

IBM Launches Mainframe Skills Council with SHARE and Other Key Organizations to Support New Generations of Mainframe Talent

- New data from The Futurum Group (1) suggests that the mainframe skills pool is growing, with 65 percent of university leaders surveyed reporting more skilled mainframe talent available today as compared to the last 5 years
- According to The Futurum Group research, 91 percent of employer respondents said they are planning to hire talent for new mainframe positions in the next 1-2 years, investing in and growing their mainframe IT team
- 66 percent of organizations use third-party learning programs or platforms to support mainframe learning and talent development, according to new findings from The Futurum Group



ORLANDO, Fla., March 6, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE:IBM) introduced the [Mainframe Skills Council](#) during this week's SHARE conference in Orlando, to provide a forum where global organizations will foster a skilled, diverse, sustainable workforce for the mainframe platform. In addition to IBM, the council includes organizations spanning IBM clients, IBM partners, academia, user groups, non-profits, and open communities that will collaborate to implement mainframe skills development solutions. Initial members include Academic Mainframe Consortium, Albany State University, Broadcom, DNB Bank, HOGENT, M&T Bank, Northern Illinois University, Rocket Software, SHARE, and 21CS.

[Click here to learn more about mainframe skills](#)

"As the SHARE Premier Education and Technology Platform Provider in 2024, IBM is well-positioned to address today's technology skills challenges, something that every organization is grappling with as new innovation is unveiled," said Meredith Stowell, Vice President, IBM Z Ecosystem. "The mainframe community has been working to close the mainframe generational skills gap and we've seen substantial progress. The Mainframe Skills Council represents an exciting opportunity to build on these advancements and ignite the community to share experiences and create mainframe talent solutions that can grow with the platform."

New research affirms industry efforts to increase mainframe skills

As today's businesses adapt to economic shifts in the market and new advances in technology, skills are a key part of success for every organization. According to a 2022 IBM Transformation Index: State of Cloud survey, 56 percent of companies surveyed have embraced a hybrid cloud operating model². IBM Z, as a key part of many clients' hybrid cloud environments, provides a resilient, and agile IT platform to help drive clients' digital transformations. Mainframe skills will be particularly critical for the success of many businesses as they implement AI, modernize their applications, and focus on digital transformation.

New research from The Futurum Group, 2024 Global Mainframe Skills Report: Insights from Industry and Educational Experts, commissioned by IBM, Broadcom, and 21CS shows continued demand in mainframe talent as well as progress in growing the mainframe workforce as the mainframe community works together to build skills³.

The survey highlighted a generational gap in mainframe skilling with an influx of early career talent, while calling attention to the existing demand for experienced mainframe professionals with 79 percent of respondents recruiting for mid-career mainframe positions and 51 percent recruiting for entry-level positions. In fact, in 2023, 32 percent of mainframe employers responding to the global survey hired 11-20 mainframe related roles and 35 percent hired more than 20 mainframe roles. In addition, 91 percent of employer respondents said they are planning to hire talent for new mainframe positions in the next 1-2 years, investing in and growing their mainframe IT teams.

The survey results also underscored increased opportunities for mainframe job-seekers to learn and grow their skills regardless of where they are in their careers with 75 percent of responding university leaders indicating that their institution offers course curricula for students to learn mainframe skills and 83 percent of student respondents indicating they are learning mainframe skills through their university.

Companies are also taking advantage of the community resources available in the market to find, train and develop mainframe talent. Sixty percent of mainframe employers surveyed report that they rely on non-traditional skills resources as a mainframe hiring or recruitment strategy, such as working with industry vendors on bootcamp, training, or apprenticeship programs. And mainframe employers who invest resources in the platform indicated they have less trouble finding skills, with 71 percent of companies, who invest at least \$10 million in their mainframe environment, surveyed saying they sufficiently or fully met their hiring goals for mainframe system administrator roles in 2023.

To help encourage growth in the mainframe industry and improve access to skills, IBM and many other industry vendors are working with universities, mainframe employers, online learning platforms, training providers, and workforce as well as community organizations to offer additional learning opportunities to help clients support their mainframe platform with a vibrant technical community.

Mainframe Skills Council to inspire, connect, train, and grow mainframe talent

"There is a significant and growing demand for skills training, apprenticeships, and networking opportunities in the tech space," says Kate Holterhoff, a senior analyst with RedMonk who specializes in IT and developer upskilling. "IBM's Mainframe Skills Council expands the range of options for individuals looking to reskill into a career as a mainframe professional."

In addition to IBM offering training, [industry-recognized](#) digital badging⁴, academic community support, and non-traditional pathway programs, the broader IBM Z global community of universities, clients, user groups, and partners also provide mainframe skills solutions and insights. The Mainframe Skills Council brings together organizations to share experiences and collaboratively implement solutions to build a strong global workforce for the mainframe platform. The council will include working groups focused on career awareness, competency frameworks, learning paths, as well as professional development.

Council goals include:

- Showcase a vibrant mainframe talent pool
- Align on common industry competency frameworks
- Share ideas and practices to enhance professional development
- Share education, training tools, and related resources to optimize overall mainframe career experience for professionals and leaders
- Increase mainframe employer adoption of proven skill initiatives and practices

"We had a business challenge of a tenured mainframe workforce," said Gary Fusco, Engineering Director, M&T Bank. "We partnered with IBM and Franklin Apprenticeships to develop a mainframe skills education program at M&T. By about six months into the program, our apprentices were coding on COBOL and installing new products on the IBM Z platform."

