



Volunteers' Experiences

As a global community, volunteering opens up a wealth of networking opportunities and a chance to learn from others within a different jurisdiction.

Over 4000 volunteers give their time and expertise. In what follows, some have told us what volunteering has meant for them, and what they got out of it.

Scroll through them or click on a name to read what they say about their volunteer experience

Name	A volunteer experience relating to...
Alan Kershaw	a lay member - supporting professionalism and standards
Alex Marcuson	the profession
Andrew MacFarlane	Resource and Environment volunteer based in Bermuda
Andrew Slater	elected to Council June 2016
Antonie Jagga	based in Singapore
Barbara Fewkes	working in Pensions
Carole Ryden	volunteering got Carole back into work
Chong Sheng Lim	based in Singapore
Chris Reynolds	based in Switzerland
Dawn Whittaker	Life Insurance
Donncha Pexton-Hayes	a volunteer Student Employer Contact
Emily Penn	a Deputy Chair of the Life Conference Programme Committee
Farzana Ismail	the Takaful Working Party
Gordon Sharp	member of the Disciplinary Board
Helena Ingram	based in the Midlands
Heting Yang	a student member
Iain McGrory	a lay panel member of the IFoA Disciplinary Pool
Jeremy Affolter	lifelong learning and the enjoyment of learning
John McAleer	a member of a Pensions working party
Jonathan Hughes	Health and Care
Josephine Robertson	a 'younger member'
Kelvin Chamunorwa	member of Council
Kyle West	an IFoA Guinea Pig 1
Linjie Li	an international volunteer
Lisa Morgan	a volunteer conference Chair - Health and Care
Lloyd Richards	a Career Ambassador
Martin Potter	member of Council
Michael Tripp	General Insurance
Natalie Greene	a volunteer who enjoys learning
Ooi Choong Hern	based in South-East Asia
Patrick Kelliher	Research

Pay Peng Neo	a CPD Co-ordinator based in Singapore
Pei (Grace) Guan	based in China
Seamus Creedon	Chair, Non-Executive Director (NED) Member Interest Group
Souvik Jash	based in India
Spenser Chen	based in Singapore
Suzanne Vaughan	member of Council
Thanuja Krishnaratna	an Associate member based in Sri Lanka.
Vasan Errakiah	based in Singapore
Xiaoxuan (Sherwin) Li	based in China

Volunteers' experience re working in the Wider Fields

Andrew MacFarlane
Chris Lewin
John Young
Mike Clark

'Inside Story' volunteer profile articles as seen in The Actuary magazine

Alan Rae
Ben Stroud
David Hare
Dick Rae
Ellen Yang
Haijing Wang
Jo Lo
Karen Brolly
Mike Shelley
Natalie Greene
Patrick Kelliher
Pei (Grace) Guan
Richard Galbraith
Rosalind Rossouw
Sophia Ch'ng
Tze Leong Chan
Waqas Ahmed

"Many IFoA members have told me how motivational, beneficial, and inspiring they have found these volunteers' experience case studies which members have taken the time to write." **Debbie Atkins**

Share your story?

If you would like to share your volunteer experience, please contact [Debbie Atkins](#), Head of Engagement.



Volunteers' experiences

“The actuaries I have worked with at the IFoA have been welcoming, encouraging and appreciative of what lay members can bring.”

A view from a volunteer: Alan Kershaw



Alan has been a lay member* of the IFoA's Regulation Board, Designated Professional Body Board, Standards Review Committee and lay Chair of the IFoA's Standards Framework Review Working Party. Alan has specialised in professional regulation and standards setting since 1983. Currently he also holds lay member positions with leadership bodies for a number of other professions including pharmacists, dentists, optometrists, interpreters, dieticians, psychotherapists and intellectual property lawyers. In all he has been involved in standards setting for over 100 professional groups.

The experience of a lay member involved in supporting professionalism and standards

“I have been working with the IFoA since 2012, when I was appointed as one of three lay members on the Regulation Board. ‘Lay member’ is of course Latin for ‘someone who knows nothing about anything’ and indeed much of our value lies in being the untutored outsider who can ask questions from a fresh angle and develop into a critical friend. That is what I have tried to do.

What I found on arrival was a group of highly skilled individuals who were committed to engaging with the technicalities of important regulatory issues which are usually, to be blunt, of limited interest to most professionals once they are in practice: How do you get into the profession? How should you behave as a member in practice? What happens when something goes wrong and someone's fitness for membership is called into question?

What I have experienced

The actuaries I have worked with at the IFoA have been welcoming, encouraging and appreciative of what lay members can bring by way of broadening the debate, introducing ideas and models from elsewhere, and occasionally asking the innocent question which sparks an analysis of exactly why things are the way they are, perhaps inspiring change. All this makes for a more rounded and, I believe, defensible approach to conversations which previously belonged to the profession alone.

It is not, in my view, the role of the lay member to claim to speak or campaign on behalf of clients or ‘the public’ – whoever ‘the public’ are. Sometimes, though, you do find yourself expressing a view on what an organisation looks like (or may be about to look like), and this is where we get our best exercise. For me it has often been about the clarity, accuracy, logic and consistency of how we express ourselves in a communication. “I don't like you”, a professional colleague once said, “because you make me think”. A high compliment.

*The term “Lay” refers to someone who is not a member of the IFoA.



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile



Institute
and Faculty
of Actuaries

Volunteers' experiences

“... much of our value lies in being the untutored outsider who can ask questions from a fresh angle and develop into a critical friend.”

Actuaries are rightly proud of their profession and its traditions. Their qualifications are hard-won and highly valued, and they do not want to see them compromised. The IFoA is committed to preserving the standards, values and integrity of their respected, global brand. That chimes closely with the approach to regulation with which I am most comfortable. It's about articulating what is safe, competent practice. It's about upholding that standard, whatever uncomfortable decisions that may require. It's about helping good practitioners to stay good and to go on developing throughout their professional careers. I enjoy being part of that process.”



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To get involved in volunteering for the IFoA visit:
www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo



Volunteers' experiences

“It’s a great chance to grow your network, meeting peers from clients, competitors and regulators alike.”

A view from a volunteer: **Alex Marcuson**



Alex’s career started with Bacon and Woodrow in 1994 and has included three years in Australia. In 2010 he established Marcuson Consulting Ltd, a specialist general insurance actuarial advisory firm.

The experience of a volunteer to the profession

“My first involvement with the profession was in the mid-1990s getting stuck into the vibrant GIRO working party culture” he says. “During my time in Australia, HIH had collapsed and a new insurance regime was being introduced, so there was a great opportunity for me, a young actuary, to participate in solving the challenges of the day. Back in the UK, my volunteering has been a mix of working parties and committees. Currently I am one of the two General Insurance specialists on the Professional Support Service, and am a member of the General Insurance Reserve Oversight Committee and the Managing Uncertainty with Professionalism Working Party.

Volunteering has given me a chance to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds. It’s a great chance to grow your network, meeting peers from clients, competitors and regulators alike. You learn from working alongside industry experts and in turn share your knowledge with the leaders of the future.

In 2010 I embarked on a new stage in my career, establishing my own consulting business. My volunteering network has been of enormous value in helping me build a successful business. Even now, it’s important to me to give something back to the profession.

Volunteering lets you develop skills that differ from the normal workplace. When you are collaborating with clients and competitors on an issue, you don’t always see a problem in the same way. As a volunteer, you need a greater degree of sensitivity and compromise to find a solution.”

Alex says: “I agree with the sentiment of giving something back – it is a defining characteristic of us as actuaries.”



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Volunteers' experiences

“I not only have the opportunity to shape the way the IFoA takes things forward but also to broaden my learning in this wider field.”

A view from a volunteer:

Andrew MacFarlane



“I am a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and am based in Bermuda where I have lived for more than 7 years. I work at XL Catlin Re which operates in the General Insurance (GI) industry and I am a volunteer who sits on the IFoA's Resource and Environment Board. I am also involved in the Climate Change Working Party.”

The experience of a resource and environment volunteer based in Bermuda

“As an internationally based volunteer I dial in to Board meetings by conference call and I engage with the Executive staff and my peers via email between meetings. General Insurance is heavily influenced by extreme events and so having more insight into the resource and environment space and how this might affect general insurance now, and in the future, is hugely important to ensuring we are considering these aspects when making business decisions.

I have an interest in the resource and environment space and, when I volunteered for this role, I was keen to build up my knowledge in the field.

As a volunteer member of the Resource and Environment Board I wanted to combine my interest in the environment with my skills that I have obtained working as an actuary. In doing so, I not only have the opportunity to shape the way the IFoA takes things forward but also to broaden my learning in this wider field. It also allows me to combine my day job with an external interest in this space. As a result I have expanded my network and gained access to numerous experts in this field.

If you are reading this and considering taking on a volunteer role for the profession, I would encourage you to get involved. Look for opportunities that interest you and for ways in which you can use your skills but at the same time expand your development.”



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Volunteers' experiences

“It turned out to be a crowded field, with 21 people standing for 7 places on Council. However, I had put in the effort to decide what I wanted to achieve if I were on Council, and that I think turned the odds in my favour.”

A view from a volunteer: Andrew Slater



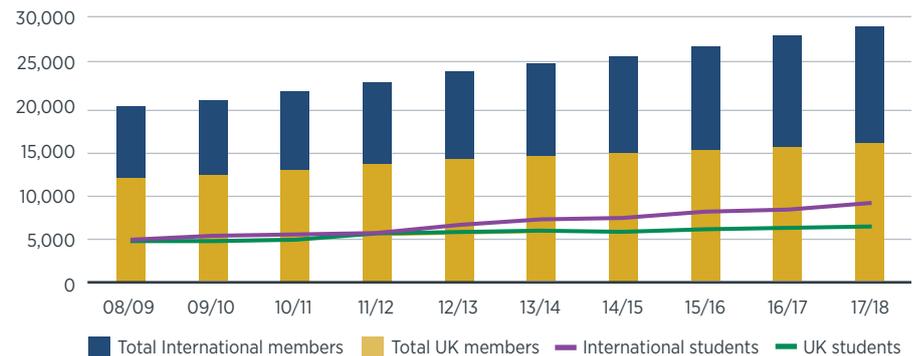
“I had considered standing for Council several times over the years, the first time being not long after I qualified. (Council needs younger members!). But in the end it took a friend of mine, and former Council member, to convince me to go from just consideration to actual application. I filled out the forms and recorded my video. It turned out to be a crowded field, with 21 people standing for 7 places on Council. However, I had put in the effort to decide what I wanted to achieve if I were on Council, and that I think turned the odds in my favour.”

The experience of a volunteer: elected to Council June 2016

“I focused on three areas. First, I wanted the profession to continue to find its voice and not be afraid to speak up. In a previous job I had done much PR activity and I wanted to bring that experience for the benefit of the profession. Second, I wanted to help “refresh the actuarial toolkit” to ensure our training remains relevant to today’s environment, reflecting both the increasingly wider areas where actuaries work and the computing power we have at our fingertips. You will have seen Colin Wilson as President talking about the opportunities in big data, for example.

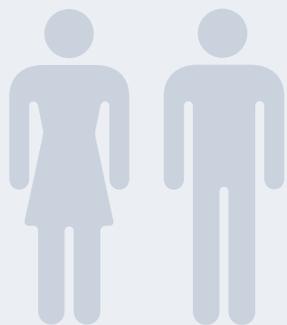
Third, I wanted to participate in the professions’ international activities. The geographical make up of our profession is gradually changing as the chart below illustrates.

Growth of IFoA members and students - UK and International



To this end, in March 2017 I found myself in Ghana at a workshop organised by the insurance regulator talking about the profession’s perspective on data. I was also advertising the new qualification, Certified Actuarial Analyst, launched jointly by the IFoA and the Society of Actuaries.

