



# Case Study: CEng

## Joe Muskett



I am a Senior Systems Engineer currently working for Costain Group Plc within the Systems Approach Team. My role is to provide Systems Engineering consultancy services to infrastructure projects in a range of industries within Costain's portfolio including rail and energy. Through my work, I mostly enjoy projects that involve the management of requirements including elicitation, decomposition, traceability, and the management of related processes. My proudest achievements in my career to date are creating and embedding an efficient requirements change management process on the Melbourne Metro Tunnel project in Australia, and more recently being recognised as a Chartered Engineer by INCOSE UK. Outside of work I enjoy outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, kayaking, and green wood carving. In around 5 years' time, I currently see myself as an engineering director or Chief Systems Engineer running my own department, or running my own limited company.

### Congratulations on gaining your professional registration with INCOSE UK. What inspired you to apply?

Since the start of my career, I have worked in environments where the recognition associated with becoming a Chartered Engineer has always been highly valued. This made me realise early on that working towards gaining CEng was a worthwhile use of time; not just for recognition from peers, but also as a constructive means for my own self-development and sense of self-worth.

### How did you find the application process through INCOSE UK?

The process is well put together and competently facilitated by the INCOSE UK Professional development team. The standard set of forms are easily located and available through the INCOSE UK online portal. There are also a number of regular seminars held by INCOSE UK on the professional recognition application process, I attended one of these and it was very helpful. For example, it made me aware that INCOSE UK offered a service that can match an applicant with a professional mentor (who are MINCOSE volunteers). I requested and was matched with a mentor who helped significantly through the application process.

One last thing to mention is ensuring that as an applicant, you are aware of all required forms that need to be completed prior to submission. For a standard application for someone who has a Washington Accord accredited degree, this should be

no issue. However, for others they may be required to complete a further learning report (to demonstrate equivalent learning outside of a WA accredited degree). This was the case for me after being made aware by my mentor. A simple request via email to INCOSE UK Professional Development team is all that was needed for the relevant form to be sent to me.

### Was it challenging to document all the workplace evidence required for the CEng application and did it take a long time?

Yes. Whilst not impossible, it took a significant amount of time and a lot of effort to remember the finer details of early career activities. One reason for this in my case is because I started this process comparably late. If I were to do the process again then I would like to think I would have the long-term foresight to start as early as possible in my career (ideally during my IPD).

Another challenge is matching experience up to a relevant Engineering Council UK-SPEC competency. To do this along with having something that allows quick and easy recording of CPD, I would advise seeking out a digital platform that can capture this information (such as MyCareerPath) or put together an easy to use spreadsheet (which is what I did) with columns to capture knowledge / experience details and columns to mark these off against UK-SPEC competencies. Lastly, I would advise dedicating at least 15 minutes per week to updating your CPD logbook. It isn't a lot of time per week but it adds up to one's benefit over a few months.

### How easy was it to track down references in support of your CEng application?

I had no issue with tracking down references for my application as I had maintained good contact as my career progressed. Keeping good relationships whilst in a job along with keeping up to date contact details for phone, email, and LinkedIn also helped with contacting references when the time came to do so.

### How long did the application process take?

The process took 8 months for me from start to finish. A lot of this time was spent brining my CPD logbook up to date and matching knowledge / experience with UK-SPEC competencies.

### How did you find the professional review interview?

I found the interview to be an open and friendly process. Some elements of the interview were deliberately slightly informal which went a long way to

help calm nerves. Each of the questions were open, positive, and designed to allow the interviewers to gather further details about me and what I had done through my career. Overall, I dare say that the interview was a slightly nervous but enjoyable experience.

### **In what ways has registration benefited your career?**

I have only been registered for a few days, but the immediate benefit I have seen already is to my self-worth. I have wanted to obtain CEng for a long time and hold it in very high regard. For a long while I thought that there may not come a point where I could achieve it and at one point, didn't think I was good enough for it. So to go through and complete the process has been a significant milestone for me. It has allowed me to realise my knowledge and experience is now of a certain standard which is also recognised by my peers, all in all a great confidence booster.

### **Do you have future plans to support others in the professional registration process?**

Yes. I believe getting involved in giving back to the engineering community like this is part of the core foundation of how succession planning for engineering in general should be executed. At some point soon I would like to get involved in activities relating to professional mentorship and / or coaching for processes such as professional registration or for CPD in general to those who are looking for support.

### **Finally, what advice would you give to future INCOSE UK CEng applicants?**

As mentioned earlier, I would advise starting the process of capturing relevant knowledge / experience in a CPD logbook as early as possible and spend at least 15 minutes a week updating where required (good practice post application as well). Your future self will be very grateful.

I would also advise requesting a professional mentor via INCOSE UK. Mentors are volunteers who give up their free time to do it but are nonetheless very helpful. If you decide to request a mentor, it is up to you to set the pace on your own progress and how many meetings you would like with them (I opted for a meeting once month on average). Whilst a mentor will support you when required, they will not chase you up for anything, so remember that completing the process is still entirely down to you!

Lastly, wherever you are in your career make sure to keep your professional network up to date and that you maintain some form of contact with those who may act as references in the future for your application. We work in a world now where one might work for a number of different companies over a given time period. Whilst that can result in a large and beneficial network, it can also be challenging to maintain contact. Use all the tools at your disposal such as phone, email, and LinkedIn and catch up with ex-colleagues when you can. This will of course not just benefit your CEng application but also other aspects of your career.