

I Am a Volunteer and I Do...

Tim Breakspear

What activities have you undertaken as part of your volunteering?

In terms of volunteering for INCOSE UK, one of the key ones for me is being a Professional Registration Advisor (PRA), supporting engineers through the Professional Registration process! This is a key aspect for me, as it is supporting other systems engineers in their own development, using my experience and understanding of the process to advise on their application. On that theme, I am also a Professional Registration Assessor – I am part of the pool of assessors which INCOSE UK uses (alongside our friend in the Institute of Explosives Engineers) to provide the independent assessment of competency for Professional Registration. In this role, I assess applications to measure them against the Engineering Council definitions for Engineering Technician (EngTech), Incorporated Engineer (IEng) and Chartered Engineer (CEng), conduct interviews with applicants and make recommendations for Registration as appropriate.

On top of this, I also support INCOSE UK Professional Development as deputy to the Director – supporting monthly webinars on professional development, maintaining our processes and procedures, and supporting our pool of volunteers for professional development.

What originally inspired you to volunteer for INCOSE UK?

I was inspired to volunteer based on elements of my work based role that I enjoyed! During employment, I discovered that I really enjoyed supporting others in their development, and working towards improving themselves. Developing those around you and knowledge sharing is rewarding, and seeing others take opportunities to improve (followed by rewards) became an element of work that I really enjoyed. I naturally became a mentor for other engineers



within the company I worked (and continue to do so). When I transferred my own Registration to INCOSE UK, I took the decision to volunteer as a PRA to support others in their own application, believing that understanding the process would make me a better mentor/coach. After undertaking this for a while, I then decided to 'up my game' in terms of giving back, and moved into a role supporting professional development through being an assessor. This was partly driven by wanting to be a better PRA – doing assessments provides insight into what assessors are looking for!

What do you get out of volunteering?

I get a huge amount out of volunteering, both personally and professionally.

Personally, I really enjoy supporting others through development; acting as a PRA and hearing back when they have achieved Professional Registration. As an assessor, I feel a certain amount of responsibility for maintaining the professional standard. Being a Chartered Engineer is important to me as a recognition of professionalism – so maintaining the standard, and recognising others as such is key.

The volunteering I do with INCOSE UK also supports me in my own career – becoming an assessor for Professional Registration supports me in assessing competency within my own employment! It provides me with opportunities to develop in areas which complement my work based development, and I can then bring this experience into my role within the company. I very much view the INCOSE UK volunteering as making me better in my full time role – and vice versa.

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

Get involved in volunteering as soon as you can. The opportunity to get involved and start to shape the organisation is real. The ability to improve your own skills, and ensure that INCOSE UK is delivering the right mix of knowledge and development to its members is important to us all as a community. As INCOSE UK, we provide support for all of our volunteers: - so you will be helped to succeed! The opportunities are great for individuals to support all aspects of INCOSE UK, there are working groups, local groups – using your membership to be active in these spaces helps those areas develop and respond to the needs of the members. Volunteering for a role within INCOSE UK is a great way to develop yourself – and you may even have fun along the way!