The time commitment on Council is not onerous, with four meetings each year plus follow up actions and emails. You will also receive an informative induction as a new Council member. If you care about shaping the future of your profession, and you can bring your own unique perspective, I would implore you to put yourself forward. You will find your role on Council extremely rewarding!”





Volunteers' experiences

“In order for us to continue growing the profession it is critical that we as members support the IFoA through volunteer work.”



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A view from a volunteer: **Antonie Jagga**



Antonie Jagga is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) based in Singapore. He started his career as an actuarial graduate in South Africa and moved to Singapore in 2015 where he leads PwC's Financial Risk Management consulting practice across South-East Asia.

The experience of a volunteer based in Singapore

“In my career as an actuary, I've been fortunate enough to be involved in everything from life insurance to banking, and to travel the world. The actuarial qualification has been key in opening up these opportunities and in equipping me with the skills to remain relevant in a changing world.

I started volunteering for the IFoA in 2013, and have made a conscious effort to do so at every opportunity since. While it's not easy to take on the additional commitment, as we all have busy work and personal lives, I believe it's important to remember that being a professional goes beyond 9 to 5. I've personally benefited from the actuarial qualification, and would not be where I am today without it. This is largely due to two things: firstly the rigour of the education syllabus, and secondly, the ongoing professional development (through CPD) required by the IFoA. Neither of these would be possible without a strong group of volunteers to support the full-time employees of the IFoA.

In order for us to continue growing the profession, it is critical that we as members support the IFoA through volunteer work. This can take many forms: acting as Guinea Pigs, volunteering as committee members, or providing support by marking exam scripts. The IFoA makes it easy to be a volunteer, despite being based in a different country, or a different time zone for that matter! All information is made available electronically and I'm able to attend meetings via conference call. It's also great to work with people from different backgrounds, sharing experiences and helping to shape the future of the profession.

Finally, volunteering helps keep me grounded, even when my work life gets very busy. The change of pace and the sense of giving back to the profession is something that I personally find very satisfying. I would strongly encourage anyone thinking about getting more involved with the profession to take up volunteering.”

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Volunteers' experiences

"I could never have imagined the huge list of connections that volunteering would generate for me."

A view from a volunteer: Barbara Fewkes



"I first volunteered with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) in 2010 when I joined the Pensions Conference Programme Committee, having been approached at the 2010 conference at Celtic Manor. I won't deny that at first it was rather daunting – I was unaware of who many of the suggested plenary speakers were and there was much internet research required on my part! However, undeterred, and following a very successful conference in 2011, I stayed on the Conference Programme Committee for 2012."

The experience of a volunteer working in Pensions

"Having been bitten by the volunteering bug, I then joined the Pensions Education and CPD (ECPD) Sub-committee, responsible for the design, management and delivery of CPD for pensions actuaries. This sub-committee consists of a diverse group of actuaries (and non-actuaries) allowing us to consider and provide a broad range of topics at our CPD events. I am passionate about providing quality CPD for members and am honoured to now Chair the ECPD Sub-committee.

I also sit on the Pensions Board – another daunting experience as I initially thought this was only for those actuaries with more years under their belt than me. I was wrong. The Pensions Board have been incredibly welcoming and, whilst at first I may have been a little lost with the jargon on the various workings within the profession, I have now found my feet with the help of the Board members and support staff.

The ECPD sub-committee this year (2018) have been responsible for the design and content of the annual IFoA Pensions Conference. Having listened to member feedback, we decided to try something new this year and ran the event as a one and a half day conference with a dinner on the opening evening. Being able to change the format of events and take on board the feedback of IFoA members is important to me and I have been delighted to work with the sub-committee members and the IFoA events team to put together such a successful event.

The main highlight of volunteering for me has been meeting and interacting with such a broad range of individuals. These have included countless other actuaries, as well as Executive staff, numerous high profile industry experts, and even politicians. I could never have imagined the huge list of connections that volunteering would generate for me.

I also mark CP3 (Communication) exams having previously marked CA3 for a number of years. This can be challenging at times with tight timescales but it is rewarding – being able to see the importance the IFoA places on the quality of the actuarial exams and the marking of them instills a great deal of confidence in the future of the profession and the actuaries starting out in their careers. I'm just glad I qualified quite some time ago now!



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Volunteers' experiences

“The main highlight of volunteering for me has been meeting and interacting with such a broad range of individuals.”

I thoroughly recommend volunteering with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries. Don't be shy – you can give a lot of your time, or just a little. There will be an opportunity to suit you and you will definitely be made to feel welcome, regardless of your level of experience.”



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Volunteers' experiences

“Suddenly I had my foot in the door of the Belfast business community. At times like this I realise what an asset it is to belong to a profession.”

A view from a volunteer: Carole Ryden



Carole Ryden is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) based in Northern Ireland where she is a Director of Ryden Mckenna Ltd. Carole has volunteered for the IFoA since 2012.

The experience of a volunteer who found volunteering got her back into work

“In 2012 after a career break to bring up my young daughter, I was ready to go back to work. I had the skills and I felt my experience remained relevant. I didn’t think it would be difficult to go back out and find a job in Edinburgh, where I was based. I discovered that I was wrong. Experience and relevant skills would not be enough. I was reminded of what my father had continually told us growing up. He used to advise that ‘It’s not what you know, it’s who you know’ and ‘When you have a job, you’ll get a job’. This was the first time I’d thought seriously about this advice.

I began to talk to the small number of work contacts I still had in Edinburgh. I discovered that people generally seemed pleased that I valued their opinion enough to seek their advice. The hard bit was being brave enough to ask. The best advice I was given was from a senior actuary who suggested I join a working party and make new, valuable contacts that way. This was good advice. I had to build up my network and do something to raise my profile. I needed to engage with the profession. I had volunteered with the Faculty in the past and enjoyed it. I was happy to get involved again. I looked for interesting volunteer roles. I sought help from IFoA staff. Their support and encouragement were invaluable. I began to appreciate what a great opportunity volunteering would be. I’d be able to make new contacts, rebuild my confidence and learn new skills. So, I eagerly began my volunteering afresh. Soon I found that my volunteer work was the job I needed . . . ‘When you have a job, you’ll get a job’ and within months I had secured a ‘paid’ job!

Since then, I have put myself forward for several volunteer roles. I have volunteered as a member of the Scottish Board, going on to become Deputy Leader. I have also volunteered as a Career Ambassador, been a member of various working parties, presented at IFoA events including acting as Chair of the 2015 CPD Co-ordinators’ Briefing, in London, and in 2013 I was elected to Council where I served until 2016.

Relocating to Northern Ireland

In 2016 my family and I moved to Northern Ireland; I had left when I was 18. I didn’t know anyone in the NI business world. Luckily, I could use the volunteering route again to meet actuaries in Belfast and build new relationships and connections.



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Volunteers' experiences

“Volunteering can be a safe environment in which to build up your confidence, grow your network, gain relevant experience and develop new skills.”



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With the good volunteering relationships which I already had established I started making enquiries. I was quickly able to connect with the Society of Northern Ireland Actuaries (SONIA) – the regional society for IFoA members, in Belfast. Through volunteering with them I got to know many new people in a very short space of time. Suddenly I had my foot in the door of the Belfast business community. At times like this I realise what an asset it is to belong to a profession. Particularly a profession like ours which values volunteering and gives so much support to those who wish to get involved.

Have courage and believe in yourself

Don't be afraid of change. Volunteering can be a safe environment in which to build up your confidence, grow your network, gain relevant experience and develop new skills.

Volunteering isn't easy (at least, not if you work hard at it) and at times I found it frustrating. For a long period, I was way out of my comfort zone. I found it scary to be the lone voice asking a difficult question in a packed meeting room of people I didn't know. I found it stomach churning to be the only one voting against a motion I didn't agree with. (I wasn't the only one against the motion, but I was the only one prepared to voice my dissent!) Looking back, I am glad I found myself in those situations. It tested me in ways that I wasn't being tested in my paid job. I persevered regardless of my fears and it was worth it.

I strongly believe that if you work hard as a volunteer then *'You will reap what you sow'*, not necessarily right away but at some point. It helps if you take the attitude *'To give and not to count the cost'* because it may be some years down the line before you fully appreciate what you have gained.

Rich and valued experience

I had many great opportunities to contribute to the profession and at the same time meet new people through my volunteering. As Deputy Leader of the Scottish Board I proposed an initiative for the IFoA to host an event focussing on diversity, which I worked on with the IFoA's Head of Engagement. We took the opportunity to collaborate with the Morton Fraser Business Women's Network. Together we hosted a joint panel event in Edinburgh in 2016 entitled *Leading by Example: Diversity in Business*.* The speakers encouraged women to act as supportive role models for other women. During the discussions, Dame Susan Rice spoke about her work ethic. She said that sometimes she was paid for what she did and sometimes she was not paid (i.e. volunteering). Paid or unpaid, she viewed all of it as work.

Good advice

Make the most of our profession. Get involved. Talk to as many people as possible and ask for advice. Don't be afraid to contact people, especially members of the IFoA staff. People are more than willing to help. If you know senior contacts approach them. Be brave, be honest and just tell them you would value their advice on your situation.

Volunteering for the IFoA helped me to get back into the workforce by building my confidence and enlarging my skillset. It helped me to establish a new network after my relocation. The profession is a community and all communities help us to belong. Make the most of your professional community. Get involved and reap the rewards.”

* The 'Leading by Example: Diversity in Business' panel discussion was recorded and you can access the recording on the [IFoA's Diversity Advisory Group webpage](#).

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Volunteers' experiences

“... there will always be a role that we, be it students or qualified actuaries, can all play to shape the future of both the IFoA and our profession.”

A view from a volunteer: Chong Sheng Lim



“I started my actuarial career in Asia after graduating from Heriot-Watt University in 2014. Since then, I have been actively involved as a volunteer career ambassador for the IFoA.”

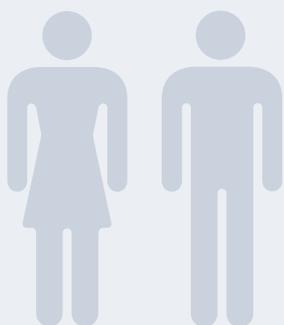
The experience of a volunteer in Singapore

“The first of the many events that I have volunteered to attend was at a careers fair held at a local university in Singapore. My role was to encourage students to consider a career as an actuary and the experience was amazing!

I am always excited to meet with enthusiastic potential actuarial students, as it reminds me of my teenage years when I was searching for an undergraduate course to pursue. I am eager to share my experience, and unfold the known and untold facts and figures of the actuarial profession. In addition, I enjoy raising public awareness about the various roles that actuaries play, how it differs from the other professions, and how the IFoA plays a pivotal role if one decides to pursue this career path.

Some of the students I met even connected with me after the careers fair via social networks and by email to ask further questions. It is always a delight to see some of the students whom I had once given advice to doing well in their studies and career. I am extremely honoured to be an inspiration to them.

I have never regretted taking time out of my schedule to volunteer and am very appreciative towards the IFoA for giving me this opportunity. There will never be too many volunteers and there will always be a role that we, be it students or qualified actuaries, can all play to shape the future of both the IFoA and our profession. I encourage you to get involved.”





Volunteers' experiences

“The sub-committee provides me with the opportunity to hear from people working in different fields and to interact with committee members from diverse backgrounds . . . ”



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A view from a volunteer: **Chris Reynolds**



Chris Reynolds is the current Chair of the Health and Care Research Sub-committee, a member of the Health and Care Board and sits on the CMI Assurances Committee. He spearheaded the initiative which led to the launch of the Zurich Actuarial Society in 2017. In his day job, Chris works in Zurich for PartnerRe.

The experience of a volunteer based in Switzerland

“Being a member of the Health and Care Research Sub-committee is a great way to keep abreast of work in the Health and Care space. On becoming Chair in 2016 I also joined the Health and Care Board. This gives me a holistic view of activity within the Health and Care space and how the work of the research sub-committee contributes.

