



Volunteers' experiences

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An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer: Colin O'Hare



"I am a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and Professor of Actuarial practice and Actuarial Program Director in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University, in Australia. Prior to moving to Australia I was based at Queen's University, Belfast. I have volunteered for the IFoA for several years and am currently an Independent Examiner."

The experience of a volunteer Independent Examiner, based in Australia

"Independent Examiners are appointed by the IFoA to assist in monitoring the quality and standards of university programs with IFoA exemption agreements. In carrying out this role, I enjoy the opportunity to interact with colleagues in different institutions and to grow my professional network. I see how actuarial science is delivered differently or similarly to the way we deliver it, and share and learn from best practice globally. The opportunity to share in the experience of delivering courses in different geographies, to students with different cultural and international demographics and with sometimes differing perceptions of the skills of an actuary is a truly enriching experience.

I would encourage others to take on this role too. For actuarial academics there is a real benefit in seeing how other academics engage with students and deliver similar content. How they assess student performance and how they engage students in concepts such as professionalism and the development of softer skills. Seeing how they engage with industry and promote the profession. As well as supporting other actuarial academics through the process of accreditation, the role enables me to benchmark what I do as an academic and to develop better as an academic. At the same time I am pleased to be able to support the IFoA.

There is a real need for universities to understand better, and to expose students to the realities of actuarial practice. For actuarial practitioners there is an opportunity to help universities in this aspiration by acting as Independent Examiners. As well as carrying out the role of the independent examiner practicing actuaries could offer their invaluable experience and advice on actuarial practice providing a way for universities to check what they deliver and how they deliver it in terms of it linking with the real job.

For the practising actuary it is also a way of giving back to the academic and educational process that helped them in the early stages of developing their careers. Particularly with the current changes in actuarial education there is a real opportunity for academics and practitioners to have more joined up conversations about the future education of actuaries. This could be led by collectives of practitioners and academics involved in the development and ongoing management of accredited universities. I encourage you to get involved."