

**SEO/LONDON**  
SPONSORS FOR EDUCATIONAL  
OPPORTUNITY

**25**

**YEARS  
OF  
LASTING  
IMPACT**  
2000-2025

# INTRODUCTION

## What we do

SEO London is dedicated to unlocking the potential of young people through our comprehensive interventions tailored for underrepresented students and recent graduates. We guide our programme participants from school age through university and well into their careers by providing substantial support at every stage of their professional development. Renowned for our commitment to helping industries and firms benefit from diversity, our charity offers students exclusive access to high-quality industry-specific education and training programmes along with unparalleled networking opportunities with senior professionals and likeminded peers across various competitive industries.

## Why our work is important

We believe that a diverse workforce enhances innovation and creativity, improves talent attraction and retention, and boosts employees' wellbeing by fostering a sense of belonging, acceptance and appreciation in the workplace. Demonstrating a commitment to equity for all should be an integral part of any organisation's corporate social responsibility. Companies are increasingly expected to contribute positively to societal values and promoting inclusion is a significant aspect of this responsibility. We support these initiatives by offering our partners and participants unparalleled opportunities. Over the last 25 years, we've mastered the art of creating win-win situations for all.

## Our vision

A society where everyone, regardless of background, has equal opportunity to achieve long-term professional and personal success.

## Our mission

To prepare talented students from underrepresented backgrounds for career success.



## A message from our Chief Executive Officer Nathalie Richards

As we celebrate SEO London's 25th anniversary, I'm filled with immense pride of our accomplishments and optimism for what lies ahead. Over the past quarter-century, we've transformed the lives of thousands of young people from underrepresented backgrounds who might otherwise have been left behind. By breaking down barriers, providing inspiration and world-class training, we've given them opportunities to succeed and to give back to others who follow.

However, our journey hasn't always been easy. As most charities will know, this is often a very difficult sector. Naturally, there have been challenging times

along the way when our future seemed uncertain. Consequently, this is a particularly pertinent milestone and I feel incredibly fortunate to stand on the shoulders of the remarkable leaders who came before me, and I'm thrilled about the potential for further impact over the next 25 years.

As we enter this new chapter, I'm confident that SEO London will continue to thrive and leave a lasting impact. Together, we'll create a brighter future for the next generation of leaders. While we've made incredible progress, there's still more to do to ensure that every young person has the chance to reach their full potential.

# HISTORY AND MILESTONES



## Founding story and key moments Andrew Fairbairn

Founder, Co-chair of SEO London and SEO USA alumnus (class of 1995), Executive Vice President at SEO USA

My journey with Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) began nearly three decades ago as an undergraduate in 1995, when I first benefited from SEO USA's internship program hosted by the now-defunct investment banking firm Lehman Brothers on Wall Street. With SEO USA's support I was able to kickstart my career in finance at UBS Securities in New York after completing my degree at Stanford.

Fast forward to 2000, while working at Deutsche Bank in London, I recognised the need for similar support among disadvantaged communities in the UK and co-founded SEO London as a direct response. Rooted in my experience with SEO USA, my motivation has always been to help talented students from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds gain meaningful career opportunities.

The first two decades of SEO London were marked by remarkable growth. Initially we served just eight students but during the following 25 years engaged thousands of participants from more than 120 universities. We have also partnered with over 283 firms in the UK and France. Our growth continued through the Dot-Com collapse, the Global Financial Crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The impact of the Black Lives Matter movement, particularly in 2020, amplified discussions on workplace inclusion in the corporate world. Many long-term sponsors doubled down on their support of SEO London, and many new sponsors saw SEO London as a potential partner to driving change. This pivotal moment helped solidify SEO London's role in pushing for systemic change within industries that had previously fostered a homogenous workforce. Today we continue to drive the conversation forward, advocating for representation and inclusion across various sectors.

