

I Am a Volunteer and I Do...

Malcolm Thomas



What activities have you undertaken as part of your volunteering?

My first activities in volunteering with INCOSE UK were as the UKAB Point of Contact (PoC) for my employer, WSP UK Ltd. This gave a great insight into the workings of INCOSE UK as was able to attend the 'Joint Meetings' with the Council and UKAB.

I have been a Chartered Engineer of many years and thought that I could offer my experience to those wishing to achieve professional registration. So, I became a Professional Registration Advisor (PRA) supporting those who want to advance their careers by gaining a level of professional registration with INCOSE UK. I have since become an assessor and undertake formal assessments and interviews for professional registration applicants.

The biggest volunteering role I am currently involved in is, of course, as President of INCOSE UK. This has, without doubt, been the most rewarding experience I have had. I am nearly two thirds of the way through my time in the presidential roles and will certainly miss it when it comes to an end in 2026.

What originally inspired you to volunteer for INCOSE UK?

I have been a mentor within several of the organisations I have worked for many years and have always enjoyed helping be the best they can within the workplace and get the most out of their careers. I liked the variety it provided for me and the satisfaction I got from seeing those that I had mentored achieving their goals. So, it seemed a natural progression to get involved with INCOSE UK.

In 2012, I was the technical leader of my employers Systems Engineering team. We were looking to grow and to become more influential in the SE landscape. Therefore, we decided to become a UKAB member, and I volunteered to be the PoC. Having been an INCOSE UK member for a number of years it seemed like a natural progression for me to get more involved and this was the perfect opportunity for me.

What do you get out of volunteering?

I get a great deal of satisfaction out of all my volunteering roles that comes through a number of routes.

As a PRA it is seeing those that I have advised and mentored successfully achieving their professional registration goals. As professional registration assessor it is enabling INCOSE UK to fulfil its obligations, as a Professional Engineering Institute, to our members by providing the route for them to gain recognition as a professional systems engineer with the Institute that fully represents the profession.

As President of INCOSE UK it is leading the organisation and using my experience gained over many years to hopefully move the Institute forward. It's not always straightforward but that adds to the challenge and the enjoyment – really – of the role.

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

It is always the right time to volunteer and there are so many ways to get involved. If you are unsure, start with something small that won't take up too much of your time and that you can manage. You will get an awful lot out of it, not just the satisfaction of helping out, but it will also broaden your experience and benefit your career.

INCOSE UK's lifeblood is its volunteers. There are so many opportunities for volunteers from being part of a Group through to the Council roles.

It might seem daunting at first, but take the leap, you will get so much out of it!