A survey of over 2000 engineering employers across the world, conducted by YouGov, found that the UK’s ambition to be a world leader in AI and sustainability is hampered by the lack of adoption of digital technologies. A whole system approach is needed to ensure the UK has the skills to be internationally competitive.

**Recommendations**

- **Net zero needs the trifecta** of an industrial strategy, innovation funding, and support for upskilling the UK workforce to become more internationally competitive.

- **Agility and whole-systems thinking** are key skills for reaching net zero and adapting to climate change, and more should be done to encourage this in the workforce.

- **Industry confidence in the UK’s education pipeline** is remarkably low by international standards – greater collaboration between industry and universities is required - targeting placements in areas of critical skill deficit such as nuclear technologies and digital twins.

- **Employers** are missing an opportunity on digitalisation and net zero. Government should help facilitate upskilling in the sustainable use of technologies such as AI and digital twins.

**Skills gaps**

- 67% of UK employers have a sustainability strategy.

- 76% of those report that additional skills are required to implement this strategy.

**Training**

- Employers in the UK who need to address skills gaps are more likely to favour upskilling/reskilling than some other nations, including: 41% USA, 27% Germany.

- UK employers are more likely than most countries to offer conventional forms of training such as:
  - 66% on the job training
  - 46% in-house development programmes
  - 42% formal qualifications

- However, UK is the nation least likely to offer training in:
  - new technologies (15%), and manufacturing (9%) sectors.

For more information please visit theiet.org/skills
5% UK firms are the least likely to recognise digital twins as a priority technology for reaching net zero – in the construction sector, only 3% say digital twins are important. Only 23% think that the UK has the skills in this area.

Methodology
1,007 adults working in engineering employers in the UK. Fieldwork was undertaken between 21 August – 5 September 2023. The survey was carried out online.