-digital-skills_131120_v3.pdf), with 70% of UK business leaders surveyed saying they expect to experience skill gaps next year.

The Microsoft report also found that only 28% of UK business leaders believe the country's current education system offers adequate digital training for students, while a mere 24% feel confident that the government is doing enough to address the country's digital skills gap.

How to Bridge AI Skills Shortage in the UK

To address this issue, the UK may need to reassess its digital skills initiatives and consider the following points:

1. Enhance Training Programs Through Open Source Projects

[OpenUK < https://openuk.uk/ >](https://openuk.uk/) CEO Amanda Brock, while speaking to Techopedia, proposes tapping into the pool of code school graduates through open-source projects. She explains, **“Those individuals could provide a rich seam of talent for the UK tech sector if we were just able to shift them a step or two further forward in their career.”** Brock envisions these projects as career launchpads, enabling developers to build impressive portfolios and attract global tech employers. The strategy aims to transform the UK's tech workforce—remote workers serving international companies—into a robust talent pipeline for the AI sector within the next few years.

2. Shifting Focus to Business Applications

Dom Couldwell, Head of Field Engineering EMEA, [DataStax < https://www.datastax.com/ >](https://www.datastax.com/) predicts a shift in AI skills demand. He told Techopedia: **“Over time, the complexity and details of the underlying technologies themselves will become less of a focus, and the attention will shift to how generative AI will be designed to help employees meet specific business challenges or improve efficiency of workflows.”** The UK could address its AI skills shortage by training professionals to apply AI to specific business problems rather than focusing solely on technical expertise.

3. Leveraging Low-Code and No-Code Tools

To rapidly bridge the AI skills gap, the UK could promote the use of low-code and no-code AI development tools. Couldwell suggests, **“Techniques like this, where we simplify life for developers so they can focus on delivering business value – versus all the integration details or more low and no code tooling – can both address that skills gap and accelerate developer velocity.”**

He also cited how developers could use GenAI toolkits like Langflow to rapidly prototype and design new applications, test them out and accelerate time to production.

By encouraging the adoption of such tools, the UK could quickly enable more professionals to work with AI, even without extensive technical expertise.

4. Promoting Diversity in AI

The Alan [Turing Institute's report < https://www.turing.ac.uk/collaborate-turing/current-partnerships-and-collaborations/accenture/solving-uks-ai-skills-gap >](https://www.turing.ac.uk/collaborate-turing/current-partnerships-and-collaborations/accenture/solving-uks-ai-skills-gap), “Where are the Women? Mapping the Gender Job Gap in AI,” highlights the need for diversity in the AI workforce. Initiatives targeting underrepresented groups are essential to broaden the talent pool and improve AI solutions.

The Bottom Line

The shift in the global workforce requirements presents a valuable opportunity for many. If you're looking to boost your earning potential, maybe now is the right time to jump on [one of these AI courses to level up your tech skills < https://www.techopedia.com/top-free-ai-courses >](https://www.techopedia.com/top-free-ai-courses).

There is no doubt that in the next couple of years, not just the UK but other global economies will rely heavily on AI to improve productivity. Fortunately, this shift towards AI requires human accompaniment, and that's where you might come in if you have the requisite skills.

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