During my time on this sub-committee we’ve established several working parties and held a number of successful events. The sub-committee provides me with the opportunity to hear from people working in different fields and to interact with committee members from diverse backgrounds with several based overseas.

Time commitment

Typically I spend about a day per month for the sub-committee meetings and a few hours of preparation pre- and post-meeting. With email, videoconference, teleconference and other communication tools, being based in Switzerland causes no issues and can reduce the burden for travel. However, I still often attend meetings in person as I can take the opportunity to arrange other business meetings and maximise the use of the day.

Building community in Zurich

Of course it’s also good to have activities in Zurich. A desire for increased activity and collaboration locally resulted in me spearheading an initiative to establish a regional community in Zurich. This culminated with the establishment of the Zurich Actuarial Society in early 2017. I chair the organising Committee and working with a group of talented volunteers we’ve organised a range of technical and leisure events over the course of 2017.

My employer is very supportive, recognising the benefits that active involvement in the profession brings. It helps raise the employer’s profile and also helps to continuously develop the employee at the same time. Being based in Switzerland my employer is keen for members of the various actuarial professions to maintain active links with their professional body – volunteering is a perfect way to achieve this and they actively encourage me and my colleagues to get involved.



Volunteers' experiences

“It is a fantastic way to expand your network of contacts and you never know what doors it may open for you.”

Why I volunteer

In the past, I have also undertaken a number of different volunteer tasks including Assistant Examiner, Moderator, Guinea Pig, Working Party member and Life Specialism Lecturer at the Professionalism Course. In 2012 and 2013 I was also a member, and then Chair, of the committee with responsibility for putting together the programme for the Life Conference. If anyone reading this is thinking of volunteering, I'd say – do it. There are so many different ways in which you can help the profession that there's certain to be an area of interest for you and if there are no current volunteering vacancies in one area, try something else. It is a fantastic way to expand your network of contacts and you never know what doors it may open for you. I've certainly found that my previous volunteering has developed in unexpected ways.”



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Volunteers' experiences

"I have been volunteering for the IFoA for over fifteen years and find it quite addictive!"

A view from a volunteer: Dawn Whittaker



Dawn Whittaker is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA), based in the Midlands, UK, who specialises in life product development and management. Dawn has volunteered for the IFoA in a variety of roles over many years.

The experience of a volunteer in Life Insurance

"I have been volunteering for the IFoA for over fifteen years and find it quite addictive! Having completed one opportunity, there is usually another I am keen to assist with and sometimes I have more than one on the go, depending on the time requirements. There is no pressure from the profession; it is my personal choice.

My main volunteer interest is in the lifelong learning space within the life practice area. For the last four years I have been a member of the Life Conference Technical Content Programme Committee. This culminated in me being Chair of the Life Conference event in Dublin 2019. This three-day residential event saw a little in excess of 1,000 delegates enjoy a range of plenaries, multiple workshops and the opportunity to network with peers from the IFoA and other stakeholders.

What's involved?

As Chair of the Life Conference, with the aid of other committee members and IFoA executive staff, the remit is primarily twofold. Firstly, to lead the committee in drawing up the technical aspects of the programme, in which, as always, the hardest job is selecting the successful applicants to deliver the workshop sessions. There is always a lively debate to ensure we have a great range of relevant topics from a broad range of speakers from varying backgrounds. Next we choose the plenary and keynote speakers. As we approach the event the Chair, Deputy Chair and IFoA staff hold a teleconference with the external plenary speakers to assist them in formulating their sessions. All committee members assist in peer review of workshop slides before they go on to the IFoA website and conference app. The second remit is choice of entertainment for the conference dinner, all of which we do in partnership with the IFoA executive staff. Along the journey is the opportunity to input into event promotion and I am delighted the 2019 event sold out.

When everyone leaves the conference I hope they feel happy that they have gained great CPD, had value for money and overall had a great experience. I see the feedback, together with other committee members, and this forms the start of the work for the next year's event.

As Chair of the conference, I will be retiring from this role and a new committee will form. This is the opportunity for new members to come along and follow in my

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Volunteers' experiences

*"I would encourage
you to give it a go,
you won't regret it."*



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footsteps. Much of the input and involvement when new committee members first volunteer to get involved is a great learning experience and, for some, it is great preparation if you want to ultimately progress to be Chair. Or you can step down after your one-year tenure and still have learned lots and met a wide range of people.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

For me it is the personal satisfaction of seeing something through from start to finish and having the opportunity to shape what is happening for members in a part of the profession. I am proud to be involved and be supported in my activities by fantastic IFoA professional staff. Working on the Life Conference is also a great way to enhance team-building skills. It's also an opportunity to learn how to engage remotely as most of the work is carried out by email and tele- or video-conference calls so geography is not a barrier to participation. It's a chance to learn about project management and be able to react to the unexpected. You can also try your hand at public speaking by being on stage or chairing a workshop. You may be surprised how enjoyable it can be and get a huge confidence boost. I would encourage you to give it a go, you won't regret it."

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Volunteers' experiences

"I would recommend becoming a Student Employer Contact to anyone who oversees or manages IFoA students in their day job. You will be kept in the loop, have the opportunity to contribute to consultations, and have a direct contact to find out information."



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer:

Donncha Pexton-Hayes



Donncha is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA).

Based in London, Donncha works for QBE Insurance Group as a Reserving Actuary. He has undertaken many different volunteer roles for the IFoA and is currently a Student Employer Contact.

The experience of a volunteer Student Employer Contact

I became a qualified member of the IFoA in 2011, and since then I have volunteered for the IFoA in several different ways. Through my numerous volunteer roles, I have enjoyed being involved with many areas of the IFoA.

I have been involved in a number of committees, Member Interest Groups (MIGs) and other roles to support the IFoA, providing insight and helping maintain the high standard of the student examination process.

Since early 2018 I have been the volunteer Student Employer Contact on behalf of my organisation, QBE Insurance Group. This has been really useful for me, as I am directly responsible for our student recruits. With the responsibility of setting the student study package, and monitoring student progress at QBE, it is essential for me to understand any developments that could impact our employees.

What is required?

Being a Student Employer Contact is very rewarding and the time commitment works well with my day job. I receive monthly updates and information from the IFoA relating to students, which I then share with colleagues within my organisation.

Volunteering has given me the opportunity (on behalf of my organisation) to feed into consultations on the student experience. Having a direct contact within the IFoA has been really useful, even if it is simply to put me in contact with the right person to help with my query.

I was fortunate to be able to attend the CPD Co-ordinators Annual Briefing, where employers come together to discuss topics of interest. This event is a great way to share ideas and understand how other employers approach matters concerning members.

Why volunteer?

Volunteering with the IFoA has been a great way of keeping up to speed with developments in the profession, as well as shaping the direction the profession is taking. My role as a Student Employer Contact also helps ensure our students at QBE are fully informed, up to date, and are engaged with the IFoA.



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Volunteers' experiences

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Volunteers' experiences

“It has been a new initiative to appoint a Deputy Chair and one that has been beneficial for both the Committee and my future role as Chair”

A view from a volunteer: Emily Penn



“Having enjoyed my involvement in the Life Conference Programme Committee over the last couple of years I was delighted to be asked to act as Deputy Chair of the Committee for the 2013 Conference, with the view to acting as Chair in 2014. It has meant there has been a natural person to step in when the current Chair is unavailable, but perhaps more importantly it has given me the opportunity to think ahead to next year and how I might influence the shape of the 2014 conference.”

The experience of a volunteer Deputy Chair of the Life Conference Programme Committee

“The IFoA’s Life Conference is high profile, attracting over 1000 delegates and the main work of the committee is to shape the programme to appeal to actuaries of all experience working across the life sector. The committee is responsible for both selecting workshops from a large number of excellent submissions and compiling an impressive group of topical and thought provoking plenary speakers.

The brainstorming sessions on plenary speakers gives rise to lively debates! Through this process it is invaluable that we have committee members from diverse backgrounds to allow us to consider the wide ranging topical issues in the sector. We can also leverage off members’ own contacts: access to industry CEOs, CROs, CFOs, senior practitioners, wider financial market experts, regulators and industry bodies.

I have been involved in a number of other volunteer roles for the IFoA, including working party member and Chair and member of the Finance & Investment Education, Research and CPD Committee. My volunteer experiences have broadened my knowledge and awareness of topical issues across the industry as well as expanding my network of industry contacts – including some very influential leaders whom I wouldn’t have access to in my day to day role. My employer has been supportive of my involvement as they recognise these personal benefits as well as the fact it helps to raise their own profile.

I have enjoyed my year as Deputy Chair and I am looking forward to my role as Chair in 2014. I look forward to working with an enthusiastic committee who can bring together a diverse range of industry experiences and contacts.”



Volunteers' experiences

“Volunteering provides opportunities for members to interact with other actuaries, globally, and gives them a platform to exchange ideas and understand a variety of issues observed in developed and developing countries.”

A view from a volunteer: Farzana Ismail



“I am a Fellow of the IFoA based in Malaysia. I volunteered to be a member of the Takaful Working Party in late 2013. The Working Party was fortunate to have members from various parts of the world, including the UK, Pakistan, Malaysia, Bermuda and the Middle East.”

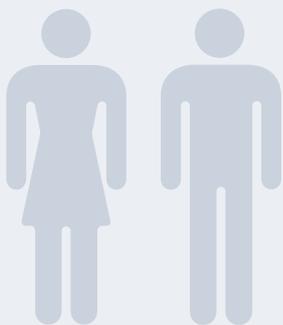
The experience of a volunteer in the Takaful Working Party

“Members of the Working Party were divided into three separate work groups. I volunteered to lead the research work which involved understanding and exploring the main value proposition of takaful, including surplus sharing mechanisms. Having volunteers based in different locations enabled us to conduct market research in various countries, including Malaysia, Pakistan and the Middle East. We also conducted a high level comparison on practices of surplus distributions, and identified the key lessons learnt from with-profits and mutual business in the UK that could be applied within takaful.

The key challenge we faced was that the level of understanding of takaful varied widely amongst volunteers. Despite this, even volunteers with little takaful exposure initially were able to contribute by providing a fresh perspective on the issues being considered.

As I was working in one of the largest takaful markets in the world, I was keen to share my knowledge and experience with other IFoA members globally and to introduce the concept of takaful to other parts of the world. It was also enlightening to obtain input from experienced UK actuaries on with-profits business and the management of mutual business, given the parallels that can be drawn between mutuals, with-profits business and takaful business particularly on the surplus sharing nature of such businesses.

Our key findings were presented at the 2014 Life Conference in Birmingham. Volunteering as a member of the Working Party provides opportunities for members to interact with other actuaries globally, and gives them a platform to exchange ideas and understand a variety of issues observed in developed and developing countries. I would encourage members to volunteer and play an active role in working parties.”





Volunteers' experiences

“The Disciplinary Board allows the IFoA to uphold our standards and to promote public trust in our professionalism.”

A view from a volunteer: Gordon Sharp



Gordon is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA). Although now retired, Gordon is still active in voluntary roles, both for the profession and other bodies. He is a member of the IFoA's Disciplinary Board, Treasurer of the Worshipful Company of Actuaries, and secretary of its Education Committee. He has volunteered throughout his career, including serving for many years on the IFoA's Pensions Board, and then the Continuous Mortality Investigation (CMI), and he chaired both bodies.

The experience of a volunteer member of the Disciplinary Board

“Mention the disciplinary process to other actuaries, and most will simply say that they are glad not to have had any dealings with it. But it is a vital part of our profession, and I would encourage members to consider getting involved. The Disciplinary Board allows the IFoA to uphold our standards and to promote public trust in our professionalism.

The experience

The Board provides oversight of and direction to the disciplinary process, with strong lay (non-member) representation as well as actuary members. I have found the role fascinating, covering all aspects of actuarial work, both in the UK and internationally.