IBM Z Skills Programs and Resources

New today, IBM is introducing the [IBM Z Mainframe Skills Depot](#), a comprehensive platform for accessing mainframe skills training. Learners can choose from specialized tracks tailored to roles such as System Administrator, Application Developer, or Modernization Architect and access over a thousand of hours of self-paced, no-charge, hands-on learning to earn industry-recognized digital badges.

IBM offers additional non-traditional skills programs and resources beyond the classroom including the [IBM Z Global Skills Accelerator and Apprenticeship](#) program. With over 300 hours of learning, success coaching, on the job training, and mentorship, this program has enabled 83 global employers to skill up over 440 mainframe system administrators and application developers across 13 countries. In addition, the [IBM Z Student Ambassador](#) program provides leadership opportunities for students and supports mainframe student clubs on campuses at more than 95 universities worldwide.

To connect mainframe talent to employers, IBM sponsors IBM Z Virtual Career Fairs around the world to bring together IBM clients, partners, and badged mainframe talent. To participate in the career fair as a job candidate or organization, [please register here](#).

Media Contact:

Ashley Peterson
IBM Communications
ashley.peterson@ibm.com

Chase Skinner
IBM Communications
chase.skinner@ibm.com

¹ Source: *The Futurum Group global research conducted in 2024 commissioned by IBM, Broadcom, and 21CS. Those surveyed included mainframe professionals who are investing in the platform, mainframe students and university leaders. The report based on these findings is not currently available and will be published on [The Futurum Group's website](#) when available.*

² Source: *IBM Transformation Index: State of Cloud, pg 7*

³ This 2024 global study surveyed mainframe professionals in companies with more than \$400 million in annual revenue, IT students who are interested in mainframe careers, and university leaders from universities that offer mainframe learning opportunities in some form, to understand the mainframe skills landscape as it exists today.

⁴ Digital badges are offered by IBM through online programs at no charge to the learner. Badges are earned by completing the program and represent a skill achievement acknowledged by the industry. IBM leverages the services of Credly, a 3rd party data processor authorized by IBM and located in the United States, to assist in the administration of the IBM Digital Badge program. All mainframe badges can be found here: https://www.credly.com/skills/ibm-z/related_badges

Supporting Quotes

"The University System of Georgia (USG), with Albany State University as a leading institution, has partnered with IBM to offer students COBOL and other Mainframe skills to drive new talent," said Dr. Robert Owor, Executive Director of Center of Innovation and Emerging Technologies/Professor of Computer Science. *"We at ASU aim to foster diverse talent by providing opportunities for students to obtain certifications to achieve dreams of becoming Mainframers."*

"We are enthusiastic about the idea of being an inaugural member of the Mainframe Skills Council and look forward to a lively and fruitful exchange of information. To be able to operate mainframes efficiently and securely in the future, well-trained personnel are the most important prerequisite," said Wolfram Greis, President Academic Mainframe Consortium, Germany. *"The non-profit Academic Mainframe Consortium supports universities and other academic institutions with infrastructure, know-how, and lecturers."*

"As organizations continue to seek avenues to attract and develop the next generation of mainframe experts, the introduction of the Mainframe Skills Council is a pivotal step forward in making mainframe education and talent programs more accessible," said Lauren Valenti, Director, Mainframe Education and Customer Engagement Broadcom Mainframe Software. *"This initiative is positioned to ignite future advancements and ongoing innovation with the platform."*

"I am honored to have the opportunity to take part in the Mainframe Skills Council on behalf of DNB. This is a unique opportunity for us to share experiences and get tips on how to inspire job seekers and students to explore the mainframe," said Janette Skoga, Mainframe Infrastructure Architect, DNB. *"We see that the platform has a major challenge as many of our talented employees and partners are approaching retirement age."*

"The establishment of Mainframe Skills Council will be hailed as a pivotal moment, reshaping the landscape of the mainframe education and cultivating a vibrant ecosystem of learning and advancement," said Leendert Blondeel, Lecturer Mainframe technologies, HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts. *"Mainframe in higher education, an international university curriculum with integrated work-based learning opportunities becomes the vibrant thread that connects classroom knowledge to real-world experience."*

"As a company committed to building a diverse workforce to support the mainframe platform, 21CS is proud to be a founding member of the Mainframe Skills Council," said Nicholas Pachnos, 21CS CEO. *"The Mainframe Skills Council will help attract and grow the next generation of talented professionals and 21CS looks forward to being an active member participant."*

"Northern Illinois University's Department of Computer Science is proud to be a founding member of the Mainframe Skills Council," said Geoffrey Decker, Instructor, Northern Illinois University. *"In addition to educational and research opportunities in leading edge Computer and Data Science, NIU's Department of Computer Science continues its 42-year history as a leader in*

mainframe education."

"The Mainframe Skills Council is critical to ensuring there is an active and engaged pool of mainframe talent for years to come," said Phil Buckellew, President, Infrastructure Modernization Business Unit, Rocket Software. "At Rocket Software, we have decades of experience in core systems and helping our customers modernize without disruption, and we look forward to joining the Council to help further close the skills gap and foster the next generation of talent."

"For nearly 70 years, SHARE has led the industry as the first enterprise IT user group dedicated to providing education and networking opportunities designed to be a catalyst to help advance our members' careers," said Scott Fagen, President, SHARE Association. "We are proud to partner with IBM and the others as a founding member of the Mainframe Skills Council, as we continue to seek new and innovative ways to bring additional resources as well as value to our membership while driving the industry forward."

Additional assets available online:



<https://stage.mediaroom.com/ibmnewsroom/IBM-Mainframe-Skills>