## Thoughts from our trustees



My involvement with SEO London started from its early days, providing pro bono legal advice and then serving as a Trustee. SEO London really can change lives. Being an SEO London Trustee is a great opportunity to be part of a committed, enthusiastic group that is determined to make a difference. As a Trustee I endeavor to use my legal skills and experience to give back and support SEO London's mission to expand horizons by encouraging talented individuals from diverse backgrounds to explore and thrive in careers which they may not otherwise have considered or known how to approach. ”

**Zoe Ashcroft**

Founding Partner and Former Head of Corporate & Finance, Winston & Strawn LLP



I have been a Trustee of SEO for over 16 years now and it has been wonderful to see the organisation grow during that period. When I first joined the Board in 2008 there were just a dozen or so staff, while today there are around five times as many helping so many young people face the challenge of joining and succeeding in the most competitive sectors where SEO operates. Our initial focus has broadened beyond ethnicity and university students to helping young people from many underprivileged backgrounds and working with secondary school students to help educate and focus them on broader career opportunities. ”

**Ausaf Abbas**

Managing Director at Coombe Advisors, Former Head of Sales and Marketing at Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management

## 25 years of growth and impact

SEO London, founded in 2000, initially placed 8 students in summer internships across 5 different employers. By 2006, the charity had grown significantly, placing 128 students in internships at 22 employers. The year 2020 marked a period of steady growth, with 417 students securing internships with 81 employers. As of 2024, SEO London has reached its peak growth with over 1,000 participants joining early talent programmes at over 200 employers. As of 2025, we ensure 60% of programme participants come from low socioeconomic backgrounds.



Reflecting on my academic and professional journey from Lome (Togo), through the vibrant cities of Beijing, Strasbourg, Paris, New York and London, I envision a multitude of opportunities that SEO London can unlock for underrepresented youth. My diverse experiences underscore the transformative power of opportunity, capable of sparking a butterfly effect. This can significantly alter the life trajectories of these young individuals and extend its impact to their families and communities. Additionally, SEO's programme in France has the potential to create a powerful ripple effect, echoing through generations, fostering a cycle of success, and paving the way for a more equitable future. ”



**Kokou Agbo-Bloua**

Managing Director, UK Head of Research and Global Head of Economics, Cross-Asset and Quant Research, Société Générale

# EVOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

## Our student-focused divisions

### Careers (since 2000)

- 2000: Open to all participants from ethnic minority backgrounds
- 2013: All participants from low socioeconomic backgrounds are accepted regardless of ethnic background
- 2022: Pledge to ensure 50%+ of participants are from low socioeconomic backgrounds

### Schools (since 2012)

- Includes iterations such as Advance (2017) and Empower (2021)
- Open to all pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds

### SEO Europe: France (since 2021)

- Open to all participants with a special focus on women and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds

## Some other funded programme offerings

- HerCapital: Female leadership initiative (since 2018)
- Beyond Barriers Initiative to support recent grads yet to gain full time employment (since 2021)
- City Solicitors Horizons (since 2015)
- SEO Spark (launched in 2024)
- SEO Ignite (beginning July 2025)

## Industry streams

- Banking (since 2000)
- Corporate Law (since 2008 / CSH since 2015)
- Corporates (since 2010)
- Professional Services (2011–2015)
- Creatives (2012–2014)
- Technology (since 2013)
- Consulting (since 2014)
- Civil Service (2016–2019)
- Engineering (2015–2020)
- Insurance (since 2021)
- Alternative Investments (launched in 2021)
- Real Estate (since 2021)



Throughout my career, and especially during the crisis of 2008, it was my ability to think differently to my peers in part because of my low-income background that set me and my team apart. 🗨️

**Devesh Shah**  
Co-chair of SEO London and SEO USA alumnus (class of 1995), Former Partner at Goldman Sachs

# Goldman Sachs

Since SEO London's founding in 2000, Goldman Sachs has been a cornerstone supporter of SEO London. For over two decades, they have been constant sponsors of our Investment Banking and Asset Management sector and in 2020 furthered this by providing seed funding to establish our reach within Alternative Investments as well as Real Estate in 2021. These commitments transformed our organisation, enabling us to reach hundreds more students in need of our support.

We're also incredibly grateful that hundreds of staff and SEO alumni at Goldman Sachs have been active supporters and ambassadors. Notably, alumni Nishi Somaiya and Kene Ejikeme, both went from SEO London interns (Class of 2000 and 2003 respectively) to become Partners at Goldman Sachs.

They both currently sit on the Board of SEO London, turbo charging our efforts and enabling us to change the lives of countless students, which exemplifies the SEO spirit of giving back. In the span of 25 years, over 850 interns have started their journeys with Goldman Sachs, with many proudly contributing to the firm's legacy to this day.

