BRE Academy’s “Boardroom to Building Site” Skills Gap Survey comes in response to a convergence of challenges hitting the construction sector and forcing it to change the tried and tested traditional methods it has been used to for several decades.

This survey establishes an understanding of what skills are in short supply and what skills are needed for the industry now and 10 years from now, so that a capable workforce can embrace and deliver transformational change including:

- Low-carbon and highly sustainable assets to help the UK achieve its carbon reduction targets
- Projects transformed by digital design, advanced materials and new technologies
- Buildings that perform as they were designed to

Industry prestige gap

The survey results once again highlight that there’s a poor public image of the construction industry...

with 91% believing that people working outside the industry have a different perspective from those working within it.
Sustainability and Environmental skills and Trade skills (e.g. plastering, electrical, plumbing) were seen to be in short supply however many respondents saw this as primarily an industry issue rather than an organisational one.

While BIM and Management skills were seen as lacking, at both an industry and organizational-wide level which merits attention.

BIM, Sustainability, and Smart Technology were seen as the key areas of future growth and where skills were most important to the construction industry, in the next 3 and 10 years.

Over 300 respondents from a cross-section of the UK construction sector work force between 1 November 2015 and 31 January 2016.

61% saying we need to ‘promote the diversity of the industry’, i.e. not just bricks and mortar!

56% said we should do a better job of ‘showcasing and promoting role models’ from across the spectrum.

62% of recipients saying that we need to ‘boost positive culture around women in industry’

56% saying we need to ‘promote the technological/digital aspects of the industry’

74% saying that we need to ‘actively promote the available methods (e.g. university, apprenticeships, school leavers) into industry’

66% saying ‘support education outside of schools’

How government can help

Most responses centred around government working to empower smaller, local businesses to offer excellent apprenticeship training programmes for young people. As well as working more closely with colleges and schools and partnering with local employers to increase promotion of apprenticeships/technical apprentices. It was also felt that government should demonstrate a greater commitment to SMEs e.g. offering them greater financial support to operate training/apprenticeship schemes.

How professional bodies can help

It was widely felt that professional bodies should take the lead in terms of promoting the high level of skills required in industry, in particular promoting technical training and promoting the range of opportunities in the industry and the skills required. It was also requested that professional bodies offer a wider range of memberships with reduced fees to accommodate a wider cross-section of the construction industry.

How schools can help

It was felt that schools can do more to help for example promoting the value of apprentice schemes and non-academic qualifications to secondary age students, as well as promoting the industry to academically-minded students. It was also felt that high profile projects e.g. The Shard and Cross Rail would help elevate the construction industry in the minds of students.

56% of recipients saying we need to ‘promote the diversity of the industry’

61% saying ‘support education outside of schools’

Gender diversity gap

The survey emphasises that there is a lack of gender diversity at all levels

The survey also demonstrates that there’s a real need to establish clear and appealing career pathways for young industry entrants

67% saying ‘actively promote the available methods (e.g. university, apprenticeships, school leavers) into industry’

61% saying that we need to ‘promote the diversity of the industry’

66% saying ‘support education outside of schools’

Skills in short supply today

Skills most important to the industry in the future

How schools can help

Career pathways gap

Skills gap survey respondents

Over 300 respondents from a cross-section of the UK construction sector work force between 1 November 2015 and 31 January 2016.
“We welcome the opportunity to work with BRE and input into their skills survey, which supports our research findings. This important research contributes to the evidence we need to work together, with industry, to close the skills gap.”

Alex Birks, Head of Strategic Training Provision & Development, CITB

“Ecobuild is focused on meeting the needs of individuals from across the built environment and as such, ensuring it is in sync with industry trends. I’m delighted to be building on the success of this year’s CPD Learning Zones and launching an even bigger, dedicated training and skills zone at Ecobuild in 2017, supported by many leading industry players including BRE. The recent BRE survey results are a strong indication that digital construction skills are very much in demand and yet are currently lacking, thus validating the need for a strong focus on training and skills at Ecobuild 2017.”

Martin Hurn, Event Director, Ecobuild

BRE Academy

As the specialist training and development division of BRE, famous for its science-based research, standards and tools, the BRE Academy delivers leading edge blended learning training courses to improve the performance and competence levels of individuals, teams and organisations to address the knowledge and skills gap, to enable new talent, support next generation of skilled operatives and professionals with accessible and practical CPD, and lifelong learning programmes. Training courses and education programmes are developed and written by world-renowned specialists who have shaped industry standards, ensuring delegates gain access to meaningful, relevant and interesting training programmes. For more information please visit www.breacademy.com