

Graduate membership – the first step on the professional ladder

The membership journey for many begins at college or university when they commence their studies. They will usually attend a session given by one of the Institute Team during Freshers' week and sign up as a student member, their fees often being generously paid for them. Some will explore how their IOM3 membership can enhance their student experience, however, the Institute is in competition with many other extra curricula activities and is, unsurprisingly, not always top of the list. It is for this reason that our student members enjoy a period of free membership once they have graduated or obtained their Diplomas or Certificates, so that they can trial and test how the activities of the Institute can support their career development and potentially lay the first foundations of their professional career.

Depending on which sector and company an individual begins their career with, they will soon find that the knowledge-rich environment they enjoyed in academia while still there works differently. Sourcing their own cutting-edge technical information, which their education trained them for, is now something they are paid to do and judged upon, but the significant resources of an education establishment are not necessarily there to support them. This is where the Institute's Technical Content offering can become part of their information resource plan. With almost 100 peer-reviewed journals accessible through the IOM3 Member Portal, there is material covering almost every technical sector in which our members practise. Of course, this flow of information isn't intended to be one-way, and we hope that all members will showcase their technical expertise and provide content on the IOM3 platform for the benefit of others.

There is also a wealth of value in the many conferences and workshops the Institute and its local groups organise, be it from the information that their fellow practitioners share or the networking they can take part in. Starting a professional network is an essential part of a successful career. Networks can be built in cyberspace, but face-to-face interaction is proven to be the most beneficial and rewarding. At Institute events, members can network with their peers or very often company owners, Chief Executives or Managing Directors – influencers who could benefit their career development, maybe even offering them a job opportunity.

More often than not graduates are looking to become Chartered Engineers or achieve some other form of Competent Person Recognition (CPR), which the Institute can also offer in the science and environmental disciplines. Some within the IOM3 technical outreach need to gain CPR for regulatory reasons, others need it to enhance their promotion prospects and achieve higher financial reward, while for the remainder it can lead to enhanced career development within their sector, easier access to overseas work permits and an asset in securing business or funding contracts. IOM3 has a programme in place to support its graduates achieve the CPR of their choice. On being awarded their 'GradIMMM', members can apply for an Institute Accreditation Certificate, which confirms the different professional registrations their academic qualifications make them eligible for. In addition, they can apply for an IOM3 Mentor to support them on the journey to qualification. There are also IOM3 Mentors based in UK industry who can support new recruits and others within their organisations. These individuals are also



supported by online workshops run by the Institute, which aim to make individuals application submission ready.

These are just some of the benefits that Graduate members can enjoy. The most important lesson those entering the world of work on a full-time basis for the first time can learn is that their career development is in their own hands – they are the architects of their own career success, not their employer. But the Institute is here and will always be here for them as long as they are a member, to support them in achieving their career goals and becoming a GradIMMM is the first step on this long path.

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