Time Commitment

Disciplinary Board membership is not onerous – there are four formal meetings each year, plus a training day, with occasional email correspondence between meetings. Members of the Board serve for a three-year term, which can be renewed for a maximum of two terms.

Why I volunteer

For many of us, volunteering is part and parcel of professional life. When I qualified, I was not asked if I wanted to volunteer – rather, my senior actuary asked me which Faculty research group I was going to join! Two Students Society papers later, and volunteering was then embedded in me. Our relatively small profession is envied by others for the participation and dedication of its members. If you have not yet considered getting involved, I would encourage you to do so.”

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

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Volunteers' experiences

“Volunteering has many benefits . . . what I value most are the excellent relationships I have been able to form with other volunteers.”

A view from a volunteer: Helena Ingram



Helena is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA), and leads on people development strategy for Willis Towers Watson’s Retirement GB business line. Helena volunteers on the mentoring workstream for the IFoA’s Diversity Advisory Group (DAG), with responsibility for the launch of the IFoA’s actuarial mentoring programme, known as Project AMP.

The experience of a volunteer based in the Midlands

“Prior to volunteering for the IFoA, I co-chaired the Willis Towers Watson Women & Supporters Inclusion Network. I found this role hugely rewarding and was looking for an opportunity to extend my work on diversity and inclusion to a wider demographic. Volunteering for the DAG was a natural next step.

I was lucky with the timing of my decision to volunteer: Pension Insurance Corporation (PIC) was looking to work with the IFoA on diversity initiatives, and I had already connected with the specialist learning, development and transitioning consultancy Moving Ahead through my previous diversity role. We introduced the two organisations and quickly found that they could work well together. We were soon on the road to designing, launching and delivering a top-quality mentoring programme, which addressed key research from the IFoA: that ‘non-retiring female actuaries leave the profession some 13 years ahead of their male peers.’

Project AMP

Project AMP matches 100 senior male and female mentors with recently and nearly-qualified female actuaries in cross-functional and inter-disciplinary posts. The first cohort of mentors and mentees started their nine-month mentoring partnership on 6 November 2017, at a launch event hosted at Staple Inn, London. Some of the biggest employers of actuaries in the UK have joined the programme, and it was both rewarding and sometimes challenging to establish these relationships and convert them to sign-ups. We will be monitoring the progress of the programme over the next few months, and looking at how we can build on this foundation for future years – there is scope to widen out the definition of diversity beyond gender, and we are keen to harness the well-established benefits of diversity – not only for the profession, but also for the individual and for employers.

Location, location, location

While my role has involved attending meetings and events in London, much of the work can be completed effectively by remote access solutions like Skype and email from my desk in the Midlands, and when I do need to travel I can generally do this



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile



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Volunteers' experiences

"I have been able to apply the skills I use in my day-to-day work to new scenarios and consequently to refine those skills."

efficiently by arranging other meetings around my DAG-related commitments. Volunteering has many benefits. I have been able to apply the skills I use in my day-to-day work to new scenarios and consequently to refine those skills. I've also learnt new approaches to solving familiar problems. However, what I value most are the excellent relationships I have been able to form with other volunteers, with actuaries working for other employers, and with colleagues in the wider professional world."



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Volunteers' experiences

"I would advise any students thinking of volunteering to just do it! It will open a door to something different and it is not as difficult as it may seem."

A view from a volunteer: Heting Yang



Heting Yang is a student of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) based in New Zealand, where he works for Sovereign Assurance as a Senior Actuarial Analyst.

Heting started volunteering for the IFoA shortly after joining, as a member of the Global Student Consultative Forum and the Data Science Conference Programme Committee 2018/2019.

The experience of a student member

Being a student member, it can be hard to balance work, study and volunteering. However, I did not want to be a member simply sitting the exams. It was important to me to contribute and be involved, at least in the aspects that I am interested in.

The importance of feedback

As a Global Student Consultative Forum Representative, I helped spread the request for IFoA exam feedback and reported back to the committee for discussion. Being a regional representative is one of the most impactful ways to contribute to the profession and make positive change. The IFoA has six global forums to ensure that members can have a say, no matter where they are located in the world.

Data Science and its potential for Actuaries

Data science holds huge potential for changing the way in which actuaries work and being involved in the conference programme committee, I was enlightened by the angle of approach to data science as a pre-emptive and preventative tool rather than simply analysing and predicting possible results. In addition, getting to know people who share a common interest in applying actuarial techniques in non-traditional fields encouraged me to explore more cutting-edge data analytics skills.

For the Data Science Conference Programme Committee 2018/2019, I was involved with reviewing paper submissions for both the physical and virtual events. Working alongside other committee members was very helpful, and with guidance from more experienced committee members I developed my skills in reviewing a submission from different perspectives: inclusion of different actuarial practices, possible level of audience interest, etc. With support from the IFoA Events team and IFoA Executive support it made me realise that I do not have to be the best event organiser to put my name down to help. One can grow in the process of simply stepping up and doing.

Balancing, work, study and volunteering

It can be challenging to find time to study; however, balancing work and volunteering was not as difficult as it seemed.



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Volunteers' experiences

“Being a regional representative is one of the most impactful ways to contribute to the profession and make positive change.”

I would advise any students thinking of volunteering to just do it! It will open a door to something different and it is not as difficult as it may seem.

A good start is halfway to success but actually starting itself is already good enough.



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Volunteers' experiences

"I was immediately impressed by how important the promotion of ethical values and standards of competence were to the IFoA."

A view from a volunteer: Iain McGrory



Iain has been a Lay* Panel Member of the IFoA's Disciplinary Pool since July 2014. He is a former Head of Professional Standards at Grampian Police, in Scotland, having retired in 2011 after more than 35 years' service. Following retirement from the police he spent five years as a Commissioner with the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (SLCC) and is currently a Public Interest Member on the Investigation Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS).

The experience of a volunteer Lay Panel Member of the IFoA Disciplinary Pool

"Having worked in the professional standards arena in policing and the legal profession in Scotland, I was keen to experience something similar in another area. From the outset I was made to feel welcome and any nervousness around my lack of technical knowledge about the profession was quickly addressed by IFoA staff. The IFoA is an organisation that not only publishes fine words but also follows through on them. I was immediately impressed by how important the promotion of ethical values and standards of competence were to the IFoA. It was clear to me that maintaining and enhancing reputation was extremely important.

The role, time commitment etc

Since taking up my position in 2014, I have sat as a member of several Adjudication Panels, a member of two Disciplinary Tribunals, and early in 2018 I was the Chair of a Disciplinary Tribunal. I have received appropriate support from IFoA staff in the form of structured training days and been able to observe a Disciplinary Tribunal, before sitting on one. The experience I have gained while working with other professions in this area allows me to offer colleagues at the IFoA an alternative view on how matters can be dealt with. However, it is also a two-way street and I have been able to share my learning from the IFoA with other bodies. My commitment is no more than four days per year and I have gained valuable experience during my tenure.

Actuaries are humans and like all others they will make mistakes in their professional or personal lives. They, other IFoA members, the recipients of their services and the wider public, need to be confident that the IFoA has fair and proportionate procedures in place to handle such errors and failings. Lay Panel Members of the IFoA Disciplinary Pool play a key role in this and I would encourage anyone who feels they have the skills and experience to volunteer to become a Lay Panel Member with the IFoA."

*The term "Lay" refers to someone who is not a member of the IFoA.

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Volunteers' experiences

"We had some very experienced actuaries on our working party but I must say they were very welcoming and collaborative."

A view from a volunteer: John McAleer



John McAleer is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) based in Scotland. He specialises in pensions and is a Senior Consultant with Aon. In his day job, he partners with clients to help them achieve their pensions-related objectives.

John began volunteering for the IFoA in 2016.

The experience of a volunteer involved in a pensions working party

I first volunteered with the IFoA in 2016 when I applied to join a working party. The working party was set up to look into how defined benefit pension schemes are maturing and to consider whether there were any gaps in industry practice. I thought this seemed like an interesting area with some overlap in my day job as an actuary advising sponsors and trustees of pension schemes.

Getting involved

I must admit it was quite daunting putting myself forward but that is to be expected when you go outside of your comfort zone.

We had some very experienced actuaries on our working party but I must say they were very welcoming and collaborative. It was also great to exchange views with actuaries who had different backgrounds to me – for example one actuary had worked for The Pensions Regulator and another for bulk annuity providers.

Lifelong learning: benefits

We published our findings in May 2018. Our findings provided the opportunity for me to speak at various industry events – the highlight of which was probably presenting our findings to staff at The Pensions Regulator. The findings also allowed me to contribute to articles for *The Actuary* magazine and *Professional Pensions*. There was a lot of drafting involved in getting the articles just right, including very helpful support from the IFoA. With all the hours invested it was a pleasant surprise that our article on cashflow driven investment made the front cover of the October 2018 edition of *The Actuary*.

...and it led to more opportunities

One of my colleagues at Aon, Alan Watson, is currently an IFoA Council member and the Leader/Chair of the IFoA's Scottish Board. Alan is always on the lookout for speakers to present at the Scottish Board's Knowledge Sharing Scotland (KSS) events, in Scotland. Alan managed to rope me in to do a talk on defined contribution pension



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Volunteers' experiences

"I would certainly encourage members to come forward and volunteer. The benefits far outweigh the time invested."

consolidation in 2017. We ran two sessions and managed to generate some insightful sharing of experiences with actuaries from different firms – which Alan tells me is what these events are meant to be all about!

There are lots of volunteering opportunities to suit your areas of interest and the skills that you are looking to develop. It is also a great way to grow your network – both within the actuarial community and within industry more generally. I would certainly encourage members to come forward and volunteer. The benefits far outweigh the time invested.



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Engagement Profile

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Volunteers' experiences

“My employers past and present have clearly seen the benefits to them of having their staff volunteer, as it brings increased exposure, a higher profile and fresh ideas.”

A view from a volunteer: Jonathan Hughes



“We are lucky to work in a profession that provides such a varied diet of potential volunteering work. Over the years I’ve enjoyed taking advantage of those opportunities: speaking at the profession’s conferences, chairing the organising committee for one of those conferences and chairing one of the CMI’s investigations committees. It’s a rewarding experience and a great way to broaden your own thinking.”

The experience of a volunteer working in Health and Care

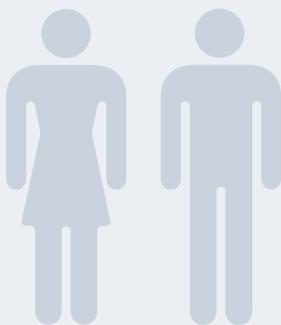
“There are many different ways to contribute to the profession. If you have particular knowledge or experiences that could help take our industry forward, speaking at conferences is a great way to share that insight. I enjoy doing this in particular because the audience is broad-based and has varied viewpoints, which gives you invaluable feedback on your ideas. It’s a great way to raise your profile and make connections with like-minded people in your industry.

If you prefer a more “behind the scenes” role, the conference programme committees always welcome people with fresh ideas to make these events as relevant and interesting as possible. I enjoyed participating in the organising committee for the Health and Care conference for several years, including being Chair for the 2015 conference. I was always impressed by the camaraderie and creativity from everyone involved and found it great fun.

Volunteering for the CMI lets you make a more technical contribution. The CMI’s work is particularly vital in sectors such as Health and Care, where the products and marketplace are rapidly developing and we all benefit from industry-wide research. Some of the best actuaries I’ve worked with have been volunteers on CMI committees; it’s great being able to work alongside them and make a broader contribution to our industry. As Chair of the Annuities Committee, I also get a chance to input into the CMI’s strategy via the Executive team to ensure we sustain the CMI’s relevance to the actuarial community.

On a personal level, I’ve benefited from volunteer work too. It’s a great way to maintain and broaden your network, as well as getting exposure to a broad range of views. My employers past and present have clearly seen the benefits to them of having their staff volunteer, as it brings increased exposure, a higher profile and fresh ideas.