“ We're proud to extend our support for SEO London through this flagship programme for real estate careers. Ensuring the industry is accessible and open to a wider range of students from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds is hugely important and we hope the programme will have long-lasting impact. ”

**Jim Garman**  
Founding Partner Real Estate Programme, Goldman Sachs

## The story of our Alumni Division

### 2001

Since 2001, SEO London alumni have been instrumental in embodying the SEO London principle of giving back to the next generation. These alumni have shared their expertise, coached the next generation, participated in Lunch and Learns, and mentored current students—opening doors to new partner firms and broadening our reach.

### 2014

SEO Africa is launched, with alumna Sidumiso Sibanda appointed as the first CEO of the newly launched Ghana-based charity.

### 2017

Alumna Tracey Abayeta creates the Her Capital programme to support women breaking into the world of finance.

### 2020

Alumna Nishi Somaya mobilises her network at Goldman Sachs Asset Management and elsewhere to fund the new Alternatives programme, creating an exciting new industry stream for SEO candidates.

### 2021

Beyond Barriers is launched with Barclays, thanks to conversations facilitated by alumna Charlotte M.

### 2024

SEO launches its new dedicated networking platform, Connect, where alumni can make new connections, learn about our events and stay up to date with all things alumni.

### 2025

A dedicated engagement programme is created, including Peer to Peer Mentoring to support alumni in the next phase of their careers, tailored CPD content such as webinars and short courses launching on Connect, our dedicated alumni platform, a vibrant Jobs Board and an exciting events calendar developed to enhance knowledge and networking skills.



SEO London has made all the difference in my career. They recommended me for my first internship at a global investment bank and supported me at most stages since. As a graduate, I attended the Alternatives Academy Thursdays, learning about different buy-side careers. SEO London removes barriers for those from diverse backgrounds, providing clarity on career steps and choices. Their programmes helped me convert work experience into a graduate offer and prepare for buy-side interviews. The free financial modelling courses were crucial for my graduate job and the alumni network offers encouragement by connecting with people who have faced similar obstacles well as surround me with like-minded individuals. ”

**Teodora Nacheva**  
Investment Analyst, Sandglass  
Capital Management



SEO London allowed me to learn and be around very driven people which made me excel. Listening to their experiences it gave me an understanding of the industry and prepare for interviews. By providing company insights as well as training, SEO London allowed me to understand how industry is structured and how it operates. It also equipped me with necessary skills to pass the interviews and prove myself at work. It also made me feel more confident in my future, as well as surrounded me with like-minded individuals. ”

**Timotej Zrnec**  
Sustainable Energy, Zurich Insurance

## ICG

We are incredibly grateful to ICG, one of our AIP partners, for providing us with additional funding to launch a Finance programme in Paris in 2023 for participants attending business schools and universities in France.

Through SEO Europe, we help 2000 students in France who are from low-income backgrounds to break into careers in Finance. We have also launched Potenti'Elle in 2024, where we provide with mentorship and coaching to help women to secure roles in industries in which they are underrepresented. ICG's support has been game-changing for us and we're excited to continue to build on this relationship in future.



## Surreal experience: A journey of growth and giving back Chang Tan

From Alumni to Chief Programme Officer

Transitioning from an alum to working at SEO London has been a surreal experience. As a student I never considered how the organisation operated or where it got its funding. When I was in the class of 2005, we only knew of three people working at SEO London: Hason, Jenn and Pippa.

When I returned as maternity cover in 2016, I was surprised to learn that SEO London had expanded into areas like corporate law, corporates and engineering. Previously, I only knew it for banking. This seems to reflect the typical alumni trajectory: staying engaged initially, then drifting away only to return later with a desire to contribute more.

It's been highly satisfying to see the students I first worked with, who were in their first year at university, now reaching VP levels at banks. We're now getting them back to help out at events, which is incredibly rewarding.

## J.P.Morgan


J.P. Morgan has been an unwavering supporter of SEO London, with more than 600 interns joining their ranks over the years. They remain one of our top employers, offering a wealth of opportunities to our underrepresented young people. We are immensely grateful for J.P. Morgan's support, especially in hosting one of our celebratory events for our 25th Anniversary. Their partnership has been instrumental in our success and growth.

In 2022, we launched a groundbreaking multi-year partnership with Nomura to empower talented students from underrepresented backgrounds to achieve educational and career success in Financial Services. This unique partnership spans all our divisions—SEO Schools, SEO Careers, and SEO Alumni—as well as our work in France.

