

I Am a Volunteer and I Do...

Peter Moore



What activities have you undertaken as part of your volunteering

I am active in providing advice, mentoring and assessments for members who are looking to achieve professional registration as EngTech, IEng or CEng through INCOSE UK. I first got involved when the registration process was provided by the SEE and I'm delighted to continue now that that INCOSE UK is a full Licensed Member of the Engineering Council and providing the service directly for our members. The initial training for assessors confirms understanding of the Engineering Council requirements for registrants and gives a grounding in the assessment process. Following this training my involvement started with reviewing candidate's applications prior to submission, helping to ensure that the forms are completed correctly and that the submission provides an accurate and compelling case for compliance with the Engineering Council requirements. Over the past two years I have been a member of the assessment panel for several candidates including taking part in the professional interview.

In a somewhat related role, although not strictly volunteering through INCOSE UK, I am chair of the employers' Trailblazer Group that is responsible for managing the Level 7 Systems Engineering Masters Apprenticeship Programme. During my time as Chair the group has seen the apprenticeship through a major review of the Standard and assessment process which has taken it to provide a full MSc, alignment with the recently updated INCOSE Competency Framework and widened the appeal from an initial focus on the Defence industry sector. It has been satisfying to see growing participation of new employers and the apprenticeship provided by more academic & training providers. With the first cohorts now completing their apprenticeship our focus is on seeing them through the process for the end point assessment.

What Originally inspired you to volunteer for INCOSE UK?

I have been a member of the IET for many years and gained Chartered Engineer registration through them back in 1985. I became aware of INCOSE through my company's involvement in UKAB and it was obvious that INCOSE UK offered the relevant focus that I was looking for from a professional body. I was impressed by the amount and quality of material that is available through INCOSE as well as activities such as the annual conference. My role in the company at the time was a Group Leader in our Systems Engineering discipline, part of the team responsible for, among other things, developing capability and competence within the discipline. This sparked my interest in the SE Competency Framework as a means for measuring competence and planning out a development path for individuals; this also linked with the competency assessment used for the post-graduate apprenticeship. With professional registration providing a recognised milestone in the development journey of an engineer I was interested in the relationship between SE competencies and the Engineering Council requirements for registration.

Our Group Director of Engineering once asked, "Who had their hand on your shoulder?" enabling us to achieve our full potential. Over my career there have been many who have given me time as advisers, mentors, friends. INCOSE UK are heavily dependent on the quality of the efforts from many volunteers and their willingness to give their time and energy in ways that support members in developing their careers, I am happy to put my time into paying back in a small way the efforts of others who have helped me through my career.

What do you feel you get out of your volunteering?

Part of it is the personal satisfaction from giving something back but there are direct benefits as well. Working with INCOSE UK means you work with colleagues from across industry, from the largest multinationals to SMEs and individuals, from the public sector and academia; this brings a rich variety of experience and views that can only be beneficial when dealing with the complex, or complicated, world within which we practice Systems Engineering. I have been able to bring into my 'day job' approaches, methods and techniques with a degree of confidence that comes from sharing experiences with colleagues. I am also able to advise colleagues within the company who are considering professional registration, or the INCOSE professional certification programme, such that they are better placed to reap the benefits.

Being able to contribute in this way helps make professional life more than 'just a job'.

The registration process is run in partnership with the Society of Explosives Engineers and an unexpected benefit from participating in several joint assessment boards is the insight into the world of the explosives engineer.

Do you have any advice or feedback to offer anyone who is considering volunteering?

Firstly, maybe as simple as "Give it a go". There are many and varied opportunities within INCOSE UK for contributing, find out what is out there, what are you interested in, how could you contribute. There might not be an exact match for your interests and availability but the organisation is small enough and flexible enough that if you have an idea it will be heard.

As with any voluntary activity be prepared for it to grow. The demand will almost always be bigger than the supply. Maybe be prepared to say "No" (in a polite and constructive way of course), it can be discouraging to suddenly find that you have taken on more than you meant to and the responsibility is more of a burden than rewarding.

Consider what level of support there might be from your employer, there are likely to be times when your voluntary activities will take time out of the working day. It might be worth considering a mini-business case, what are the benefits you will get, how will your employer benefit (not least from the skills you will be gaining), what is a realistic estimate of the time it will take...