With its relevance to wider social issues, the Health and Care area especially benefits from a broad range of volunteer input. So if you feel you have something to contribute, please don’t be shy: every volunteer group I’ve worked in has been welcoming, professional and most of all fun.”





Volunteers' experiences

“As a newly qualified actuary, I feel I better understand the professional body I am part of, my career as an actuary, and the prospects it entails, because of my volunteering roles.”

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer:

Josephine Robertson



Josephine is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA), and is a CERA qualified R&D Actuary at Pacific Life Re, Europe. Josephine has a keen interest in the continued learning and development of the profession; volunteering as Vice Chair and member of the Momentum Committee for two years and SIAS regional society as Programme Convenor. In addition, she has volunteered with the Digital Volunteer Group and supported the IFoA's education teams including as member of the Student Consultative Forum. Josephine is now seeking additional volunteering roles and has started to volunteer with the Worshipful Company of Actuaries Committee.

The experience of a 'younger member'

“The term younger member is funny; at what age do you become an 'older member'?! However, being a member of the profession with less years of experience did not prevent me feeling I could volunteer and provide a valuable contribution to my professional body. I started volunteering in my second year of membership and have enjoyed all roles held. I would encourage others to get involved as I have found volunteering to be a rewarding opportunity.

Time commitment and knowledge base

For members still undergoing qualification it can seem daunting to add any extra time commitments. However, there are volunteer roles that can be undertaken which require few additional hours. Your employer may support volunteering during working hours, or may not, but considering the study time undertaken outside of study days, adding an extra hour or so to further your career in a different way seems small in comparison.

For less experienced members, if it seems you do not yet have anything fruitful in your knowledge base to contribute to a volunteering role - it is worth reconsidering. The IFoA may be seeking a student's view point - or a newly or recently qualified member to talk at a school careers event. The best advice I had was to put yourself forward and let the working party Chair or the selection panel decide. If you do not get the role, it's not personal - it comes down to relevant experience and the number of applicants. Keep applying to those volunteering roles that are of interest to you and that you can commit to.

Why I volunteer?

Volunteering offers great opportunities to better understand the professional body that you are a member of. The IFoA, and each regional society, offer an opportunity for you to meet fellow actuaries and students, to learn across practices and wider fields, to hear new view points and to have your own constructively challenged. Volunteering also provides opportunities to work on personal objectives, for example establishing a network, speaking publicly, learning how to chair meetings or simply giving back. These are all opportunities to develop and learn. As a newly qualified actuary, I feel I better understand the professional body I am part of, my career as an actuary, and the prospects it entails, because of my volunteering roles.”

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Volunteers' experiences

“If you care about shaping the future of your profession . . . I would implore you to put yourself forward. You will find your role on Council extremely rewarding!”



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer: Kelvin Chamunorwa



“When I was editor of The Actuary magazine, I was fortunate to get an inside view of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries through interviewing the incoming President each year. Through these interactions, I quickly realised that Council has a formidable role to determine the future of the actuarial profession, as the body that sets and oversees strategy. I wanted to have an impact in the areas of our profession that I hold dear, such as a relevant education system, an inclusive membership and an authoritative public profile. I needed to be on Council!”

The experience of a volunteer member of Council

“I was delighted when the membership agreed with my intentions for the direction of our profession, and voted for me to represent them on Council. Boy have I had the opportunity to make that impact! For example, Council is currently reviewing strategy and I am on the Council sub-committee looking into the education strategy. We are working towards the continued relevance and demand for actuaries, across disciplines and geographies, through the review of our education system.

As a relatively recent entrant to the actuarial profession, and being from a non-UK background, I must admit that I was anxious about how my views would be received by my new colleagues on Council. In retrospect, I had nothing to worry about. In fact, I have found that my unique perspective is heard, respected and acted upon.

It's worth pointing out that the issues that Council grapples with can be complex, with no clear right answer. Also, with a group of 30 Council members, each of whom is very passionate about the profession, it can be difficult to reach consensus. However, these challenges are recognised, and skilfully managed by the President, who chairs our meetings. Also, appropriately timed humour around the table never goes amiss! It helps to ease tensions and reminds us that ultimately we all want the same thing – a thriving actuarial profession.

Time commitment on Council is not onerous, with four meetings each year plus follow up actions and emails. You will also receive an informative induction as a new Council member.

If you care about shaping the future of your profession, and you can bring your own unique perspective, I would implore you to put yourself forward. You will find your role on Council extremely rewarding!”

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Volunteers' experiences

“For once I actually enjoyed sitting an exam! This time safe in the knowledge that I wasn’t being assessed by the paper but rather assessing it, and as a bonus I received a fee for undertaking the role.”

A view from a volunteer: Kyle West



Kyle qualified in 2015 and took the opportunity to apply to be a Guinea Pig 1 for the IFoA, here he tells us why and provides an insight into the role of GPI.

“Having just qualified I was keen to get involved in volunteering generally as it is a good way to meet other actuaries outside the bubble of your own firm and to support the profession. Throughout my time sitting the exams I always found it interesting and now I had an opportunity to learn more about the exam process. Offering to help assess future exam papers nicely ticked a couple of boxes.”

Experience of an IFoA Guinea Pig 1

“The fact that this opportunity was time limited (only available in the two years post qualification) helped me to decide to just get on with this.

Once involved I was surprised at how important the role was to the exams process. I had expected the exam paper to be very nearly complete by the time it came to the guinea pigs and the role would involve giving it a “once over”. I was pleasantly surprised to find that my role was far more involved than this. It required me to fully interrogate the paper checking that it was fit for purpose and that the questions were clear and unambiguous.

It’s clear that the examiners writing the paper really rely on this feedback to ensure the exams are right for the students and the guinea pig isn’t just there to tick a box.

For once I actually enjoyed sitting an exam! This time safe in the knowledge that I wasn’t being assessed by the paper but rather assessing it, and as a bonus I received a fee for undertaking the role.

I enjoyed the opportunity to have a chance to think about whether the exam was suitable and to get a better understanding of how the papers are set. It was particularly interesting reviewing the paper and looking out for any idioms or content which could confuse, this is important as the papers are sat within an international forum.

The exams team really supported me throughout the process and it was great to get a better insight into how the papers are set for the students.

It was also nice to get positive feedback about the assessment I gave of the paper.

Taking on this role has shown me just how much the exams process relies upon volunteers. When you are a student a huge part of your life is spent thinking about the exams purely from a “how do I pass these” perspective. Getting involved in the GPI role opened my eyes to how many people are involved, from examiners to markers and guinea pigs, and how reliant the process is on these people being willing to volunteer their time. The fact that so many people are willing to give up their time like this really shows the strength of our profession.

What will you do next?

This was a great first experience and I intend to keep on volunteering. I may be past the time limit to be able to act as a GPI but there are still lots of other opportunities out there and I have a new found interest in the Volunteer Vacancies page on the IFoA website.



Volunteers' experiences

“I believe that volunteers’ contribution is very important for the promotion of IFoA outside the UK. So I hope there will be more and more volunteers emerging in the near future.”

A view from a volunteer: Linjie Li



“I’m a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries based in Beijing, China. In 2013, I started my volunteer work while the Chief Representative of the IFoA was set up in China and the South East Asia in the same year.”

The experience of an international volunteer

“As an international Fellow, I am very pleased to see that the promotion of the IFoA in China has been increased greatly and members are being looked after more. There are also more opportunities for me to play a role and make my own contribution to help. It also gives me joy to be with a group of enthusiastic members with common goals. I’m very happy when I see people accomplishing their targets in the actuarial career with my help.

With limited number of Fellows in China, I have engaged in various volunteer roles. I devote a great deal of time to helping student members who are sitting for exams in China. We do not have ActEd revision classes in China like the UK students have so some local students here really struggled to pass exams. When the study mentoring system was set up in China last year, I volunteered to be a mentor. I summarise my own successful exam experience and encourage others to share theirs too. We now have different study groups where experiences can be shared openly. I was assigned to help two student members with their ST2 exams last year. It was simply great to see them passing in the end. This mentoring experience not only gives me an opportunity to pass on my exam skills and experience, it also benefit me as I feel my knowledge has also been consolidated. This is because in order to answer mentees’ questions thoroughly, I sometimes need to go back to some knowledge points and think hard for myself first. I was also inspired by mentees’ great determination to pass their exams, and to see them passing in the end with my help has given me great satisfactions.

Another important volunteer task for me is to provide feedback and information to the IFoA for members’ voice to be heard. I am on the China and SE Asia survey feedback group, I have also volunteered to be part of the 400 Club.

I believe that volunteers’ contribution is very important for the promotion of IFoA outside the UK. So I hope there will be more and more volunteers emerging in the near future and I look forward to working together with them. Definitely a valuable and interesting experience!”



Volunteers' experiences

“As chair, it was great to be part of a group committed to making the 2013 conference a success!”

A view from a volunteer: Lisa Morgan



Lisa Morgan of International Labour Organization said: “Volunteering for and chairing the 2013 Health and Care Conference Programme Committee was an incredibly rewarding experience. As the leading market event for insurance practitioners with an interest in the health protection industry, being involved in organising the conference is a great opportunity to keep one’s finger on the pulse of the latest industry related events, issues and opinions.”

The experience of a volunteer Conference Chair - Health and Care

What the committee does. “The main task assigned to the committee is to review the responses from the “call for speakers” forms. This involves discussing which combination of workshops would provide the optimal experience for the expected mix of delegates. It is not an easy task, as there are always more excellent workshops than slots available. Whilst being a volunteer for this committee is not as technically demanding as being involved in a working party, the group relies on its combined technical knowledge to make decisions about how to best structure the conference programme. The committee is also there to support speakers by checking in with them as they prepare their presentations and offering peer review of the content. The other important task is to brainstorm, contact and secure keynote and plenary speakers. All the logistical aspects of the conference are looked after by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries’ Events Team, who with their vast experience, do an admirable job of the administration. The support the Events Team provides means that the committee can focus almost entirely on the conference content.”

The benefits of being involved. “The conference committee has a flat structure, and so everyone’s input is important and highly valued. Being on the committee means networking and building relationships with other actuaries from a wide spectrum of work experience and technical backgrounds in a welcoming and friendly environment. As the committee is selected to ensure each product area and aspect of the health and care industry has representation, it means that your horizons are naturally broadened beyond your own area of expertise.

It was an honour to be involved and an opportunity to give back to the profession by helping shape the continuing professional education that health and care actuaries receive. There is great satisfaction in seeing it all come together and I highly recommend volunteering for this committee whether you are at the start of, or well established, in your actuarial career.”

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

To get involved in volunteering for the IFoA visit:
www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo



Volunteers' experiences

“As well as the warm glow I get from seeing students I’ve advised achieve their career goals, being a career ambassador has been fantastic for my personal development.”

A view from a volunteer: Lloyd Richards



Lloyd is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA), and works in London for Crowe Horwath Global Risk Consulting. Lloyd began volunteering for the IFoA when he was a student member and has continued to fulfil the role of Career Ambassador ever since. He is also a member of the IFoA’s Data Visualisation Working Party.

The experience of a volunteer Career Ambassador

“I have been a volunteer Career Ambassador for the IFoA for six years, ever since my time as a junior student actuary. Back then my volunteering was mostly about engaging with school and university students to help them understand how to enter the profession, the different types of companies you can work for, and how you can possibly cope with another six years of exams after graduation.

Now I am qualified I also advise people more advanced in their careers who need an ambassador’s help; people who are considering a career change or having exam troubles are the most common. I still talk to schools and universities, and have made some lasting connections with some that have led to additional volunteering opportunities, including tutoring GCSE maths to disadvantaged students (a real lesson for me in how little I remember of GCSEs) and guest-lecturing at universities.

Time commitment

The time commitment is really as much as you want to put in. Opportunities are offered to all career ambassadors who can choose those they are most able to help. During busy periods I might go months without picking anything up whereas at other times I’ll talk to someone every week. After a few years in the role, you tend to be contacted directly by people you have helped, and I always try to make time for a student who followed my advice but is still struggling in interviews, or a school that wants me to talk to their next wave of students. Only recently, a school asked me to return after a student whom I had spoken with a few years earlier landed a place at Southampton to study Actuarial Science.

Assisting my LifeLong Learning

As well as the warm glow I get from seeing students I’ve advised achieve their career goals, being a career ambassador has been fantastic for my personal development. It’s a common stereotype that actuaries are poor presenters who mumble and struggle to engage their audience, but by the time I was ready to stand up and present in a client’s boardroom I had lost count of the number of lecture theatres and classrooms I had presented in. By refining my presentation style each time, learning from others



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile



Institute
and Faculty
of Actuaries

Volunteers' experiences

“Opportunities are offered to all career ambassadors who can choose those they are most able to help.”

I was presenting with, and asking for feedback from some remarkably candid students, I lost all nervousness presenting to audiences – a huge help for any consultant!

It can be both fun and challenging to be the first face many students see of the actuarial profession. I really enjoy doing something that is a little bit different to my day-to-day role and that gives me a chance to meet interesting and driven people and hopefully offer them a little bit of useful insight.”



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

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Volunteers' experiences

"... I have had my eyes opened and been really impressed by the sheer range of volunteer and staff support that the profession draws on."

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer: Martin Potter



If you are thinking of standing for Council, you may like to hear what one of our previously elected Council members has to say about his first year as a Council member. Martin was elected to Council in summer 2011.

The experience of a volunteer member of council

"I must admit when I joined Council in summer 2011 I had very little understanding of the way our profession is organised and of its committee structure with acronyms all over the place! However, I'm delighted to say I quickly got up to speed with some helpful guidance from staff members and Council colleagues.

As a result I have had my eyes opened and been really impressed by the sheer range of volunteer and staff support that the profession draws on. This has made it even more worthwhile and rewarding for me to contribute to the issues of policy, etc debated in Council on behalf of all members. Whilst there has been lots to learn (and lots of new faces too) I have genuinely found that all views and contributions are welcomed.

It has been good to join Council at a time the profession has been reviewing and implementing its new strategy. This strategic review is both ambitious and wide-ranging with lots going on in different parts of the profession. However, I am seeing it all come together now and am convinced it will help move the profession forwards. This is encouraging because the relevance of what we are doing for our members is important to me.

On this point I don't think the President in my first year on Council, Jane Curtis, would mind me saying that one of her mantras is "why are we doing this?" I am pleased to note that answers like "because we've always done it this way" don't go unchallenged!

With that environment around the table I think new Council members will find, like me, that it's a case of "no previous experience required" other than a questioning mindset and enthusiasm to help your fellow members and profession."

To get involved in volunteering for the IFoA visit:
www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo



Volunteers' experiences

“Whatever your style,
getting involved is
definitely better than
just complaining!”

A view from a volunteer: Michael Tripp



Michael Tripp is Chair of the GI Board and has volunteered for the IFoA for more than 30 years.

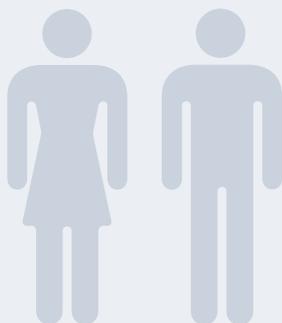
The experience of a volunteer in General Insurance (GI)

“I believe there are two ways in life - forward, or backward; without doubt going forward is the only choice! My first experience of volunteering for the profession followed GIRO in 1982! Then it was about tutoring; over the years this has broadened into working parties, sessional papers, research, dining clubs and more recently as Deputy Chair and now, since summer 2015, as Chair of the GI Board. I'd do the same again - it is a fantastic way of meeting people, sharing experiences and helping our profession to grow and develop. The corny phrase about making a difference comes to mind!

Meeting people with different personalities and from different backgrounds enriches you. Sometimes it's challenging; sometimes affirming. Both help you learn and develop and volunteering for the IFoA will provide you with great opportunities to develop in this way. It will also allow you to expand your network at the same time.

Life is not about sitting on the side-line but going on the pitch and taking part. Gaining knowledge is one thing, 'Doing' adds a practical dimension that can only really be assimilated through action. Learning and developing by doing and taking feedback is second to none. I don't know why, but since the age of 12 it's always seemed to me better to put your feet where your mouth is. You don't have to do everything yourself, it is possible to get things done by listening and facilitating others - establishing consensus and moving forward together. Whatever your style, getting involved is definitely better than just complaining! Perhaps saying yes too often can be a problem, but the challenge and the stretch keep the brain young and lively. Give a job to a busy person.

Whatever your interest, the encouragement is to get involved and I'm sure you'll find it fun and rewarding.”





Volunteers' experiences

“My main motivations for volunteering were to keep both my technical and professional skills up-to-date, to continue to develop my professional network and to give something back to the profession.”

A view from a volunteer: Natalie Greene



“I am a Fellow of the IFoA (qualified in 2001) and have considerable experience of working in both pensions consulting and life insurance. I am currently taking some time away from paid employment, as my husband’s job takes him all over the world and I wanted to be around more for our children. I currently volunteer on the cross-practice Programming for Actuarial Work working party, and also as a facilitator on the Online Professional Skills Course.”

The experience of a volunteer who enjoys learning

“My main motivations for volunteering were to keep both my technical and professional skills up-to-date, to continue to develop my professional network and to give something back to the profession. Being a facilitator on the Online Professional Skills Course, I need to keep up with changes in professional standards and continue to think through ethical issues. I have also been able to use my experience to encourage the course participants to discuss issues arising from the case studies in detail and consider the possible implications of certain courses of action.

Having a break from paid employment has given me a chance to reflect on what I enjoy most about being an actuary. One of the main reasons I entered the profession was a love of mathematics and problem solving. I was also aware that things had moved on significantly since I passed my actuarial exams, and this was a good opportunity for me to update my skills and move into new areas. I therefore put myself forward for the Programming for Actuarial Work working party. This involves exploring key programming concepts and techniques in the context of actuarial work, supporting members with developing their programming skills and providing a platform for members to collaborate in developing software that can be used as building blocks for actuarial applications.

What I gained from joining the working party

At first the learning curve was steep, as I knew little about the latest programming languages and practices. However, I have had the privilege of working with very helpful and talented individuals who have been happy to provide guidance and share their experiences. I have also discovered that the best approach in learning how to code is to think of a problem you want to solve and then work through the steps necessary to solve it. In my most recent job, I worked on a project where I had to clean and format a significant amount of data for a pricing exercise, and I remembered that the process using Excel had been rather painful. Therefore, as a first step, I decided to put together a small dataset with various issues in it, such as incorrect dates and amounts, and then set about writing some code to rectify it. I decided to start learning the programming language R to achieve this, as there are many useful reference materials available online. It was very satisfying when my code worked.

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile



Volunteers' experiences

“I would definitely encourage others who are thinking of volunteering to give it a go, and don't be afraid to try something a bit different from your day job - it's amazing how much you can learn and what a confidence boost it can be.”



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

Our working party then began to explore large datasets that we could use for modelling. I was keen to use a dataset typical of that used for an actuarial valuation to ensure it was both practical and relevant for members of the profession. However, it was difficult to find such a dataset that was publicly available, perhaps because of the confidential nature of such data. As a result, I decided to use R to create my own set of dummy data for current annuitants from scratch, and then use that for the purpose of modelling. In order to create the data, I had to generate random variables from various probability distributions; this also helped me to brush up on my statistics knowledge. Over the course of one year, I managed to write some fairly complex programs in R to not only generate data for a large number of lives, but also visualise the characteristics of the data graphically and project the resulting future cashflows. The whole process has been extremely rewarding. I am now aiming to use the knowledge I have acquired to encourage and support other members of the profession in the development of their programming skills.

Push yourself out of your comfort zone

Volunteering has been invaluable in keeping my knowledge up to date, networking with other members of the profession and pushing myself out of my comfort zone to acquire new skills. I would definitely encourage others who are thinking of volunteering to give it a go, and don't be afraid to try something a bit different from your day job - it's amazing how much you can learn and what a confidence boost it can be.”

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Volunteers' experiences

“My role in the ISCF has also given me the opportunity to engage with many actuarial students in my region. By sharing their experience, thoughts and concerns with the IFoA Education team, I hope I can somewhat contribute in shaping the future of aspiring actuaries.”

A view from a volunteer:

Ooi Choong Hern



“I started my journey as a volunteer with the IFoA in 2015 when I was recruited to be the representative of South-East Asia in the inaugural International Student Consultative Forum (ISCF). The ISCF was set up to discuss opportunities and challenges faced by students outside the UK.”

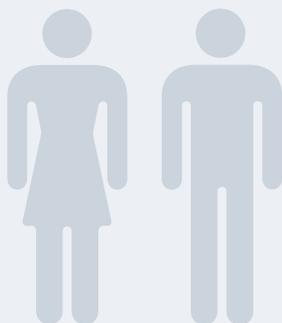
The experience of a volunteer in South-East Asia

“The ISCF is also an avenue for the IFoA to gain a better understanding of the ever-increasing international student population.

Meetings are held twice a year via conference calls after the main exam periods in April and September. During these sessions, we provide feedback on the recent examinations, brainstorm ideas on how to overcome issues faced by international students, and talk about any future changes impacting the examination process and structure.

Through this platform, I have personally found it interesting to interact with and learn from other committee members in different parts of the world, such as Europe and the Middle East. My role in the ISCF has also given me the opportunity to engage with many actuarial students in my region. By sharing their experience, thoughts and concerns with the IFoA Education team, I hope I can somewhat contribute in shaping the future of aspiring actuaries.

To all students in the region, we can be reached at asia.iscf@actuaries.org.uk. We welcome your queries, suggestions and comments, and look forward to hearing from you.”





Volunteers' experiences

“Ultimately what we as actuaries gain from the profession depends on what we put in.”

A view from a volunteer: Patrick Kelliher



“As a Fellow of the IFoA, I have been actively involved in volunteering for many years, with my focus being on research projects. I am CERA qualified and specialise in the risk management arena. Based in Edinburgh, I frequently find myself operating out of London for extended periods of time.”

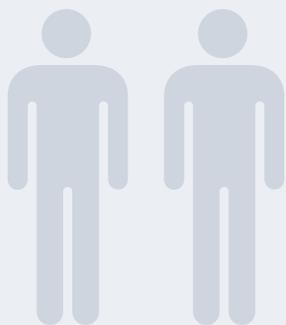
The experience of a volunteer involved in research

“As a self employed consultant, I don’t get any employer support to work on research working parties. It involves a considerable amount of my private time. It can be very tiring at the end of a day to devote another hour or two to research. So why do I do it?”

Well first of all it does my CV no harm to be involved with cutting edge research. I also learn a lot, increasing my knowledge base and ultimately making my services more attractive to clients. You also build up a great network of contacts through involvement in working parties, not just potential clients or business contacts but also people you can ask questions or bounce ideas off.

Last but not least, helping the IFoA to be at the cutting edge of research increases the brand value of actuaries in general as well as my own personal brand. This is very important in risk management where actuaries face competition from other risk professionals. It was one of the reasons I helped set up the Operational Risk Working Party which I hope will place actuaries at the forefront of this growing field.

Ultimately what we as actuaries gain from the profession depends on what we put in.”





Volunteers' experiences

“I would encourage you to step forward and become a CPD Co-ordinator for your company!”

A view from a volunteer: Pay Peng Neo



“I am a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and I work for Munich Re in Singapore. I had been planning to contribute to the actuarial profession for a while now, as it has given me a fulfilling career. The opportunity arose when my colleague asked if I would be interested in becoming a CPD Co-ordinator for our organisation. I was delighted to take up this volunteer role and have enjoyed discovering ways to enrich the breadth and depth of the traditional role of a CPD Co-ordinator.”

The experience of a volunteer CPD Co-ordinator based in Singapore

“At Munich Re Singapore, we organise frequent technical and soft skills training sessions, which are well attended internally. These sessions typically range between 1-2 hours over lunch. I have been personally involved in co-ordinating a number of sharing sessions with the junior actuaries to help them with their work/career/exam questions.

To date, in my CPD Co-ordinator role, I have helped circulate relevant CPD information to my colleagues (including annual deadline reminders!), encouraged them to attend relevant external events and kept a record of their attendance to all the events. Going forward, I plan to use more video and audio resources provided (as a member benefit) by the IFoA to enhance our training sessions.

As a CPD Co-ordinator I receive a quarterly newsletter which is full of useful information, opportunities, resources and events which I can share with my colleagues.”

Has volunteering assisted your life long learning?

“Whilst I am fairly new to this role, I am an old guard in embracing volunteerism. Personally, I really appreciate what many others have given back to the actuarial profession and this has inspired me to want to give back more. The intrinsic reward for me has been to work alongside professionals in an organisation that highly values continuous learning, ethics and professionalism. I would encourage you to step forward and become a CPD Co-ordinator for your company!”



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

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Volunteers' experiences

“Being an IFoA volunteer gives me a wider scope to make the most of my executive skills, innovation and leadership.”

A view from a volunteer: Pei (Grace) Guan



Pei (Grace) Guan FIA shares her experience engaging as an IFoA volunteer. Grace is now the Chief Actuary of Generali China Life Insurance Co., Ltd. Before joining Generali China, Grace was Head of the Actuarial Department of the Sunshine Insurance Group Corporation Limited, which is one of China's Top 500 Enterprises and Top 100 Enterprises of Service Industries. Her working area covers life insurance, health insurance and general insurance, as well as ALM.

In addition, Grace is also a member of the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission's Solvency Advisory Committee on Solvency Supervision, and is the specialist member of the ALM Committee, the Insurance Asset Management Association of China (IAMAC). Grace has volunteered for the IFoA since 2014.

The experience of a volunteer based in Beijing, China

I am the IFoA CPD Co-ordinator for my company in Beijing and a mentor for the actuarial students at the University of International Business and Economics and the Central University of Finance and Economics. I am also a Committee member of the IFoA's China Technical Member Interest Group.

What is involved?

As a CPD Co-ordinator in this region, I am able to assist the IFoA Beijing office to organise CPD member events nationwide across China, providing support for local IFoA members. As a Committee member of the IFoA China Technical Member Interest Group, I collaborate with other local volunteer FIAs in China and in the UK to provide a platform for actuaries from all practice areas to be able to discuss technical issues and seek support from one another.

I enjoy the work I do for my profession which helps to promote the profile of the IFoA, actuarial science and education, as well as the actuarial profession in China and East Asia as a whole.

Has volunteering assisted your lifelong learning?

Being an IFoA volunteer gives me wider scope to make the most of my executive skills, innovation and leadership. It makes me a better communicator and team-player. We need to work and communicate with one another and learn from each other. My voluntary work also provides me with a wider platform to gain first-hand, cutting-edge knowledge and trends of the industry. The new skills, knowledge and network I have gained have expanded my outlook and tapped into my potential.

I want to help more people to understand the value of actuarial science, not only for the insurance industry, but also for the business world and society.

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile



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Volunteers' experiences

"I would encourage anyone who wants to make progress in their career to take advantage of the volunteer openings that our profession provides us with."

I encourage you to get involved

I would encourage anyone who wants to make progress in their career to take advantage of the volunteer openings that our profession provides us with. Choose a role that appeals to you and then throw yourself into it. It helps if you take the attitude *'To give and not to count the cost'* because it may be some years down the line before you fully appreciate what you have gained. I strongly believe that if you work hard as a volunteer then *'You will reap what you sow'*, not necessarily rightaway but at some point. I enjoy playing my part in helping the IFoA to grow and to become a more influential professional body in this region.



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

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Volunteers' experiences

“Over the years serving on working parties and committees has broadened the range of options for my career by giving me useful experience beyond my ‘day jobs’.”



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer:

Seamus Creedon



Seamus Creedon is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) based in London. He volunteers for the IFoA in a number of ways including fulfilling the role of Chair of the Managing Committee responsible for driving forward the IFoA's Non-Executive Director (NED) Member Interest Group (MIG) and delivering objectives.

Seamus is himself a NED on the boards of a life insurer, an asset manager, a catastrophe reinsurer, and a life and health reinsurer.

The experience of a volunteer developing NED opportunities

I heartily recommend volunteering to support the work of our profession as a good career move! Over the years serving on working parties and committees has broadened the range of options for my career by giving me useful experience beyond my 'day jobs'.

Our skills can be of great value

These days my main volunteer work is with actuaries who are either already on company boards or would like to be. I believe that our skills can be of great value to companies in dealing with the risk and uncertainty that are intrinsic to business. My late father became an active non-executive director (NED) after retiring as a civil servant and always told me he enjoyed it more than anything else in his career.

At present I am on the boards of a life insurer, an asset manager, a catastrophe reinsurer, and a life and health reinsurer. My wife is also an actuary and serves on the board of a quoted bank. I believe my colleagues value me for my capacity to ask good questions and to help explore what might happen – 'What could go wrong and then where would we be?' is always useful!

Being a director is not without risks and businesses do get into trouble sometimes. The question for a director then becomes 'Did I do my reasonable best?'

Benefits of being involved in the IFoA's NED MIG

NEDs love to compare notes with one another and I was delighted when the profession encouraged a member interest group specifically for actuary NEDs and actuaries interested in such a career. We have organised a series of events which have gone down really well with members and we also have a LinkedIn group.

We would be very happy to hear from individuals who are keen to volunteer to be involved in the MIG Managing Committee, and we also encourage members to be involved in the MIG. Discover more about the MIG [here](#).



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Volunteers' experiences

"I am very proud of our profession – one of my sons is an actuary in Asia – and I think volunteering is a win-win, both for the volunteer and for all of us actuaries."



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

The value of volunteering

Throughout my career I have usually been happy to contribute by speaking or writing, preferably on subjects I know something about! It has helped me to organise my thoughts and also to learn from discussion with others, which I hope has made me more valuable in my main work. I am very proud of our profession – one of my sons is an actuary in Asia – and I think volunteering is a win-win, both for the volunteer and for all of us actuaries. I encourage you to get involved.

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Volunteers' experiences

“If you are reading this and considering volunteering for the IFoA I would encourage you to take the plunge. It is an extremely rewarding experience plus you get the nice feeling of doing something good for your profession.”



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

A view from a volunteer: Souvik Jash



“I am a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries of India (IAI), based in India. I first volunteered for the IFoA in 2013 and have undertaken a number of roles supporting the Education team. I am currently a member of the Education Committee and a member of the working party which is implementing Curriculum 2019.”

The experience of a volunteer based in India

“In my day job, I am the Appointed Actuary for Aegon’s joint venture life insurance company in India. Even though my role keeps me extremely busy, it is important for me to make time to volunteer for the IFoA because I am passionate about giving back to my profession.

Education has always been close to my heart which is why I have undertaken roles which specifically support the IFoA’s Education team. These have included being a Guinea Pig (reviewing and commenting on examinations) and marking exam papers. My current involvement in the Education Committee and working party allows me to play a part in ensuring that actuarial education and assessment are relevant in our changing times. As I am based outside the UK I contribute to meetings via conference call, which works well. I can also engage with my peers by email between meetings.

I feel it is important that international members have a voice so that the interests of their communities are represented. I have always found volunteering exciting and rewarding and I hope that my positive experience will encourage others to get involved.”

Why volunteer?

“If you are reading this and considering volunteering for the IFoA I would encourage you to take the plunge. It is an extremely rewarding experience plus you get the nice feeling of doing something good for your profession.”

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Volunteers' experiences

“I really enjoy doing something different to my day to day work, and volunteering for the IFoA gives me the opportunity to develop myself and help shape the future of our profession.”

A view from a volunteer: Spenser Chen



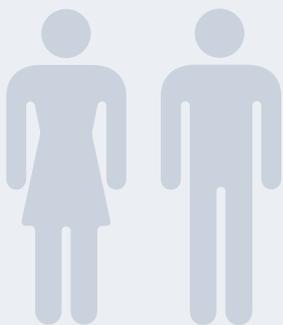
“I am a Fellow of the IFoA based in Singapore. I made a career change to become an actuary after working in the civil service for six years. My first actuarial role was in actuarial consulting in London where I was involved in reserving and capital projects for non-life insurers and Lloyd’s syndicates. I moved back to Singapore in 2013, and continued to be involved in non-life actuarial consulting for a while before moving into the health insurance area recently.”

The experience of a volunteer in Singapore

“I started a volunteering role with the IFoA for the first time in April 2015. As a newly qualified Fellow, I was looking for ways to give back to the profession, and one of the first opportunities that came up was providing support to the IFoA’s Exam Team. Even though some of us were based outside the UK, there were tools and systems to help everyone contribute actively to the team. For example, I found it very easy to take part in the meetings via teleconference. From Guinea Pigs to exam counsellors, there are many roles and tasks that support our Education and Exam Teams.

More recently, I have also volunteered to be a study mentor for student members in South East Asia. The mentoring scheme was introduced a few months ago, and we expect more student members to become aware of the scheme and to take part in it. We believe the scheme can help students develop a better understanding of the subject matter through the study sessions where mentors can share their own experiences with the exams and work. I would encourage all students preparing for the CA, ST and SA exams to sign up for the scheme. It is also another way for students and mentors to expand their network of contacts both within their home countries and across South East Asia.

I really enjoy doing something different to my day to day work, and volunteering for the IFoA gives me the opportunity to develop myself and help shape the future of our profession. There are many different ways to become more involved in volunteering, which include online feedback groups, providing support to the Exam Team, Career Ambassadors etc. There is something for everyone, whether you are a student member or Fellow”





Volunteers' experiences

“I am absolutely passionate that as members of our profession we should stand up and be counted at all stages of our careers and add our voice to the direction of travel our profession takes.”

A view from a volunteer: Suzanne Vaughan



“If I am being completely honest, I didn’t fully know what I was getting myself into by standing for election to Council. I knew that Council was responsible for steering the high level strategy and direction of the profession and this was always something that I had felt I wanted to get involved in one day.....one day being some distant date in the future, possibly towards the end of my actuarial career!”

The experience of a volunteer member of Council

“I would be fibbing if I said I pushed myself forward to run for Council. My instinct was that there would be much more senior members of our profession who would be looking to take these positions. However, after chatting this through with some of the executive support staff and the leader of the Scottish Board, I was convinced this was something I should go for, not “one day”, but now. I put myself forward and was delighted to be elected in 2012.

I am absolutely passionate that as members of our profession we should stand up and be counted at all stages of our careers and add our voice to the direction of travel our profession takes. After all this is in all our interests.

Council members were exceptionally welcoming which really helped when getting up to speed with all the acronyms, different working parties and committees. Every view is respected and listened to.

I have been very impressed with the support staff that work alongside Council members. They are dedicated to the profession in the same way we are and are working exceptionally hard to achieve our goals. I have been pleasantly surprised at the professional feel of Council, with clear goals and strategic objectives for each year.

By far one of my highlights has been getting involved in some PR for the profession when the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries sponsored the Scotland Highlands and Islands’ Mathematics weekend. This involved radio and newspaper interviews to help promote our profession and the event. I am extremely keen that we continue to look for further ways to engage with the public and expand the awareness of our profession and this is certainly something that is firmly on Council’s radar.

I would highly recommend getting involved in Council. The time commitments are not overly onerous for the amount you gain from the experience (plus you get that nice feeling of doing something good for your profession!).”