Nomura's dedication is unmatched: their team has raised over £110,000 and engaged more than 900 staff to support hundreds of SEO participants, some of whom have gone on to be full time Nomura employees. Nomura's support

has also enabled us to create impactful new initiatives like SEO Spark (Career Insight Days for Year 10 students), and SEO Ignite (a transformative one-week residential summer programme for Year 11 students exploring career pathways and industries).

This partnership exemplifies shared ambition and deep impact. Together, we're breaking barriers, fostering ambition, and shaping brighter futures for individuals and the sector.

 Our collaboration with SEO London has positively impacted our early careers recruitment at Nomura in several ways. SEO's ability and expertise in connecting us with high-potential candidates from underrepresented backgrounds has significantly enhanced our recruitment efforts and workforce diversity. SEO stands out due to their deep industry knowledge, comprehensive approach and strong network within this community. Our collaboration has grown over the years to include tailored programs, increased engagement across events and mentorship programmes. ”

**Daryl Doyle**  
Investment Banking Early Careers  
Recruitment Lead, Nomura

 Since its launch in 2022, our partnership with SEO London has become a core facet of Nomura's Community Affairs programme. From volunteering and mentoring in support of talented young people in our local communities to engaging employees in fundraising events in support of the SEO Schools Programme, we know that the work we undertake in partnership with SEO London makes a real difference to those who need it. ”

**Samantha Barnwell**  
Head of Community Affairs (EMEA),  
Nomura

## WHY WE FOCUS ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

Access, equality, social cohesion and potential

### Untapped potential

Many young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds possess incredible, untapped potential. By offering support, training, networking and opportunities, SEO London empowers these individuals to unlock and realise their full potential, transforming their futures and making a lasting impact on their communities.

### Equity

Ensuring that young people from all backgrounds have access to the same opportunities helps create a more equitable society. SEO London's goal is to reduce disparities in education and employment, leading to a more balanced and fair society.

### Breaking the cycle

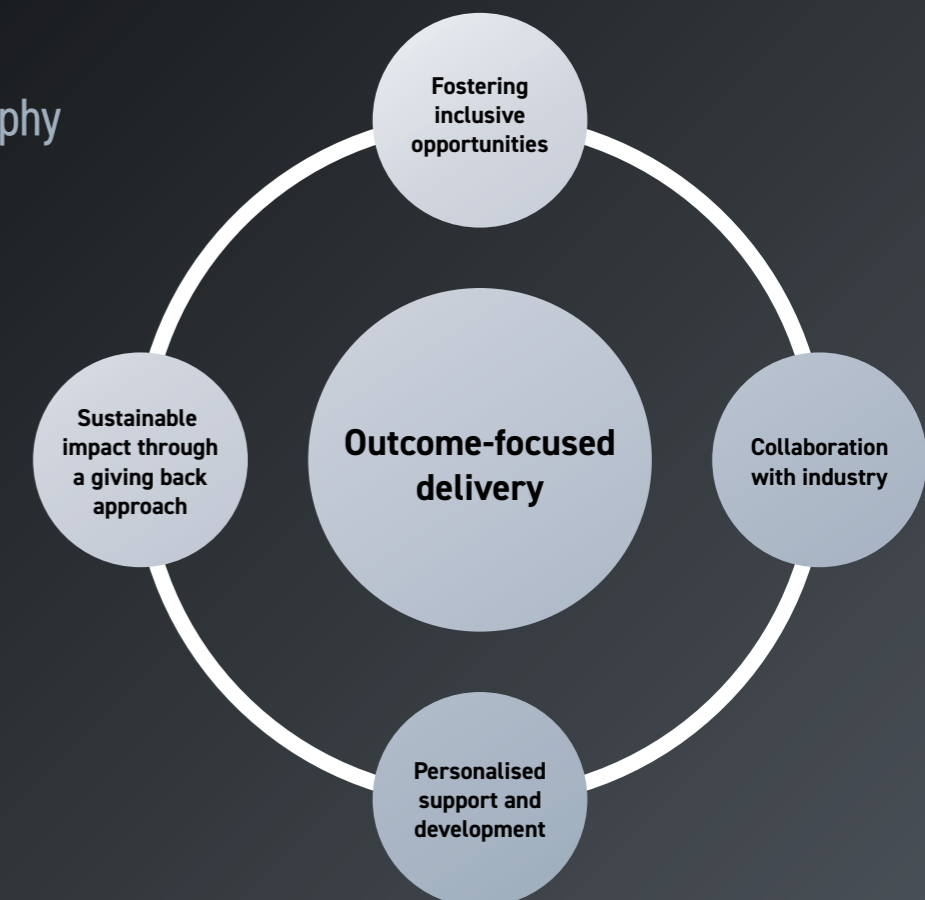
By providing training, resources and networks, SEO London helps young people break free from poverty.

### A better world

We play a vital role in fostering social cohesion by bridging gaps between different socio-economic groups. It's SEO London's vision to reach a more inclusive and harmonious society where everyone feels valued and supported.

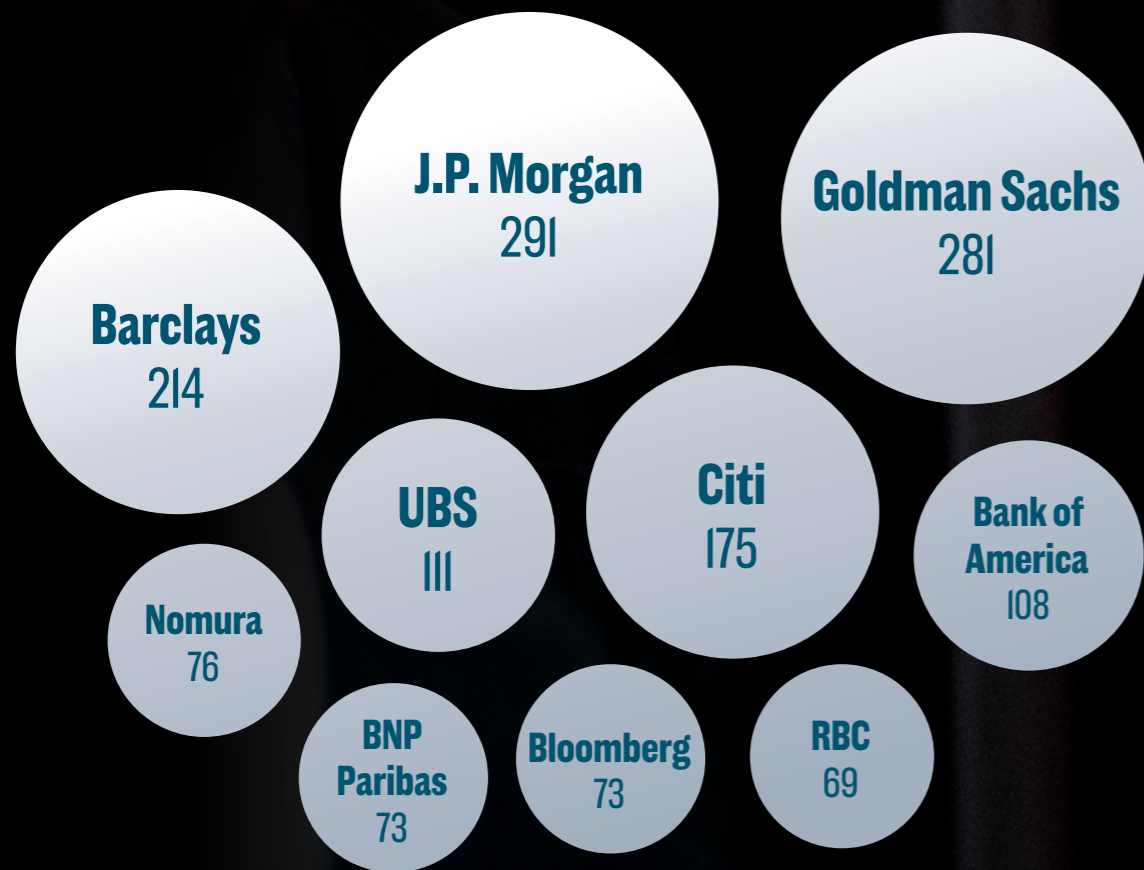
## Our programming philosophy for the last 25 years

SEO London's service delivery has centred on tackling systemic inequalities by creating pathways for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to access and excel in competitive professional sectors. This philosophy highlights our commitment to equity, individual growth and systemic transformation.



# IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENT

Top 10 hiring employers and number of placements offered between 2020 & 2024



Top 10 hiring employers who joined us between 2020-24

Employers	Number of placements	Year employers came on board
Perella Weinberg Partners	41	2021
Latham & Watkins	40	2021
S&P Global	27	2021
CNA Hardy	26	2021
Ashurst	26	2022
Civil Service: UK Government	24	2021
BP Shipping & Trading (BP IST)	24	2021
Scotiabank	24	2021
Standard Chartered	21	2022
Jones Day	20	2020

Over the past 25 years, SEO London has supported over 9,000 programme participants secure placements within our industries of focus, of which over 60% of these participants (5,600+) were at our top 15 sponsor firms.

- Goldman Sachs** 865 placements since 2000
- Barclays** 813 placements since 2003
- J.P. Morgan** 604 placements since 2000
- Citi** 474 placements since 2001
- Morgan Stanley** 399 placements since 2000
- Bank of America** 327 placements since 2001
- HSBC** 284 placements since 2004
- UBS** 260 placements since 2001
- Google** 178 placements since 2014
- Deutsche Bank** 167 placements since 2000
- Nomura** 160 placements since 2009
- BNP Paribas** 127 placements since 2015
- Linklaters** 105 placements since 2009
- Bloomberg** 103 placements since 2006
- McKinsey & Company** 98 placements since 2016

## How did we win the hearts of our sponsors over the years?

With 25 years of experience delivering measurable impact and creating win-win situations for everyone involved, here's how we've been winning the hearts of our incredibly valued partners.

### Well trained talent pipeline

- Access thousands of our well-trained and career-ready young people
- Advertise internships and graduate roles to a wider audience
- Receive assistance from experienced delivery team with curation of shortlists for opportunities

### Staff engagement

- Access high-impact volunteering opportunities, including mentoring and networking
- Host events to co-deliver our education and training
- We offer opportunities to get involved in our exciting fundraising initiatives

### Diverse recruitment

- Advertise your internships and graduate roles to their wide pool of participants
- Access thousands of our well-trained and career-ready young people
- Our experienced delivery team can support them with shortlisting

### Unrivalled reach

- Gain access to population across schools, universities and working professionals
- Engage with thousands of our successful alumni
- Connect with exceptional talent from 80+ UK universities
- Enhance your brand in CSR, diversity and inclusion

SEO London is a trusted partner and industry leader that overdelivers on its promise to connect talented students with education, training and work opportunities. At RBC, our partners at SEO London are like an extension of our team; committed to engaged, innovative and strategic approaches in our collective efforts to support student success as they strive to earn meaningful work opportunities. SEO London's programme participants are curious, ambitious, resilient and prepared to seize the opportunities ahead of them. I would highly recommend SEO London without reservation to any company looking to enhance early talent recruitment efforts while investing in the next generation of talent! ””

#### Marc Caporiccio

Global Manager, Early Talent Diversity Recruitment Programs & Partnership  
RBC Capital Markets



Thank you for sending the feedback through, we're delighted to receive such positive responses from the students! It is great to see that the event has left such a positive impact on the students and we hope they each took something out of it as they start their journeys in higher education. We also want to extend our heartfelt thank you to the SEO Careers team for organising and facilitating the Speed Networking event and giving us the opportunity to engage with such a promising group of students. We know the logistics for these speed networking events are not easy (particularly with last minute changes), so thank for making sure it runs smoothly! Thank you again and we look forward to working with you on the next one! ””

#### Victoria Varga

Director of Knowledge Management,  
Lazard

# KKR

Back in 2021, KKR was one of the first sponsors of our Alternative Investments programme. Since then, they have continued to actively support our educational initiatives and programmes across all levels – from schools and university students, to junior professionals wanting to break into the buy-side as well as being strong advocates of our annual Alternative Investments Conference (AICON).

In summer 2024, we proudly collaborated with KKR to launch their first-ever summer internships in London and Paris, welcoming 11 talented students. This groundbreaking programme has created invaluable opportunities and is set to expand further in summer 2025, paving the way for the next generation of industry leaders.

# LLOYD'S

Since 2021, SEO London has proudly partnered with Lloyd's to expand our reach within Insurance. This partnership has been instrumental in giving access, awareness, and ambition, ensuring that talented young people from ethnic minority and low-socio economic communities can envision and pursue careers in insurance.

