

HS2 contractor supports Birmingham City University graduates into employment

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Balfour Beatty VINCI, HS2's construction partner for the West Midlands section of Britain's new high speed railway, is working in partnership with Birmingham City University to support its graduates into employment.

Birmingham City University's (BCU) City Centre Campus is at the heart of the Eastside district and adjacent to the Curzon Street site which will be home to HS2's flagship terminus station.

With over 26,900 students from around 100 countries, BCU has a vested interest in HS2's arrival. Europe's biggest engineering project is spearheading major regeneration programmes right across Eastside, which will breathe a new lease of life into the district and make it an even more attractive proposition for future alumni when choosing where to live, work and study.

The partnership with Balfour Beatty VINCI will add a new dimension to the unique offer that BCU already provides for its students. With a shared ambition to see future talent flourish and progress seamlessly into meaningful employment, the two organisations have joined forces in a bid to ensure that graduates benefit from upcoming career opportunities linked to the construction and delivery of HS2.

Recognising the strength of the local talent pool that BCU is creating, Balfour Beatty VINCI's dedicated skills and communities team is actively engaging with the University to encourage graduates to apply for upcoming vacancies which align to their specialist subject areas.

Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said: "Students should not have to move away from their communities to pursue a meaningful career.

"This year's graduates will face unique challenges as they enter the jobs market, which is why providing students with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or location, is so essential as we build back better from this pandemic.

"Universities and local companies need to work together to achieve this, and I welcome this partnership between Birmingham City University and HS2 and urge others to follow their example."

Julie Venn-Morton, HS2's Skills Manager for the West Midlands said: "This forward-thinking partnership shows how we are working collaboratively with businesses and education providers to ensure that local people benefit from the broad range of job opportunities that HS2 is creating.

"BCU students are graduating with world-class skills. We want to retain that talent locally and create opportunities for the next generation of engineers and technical specialists to make their mark in the delivery of our world-class railway."

Although in its infancy, the new partnership model has already led to five BCU graduates securing direct employment with Balfour Beatty VINCI on HS2. A further four graduates have benefitted from work placements, one has received a direct referral onto Balfour Beatty VINCI's graduate programme and two have been offered Kickstart placements.

Shilpi Akbar, Head of Stakeholders and Communities at Balfour Beatty VINCI hopes this will inspire the class of 2021 to seize the opportunities ahead of them so that they too can play a part in bringing high speed rail to the West Midlands.

Shilpi explains: "We are absolutely committed to helping our future leaders get their foot on the career ladder. Through our unique partnership with Birmingham City University, we can do just that – offering the cream of the region's talent the opportunity to develop new skills while working on one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects.

"We have a monumental construction programme ahead of us which will see us recruit for thousands more roles, across a broad range of subjects, and we want Birmingham's student community to be at the heart of those opportunities."

The drive to discover and develop new local talent, capable of leaving their mark on this feat in British transport engineering, much the same as James Brindley and Matthew Boulton did in their day, is an exciting opportunity for Birmingham City University to be able to offer its students.

Professor Julian Beer at Birmingham City University said: "Employability is at the heart of the education

and training we provide for our students, and the partnership with BBV presents a unique opportunity for those entering the jobs market to play a part in one of the biggest infrastructure projects in Europe.

“Having the HS2 works on the doorstep of our City Centre Campus not only brings with it these fantastic opportunities for our graduates, but also unlocks a legacy of future benefits and economic growth for the area, the city and the wider region.

“We are proud to see some of our graduates are already taking on this mantle through this partnership.”

Once operational, HS2 will put more students within reach of BCU’s state-of-the-art facilities, which are currently benefitting from a £340 million investment. Journey times from Leeds, London and Manchester will all be slashed to under an hour on HS2, providing students north and south with better access to its quality, student-focused education.

More information about careers and opportunities with HS2 and within its supply chain is available [here](#).

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd