

# How professional bodies engage with the STEM Ambassadors programme



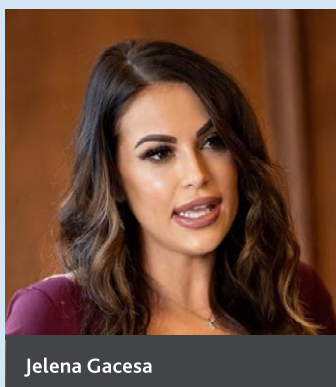
## Background: Institution of Mechanical Engineers – Jelena Gacesa – Education Outreach and Safeguarding Lead

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) is a professional engineering organisation that supports its 115,000 members throughout their lives. Their mission is to improve the world through engineering.

Among other things, IMechE works hard to inspire young people from primary school through to secondary and tertiary education about the wealth of opportunities engineering can offer them. They inform the general public about what engineers are and demystify their roles and their value to society; they influence how engineering is taught at university and beyond in apprenticeships; and they support engineers as they become registered and throughout their careers.

## The STEM Ambassador relationship

We have had an established relationship with the STEM Ambassadors (SA) programme for a long time. Our members have long felt strongly about the importance of education, and the programme provides the ideal way for them to volunteer their time in outreach activities.



Jelena Gacesa

The SA programme gives us a simplified way of registering those people who want to get involved: it ensures that they get a DBS check and are therefore insured to participate (along with the systems and processes to keep their checks valid and up to date). It also signposts a huge range of opportunities for them to choose from.

We want to make it as easy as possible for our members to get involved in education outreach and the SA programme removes many barriers to participation. **It offers activities that vary in scale, size, duration and required skill set, such that there is something for everyone.**

On a day-to-day basis, a big part of my role is to encourage our members to get involved in outreach. They start this by registering as a SA, and then they complete STEM Learning's induction process before I signpost them to various education outreach opportunities including the SA platform where they can choose which activities they do.

We have regional education officers based in every IMechE region – which are largely similar to the SA Hubs' regions – who in turn run their own events, initiatives and projects, but who also liaise with their local SA Hubs.

We recently launched a Diversity and Inclusion strategy: it is important for us to be as inclusive as possible, so every member of IMechE is invited to take part in our education outreach work. **We make sure that we let all our members know that they have something to offer and how they can all be positive role models for young people.** We are especially keen to showcase female engineers and to represent people from different backgrounds, but everybody is welcome to become an IMechE STEM Ambassador.

# What do the STEM Ambassadors do for you?

We leave it to our members to decide how much or little they do as a SA. It's one of the reasons why the programme is so popular, because they can contribute as much time as they'd like. **Members get the freedom to choose how they engage with the programme – whether they respond to activities on the SA platform, liaise with their regional contacts or get involved with one of our partnerships.** Previously, some of our members would be representing their employer if they had a pre-existing relationship with the programme, but now we are seeing that there's an IMechE STEM Ambassador sub-brand being developed. The activities our SAs deliver are really varied.

They work with primary and secondary schools using the STEM toolkit of materials and activities that we provide to them free of charge. They deliver careers talks at secondary schools or colleges. We encourage some of them to become governors or trustees, so that they can influence schools. Others do mentoring or tutoring, or they might run a STEM Club. We also supply SAs to larger regional or national events such as the Cosford Air Show or the Big Bang Fair. I always promote the SA programme to our members: it's part of our education outreach and it is established – there's a brand, a story and a very close partnership. **It's incredible how people volunteer their time on such a big scale. It's a really worthwhile programme to promote and to support!"**

## About STEM Ambassadors

STEM Ambassadors is a fantastic volunteer programme that has been running for over 20 years.

Our volunteers offer their time, passion and energy to visit schools, colleges and youth group organisations to deliver requests from teachers and youth group leaders who want to link STEM subjects to the real world of work.

Find out more at our [information session](#).



## Become a partner

Our STEM Ambassadors programme inspires the next generation and helps young people to develop the skills, confidence and mindset to build successful futures in STEM.

By running a STEM volunteer cohort we provide even more opportunities to connect young people to real-life STEM careers, prioritising support for those who need it most.

Find out more at our [information session](#).



## How to get involved

If you have been inspired by how STEM Ambassadors support the learning and development of young people across the UK and you'd like to know more, please contact us at [employersupport@stem.org.uk](mailto:employersupport@stem.org.uk) or visit [stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors/partner-info](http://stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors/partner-info)

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