Through our partnership spanning across Schools and Careers, we've reached 120 students and engaged more than 1,000 dedicated market volunteers, creating an ecosystem of mentorship, inspiration, and 258 insurance apprenticeships, internships and graduate positions.

Our partnership with Lloyd's exemplifies innovation and impact, directly aligning with their commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are excited to continue building this impactful partnership to create a legacy of equitable access to opportunities within the insurance industry.



## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### Insights from SEO London Founder Andrew Fairbairn

#### Embrace purposeful stakeholder engagement

SEO London has faced numerous challenges in engaging stakeholders. Initially, convincing non-American firms to prioritise ethnic diversity in recruitment was difficult. As we transitioned from supporting students into internships to creating a supportive, alumni-driven community, embedding a sense of purpose within our organisation and among stakeholders became crucial. We realised that genuine change required not just recruitment solutions, but a sustainable approach centred on community engagement, empowerment and reinvestment.

#### Foster genuine connections to shifting corporate mindsets for meaningful diversity

Balancing corporate views on diversity was challenging. Initially, our work was sometimes seen as a tick-box exercise. However, as we evolved, we successfully fostered deeper connections with corporate partners and alumni. Understanding the individual strengths of our students and nurturing their growth is fundamental to our mission. As we continue to grow, the organisation and I remain committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented talent, ensuring our initiatives reflect the diverse landscape of society.

#### Commitments to inclusive growth are key for workplace inclusion

The lessons we've learned have been invaluable. We prioritise long-term commitments from our partners and continually adapt to the shifting socio-political climate. By fostering an inclusive environment, we're committed to paving the way for future generations, ensuring our work remains relevant and impactful in the ever-changing landscape of workplace inclusion.

### Insights from SEO London CEO Nathalie Richards

#### You're never too young to make an impact

Similarly to Michael Osheowitz in 1963 when he founded SEO US, Andrew was just 26 years old when he founded SEO London in 2000. Given the successes of these organisations and the tens of thousands of young people they have supported, one thing is clear: you are never too young to make a life-changing impact. We require all our participants to follow in Michael and Andrew's footsteps and to give back to society while they receive support—not only to show how easy and rewarding it can be but also in the hope that they continue to do so in the future.

#### Meaningful change takes time

Since 2000, SEO London has been hungry for change. But our model is complex: we identify participants to support, train them in soft skills, technical abilities and industry awareness, then help them secure internships and transition to full-time roles. True cultural shifts in firms or sectors require repetition over decades. Supporting thousands of young people into corporate careers is a milestone but much work remains to achieve representation at the highest levels of society.

#### Real impact is not about ticking boxes

Working with 150+ partner firms annually, we aim to create opportunities that make a real impact. Partner firms that thrive recognise the need to change their cultures, ensuring fairness and equity for all. This involves rethinking talent management, offering mentorship, fostering inclusion and proactively valuing all staff. Firms embracing these changes not only boost staff morale but also improve their bottom line.

## HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT SEO LONDON?

### Donate



### Give back



### Partner with us



### Acknowledgments

**To our dedicated staff:** Your unwavering commitment and hard work are the backbone of our success.

**To our Board members:** Your guidance and strategic vision are invaluable in steering our organisation forward.

**To our valued partners:** Your collaboration and support are instrumental in helping us grow and achieve our goals.

**To our generous donors:** Your support is crucial in enabling us to continue our work and expand our reach.

**To our incredible volunteers and mentors:** Your generosity and dedication have made a significant impact on our ability to deliver our programmes and support our brilliant young people.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Together, let's make the next 25 years even more remarkable.

“Quite simply, if it wasn't for SEO I probably wouldn't be in financial services at all. It's a special organisation, whose societal impact will shape industries today and generations to come.”



**Kene Ejikeme**  
SEO London alumnus (class of 2003),  
Partner, Goldman Sachs



# SEO/LONDON

SPONSORS FOR EDUCATIONAL  
OPPORTUNITY

If you represent a firm interested in diversifying your workforce, get in touch.

We can work together to prepare talented students from underrepresented backgrounds for career success.

## Contact us

+44 (0) 20 7400 0400

[info@seo-london.org](mailto:info@seo-london.org)


[seo-london.org](http://seo-london.org)

41 Great Guildford Street  
London, SE1 0ES

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