Volunteers' experiences

"I am someone who has benefited from volunteering. It has helped me in my journey."

A view from a volunteer:

Thanuja Krishnaratna



Thanuja Krishnaratna is an Associate member of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) based in Sri Lanka. Thanuja works as an Independent Consultant Actuary and is Managing Director / Founder of STAR Actuarial Academy.

Thanuja has volunteered for the actuarial profession for many years. She was a founder member of the Actuarial Association of Sri Lanka (AASL) and was AASL's first hon. Secretary, becoming President from 2016–2018. Thanuja began volunteering for the IFoA in 2011 and is currently a member of the IFoA's Life Asia sub-committee. In addition,

she is also currently extending her volunteer services to the International Actuarial Association (IAA) as a member of the Asia sub-committee and the Advice and Assistance committee, which provides support to develop the actuarial profession in developing countries.

The experience of a volunteer working in Sri Lanka

I am someone who has benefited from volunteering. It has helped me in my journey. Without the help of volunteers in the actuarial profession, it would be very hard to face the challenges that I have faced in this part of the world in pursuing actuarial education and an actuarial career.

I am very passionate about volunteering for my profession. I started volunteering for the IFoA in 2011 while I was still a student member. My first volunteer role was as a member of IFoA's 400 club: the online feedback group for members of the IFoA to share their views. I then became a volunteer member of the IFoA's Student Consultative Forum, providing my feedback as a student to improve the activities related to exams and the challenges we faced in South Asia. At the end of 2016 I became a member of the IFoA's Life Asia sub-committee.

The benefits of the Life Asia sub-committee

The Life Asia sub-committee was the first regional sub-committee of the IFoA formed outside the UK, with the specific purpose of supporting Life actuaries in the APAC region (particularly regarding their career growth), deliberating issues in the region as well as promoting and raising awareness of the profession in the region as a whole. Members of the sub-committee are based in locations such as China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and in the UK.

Each and every person uses their specific capabilities and specialisations in their respective field. I love the fact that I receive knowledge of many markets and jurisdictions as a result of being involved in the activities within this group.

Has volunteering assisted your lifelong learning?

Yes, very much. It has helped me to improve my capabilities and the quality of my life through enhancing my non-technical skills, especially my interpersonal and communication skills. Volunteering also creates opportunities, day by day, around me.



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile



Institute
and Faculty
of Actuaries

Volunteers' experiences

*"I am very proud
to be an Associate
member of the IFoA."*



An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

What do you think about Associateship being the new destination qualification?

Being an Associate member provides me with a valuable recognition in my country to allow me to work as an actuary. The Associate qualification is a good start. Associates will have the necessary technical knowledge and the other required skills to perform as an actuary. I am very proud to be an Associate member of the IFoA.

To get involved in volunteering for the IFoA visit:
www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo



Volunteers' experiences

"I found it to be a very valuable experience as I had the opportunity to work alongside and meet with experienced actuaries from different backgrounds."

A view from a volunteer: Vasan Errakiah



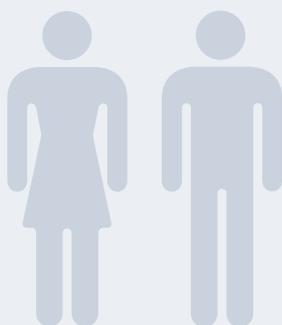
"I am a Fellow of the IFoA based in Singapore with Pacific Life Re. From a personal perspective, having moved back to Asia a couple of years ago, I was excited to find out about the IFoA's plans to host a conference in the region. I decided to volunteer to be part of the Programme Committee for the IFoA Asia Conference 2016 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia."

The experience of a volunteer based in Singapore

"The main driver for volunteering is my personal belief that it is important to develop the profession and give back to the IFoA just as I had benefited from other actuaries in the past. Volunteering for the conference was also a great platform for me to share and exchange my views on the hot topics affecting actuaries in this part of the world.

Together with the committee members from across the region, my role was to put together a cross-practice programme, in line with its theme "Celebrating Diversity, Creating Value". Each of us was assigned specific practice area(s) based on our expertise and my focus was on the Life Insurance and Risk topics. As the committee members were based in different cities, we had regular conference call meetings leading up to the event to discuss topic and speaker selections. We also received frequent updates from the IFoA regarding logistics. The experience was an eye-opener and I was impressed to see the level of effort and dedication that went behind the scenes.

Overall, I found it to be a very valuable experience as I had the opportunity to work alongside and meet with experienced actuaries from different backgrounds. I would definitely encourage my peers and colleagues to volunteer to support the profession and participate in the various IFoA member activities that are on offer."





Volunteers' experiences

“My experience of volunteering has helped me recognise the really important contribution volunteers make to the IFoA.”

A view from a volunteer: **Xiaoxuan (Sherwin) Li**



“I became a Fellow of the IFoA in 2009. As I was based in China, I didn’t know much about opportunities to volunteer for the IFoA and I didn’t feel connected to my professional body.”

The experience of a volunteer based in China

“That changed a few years later when I received an email from the IFoA looking for volunteers for the international feedback groups. That is when I first became aware of the volunteer vacancies webpage and when I began volunteering for the IFoA. Since then I have been involved in a number of roles – a member of the International Feedback Group in China and South-East Asia, a Career Ambassador and I have participated in the GIRO International Pricing Working Party and the General Insurance Asia Working Party. In addition, I wrote the first case study on the sustainable development goals for the IFoA Public Affairs and Policy team.

In 2015, my company (China Reinsurance) sent me to work in London. Whilst I was there I continued my involvement in volunteering and could see how integral volunteers are to the IFoA’s success. I even volunteered to be photographed for the IFoA’s Annual Report, which was a really interesting experience! I attended my first Volunteer Recognition party and got to network with other volunteers. What’s more, I received a Silver Volunteer Recognition Pin, something I am very proud of!

My experience of volunteering has helped me recognise the really important contribution volunteers make to the IFoA.

The influence of the IFoA does not only depend on the profession itself but also on the contributions of its members. The more IFoA members in the region that contribute, the higher the recognition and respect the IFoA will gain in the region. I encourage more IFoA members to be engaged in volunteer work. Please join us and show your strength!”

An IFoA Member
Engagement Profile

To get involved in volunteering for the IFoA visit:
www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo



Wider fields

“I not only have the opportunity to shape the way the IFoA takes things forward but also to broaden my learning in this wider field.”

A view from a member:

Andrew MacFarlane



“I am a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and am based in Bermuda where I have lived for more than 7 years. I work at XL Catlin Re which operates in the General Insurance (GI) industry and I am a volunteer who sits on the IFoA’s Resource and Environment Board. I am also involved in the Climate Change Working Party.”

The experience of a resource and environment volunteer based in Bermuda

“As an internationally based volunteer I dial in to Board meetings by conference call and I engage with the Executive staff and my peers via email between meetings. General Insurance is heavily influenced by extreme events and so having more insight into the resource and environment space and how this might affect general insurance now, and in the future, is hugely important to ensuring we are considering these aspects when making business decisions.

I have an interest in the resource and environment space and, when I volunteered for this role, I was keen to build up my knowledge in the field.

As a volunteer member of the Resource and Environment Board I wanted to combine my interest in the environment with my skills that I have obtained working as an actuary. In doing so, I not only have the opportunity to shape the way the IFoA takes things forward but also to broaden my learning in this wider field. It also allows me to combine my day job with an external interest in this space. As a result I have expanded my network and gained access to numerous experts in this field.

If you are reading this and considering taking on a volunteer role for the profession, I would encourage you to get involved. Look for opportunities that interest you and for ways in which you can use your skills but at the same time expand your development.”



Wider
fields

“Is it realistic to think that some of today’s actuaries might move during their careers into wider fields outside the traditional activities connected with pensions and insurance?”

A view from a member: **Chris Lewin**



Chris is a retired pensions director, who managed some of Britain’s largest pension schemes, including those of British Rail, Associated Newspapers, Guinness, Unilever and EDF Energy.

Actuaries and wider-fields

Is it realistic to think that some of today’s actuaries might move during their careers into wider fields outside the traditional activities connected with pensions and insurance? I believe it is entirely possible, because it has happened in the past and because there is a need in many different activities for the objective skills in risk and finance which actuaries can offer.

Wider fields in the past

Although only limited information is now readily available about the extent to which actuaries have worked outside traditional fields in the past, we do know that some have been employed in the banking, investment and transport industries, while a few have given advice to the Courts as expert witnesses in damages cases.

In 1925 Frederick Menzler said:

“If we desire our Institute to retain its position, we must, as in the case of other professions, be prepared to enter every field of activity for which our training fits us.”

He continued, and his remarks ring true today:

“The opportunities will only come to the actuary if the Institute, as a definite act of policy, takes such steps as may be appropriate to dissipate mistaken notions as to the narrow exclusiveness of the profession.” [Menzler (1925)]

Menzler himself had a wide-ranging career with London Transport: see Gunlake (1969). He was the organisation’s Actuary from 1930-39, Chief Financial Officer from 1939-45 and Chief Development & Research Officer from 1945-54. Moreover, he was the chairman of a committee which recommended building the Victoria Line, and took a strong interest in the development of operational research methods in the organisation. I only knew him slightly, after his retirement, but it was as a result of his influence that, as a young actuarial student, I became a member of the Royal Statistical Society (to which I still belong) and the Operational Research Society. The latter led later to the publication of a paper written by me in *Operational Research*



“... we should regard the actuary’s normal role as being to provide professional advice on questions involving risk and finance, as well as questions involving risk alone. However, some actuaries will probably continue to go into positions calling for a wider range of work than this.”

Quarterly – Lewin (1971). I would encourage all of today’s actuaries who would like a wider fields career to join another relevant professional body as well as the IFoA, since external publications broaden the mind. In particular the Royal Statistical Society’s magazine, *Significance*, is likely to interest many actuaries.

Another wider-fields actuary who worked for London Transport was Frederick Lloyd. His journey started in 1942, when the Royal Air Force made use of his actuarial training. His first assignment was to find out why the overall loss rate of Halifax bombers, equipped with four Rolls Royce Merlin engines, was roughly double that of Lancaster bombers with the same engines – you can read his fascinating account in Lloyd (1997). In 1966 he presented a paper on the statistical background to the extension of underground railway networks – see Lloyd (1967). It is worth noting that this paper was discussed at a joint meeting of the Royal Statistical Society, General Applications Section and the Institute of Actuaries Students’ Society – a practical example of co-operation with another profession. He went on to hold a number of important positions in the management of public transport systems in London and the West Midlands, at one stage fulfilling the role of Operating Manager of London’s central buses and eventually becoming the Director-General of the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive.

The actuaries who went into investment work in the past have included Gordon Pepper, Jack Plymen and George Ross-Goobey, the latter being famous for having been the first to spot the attractions of equity investments in the 1950s. In 1973 Pepper wrote a paper jointly with R.L. Thomas, another actuary, on cyclical changes in investment markets. Plymen’s paper on the actuarial background to investment policy was submitted to the Faculty of Actuaries in 1987.

In addition to participating extensively in pension fund investment committees, I did some wider-fields work at one or two stages of my own career. In the early 1960s I worked for London Transport, where a small team of us carried out statistical investigations, including analyses of staff leaving service, Underground drivers passing signals at danger, public complaints about buses, and the length of life of bus components. The latter was interesting because engines, radiators, gearboxes and accumulators all had differing life patterns. Later on I worked for British Rail where, after managing the pension schemes for 10 years, I was seconded for a year to Michael Heseltine’s Inner Cities Initiative. There were about twenty of us from various organisations, in what was known as the Financial Institutions Group, and we were tasked with making recommendations to improve life in the depressed areas of the inner cities. Upon returning from this secondment, I went on to several years’ work connected with the interface between British Rail and the private sector, with the title Co-ordinator, Private Capital. This included the negotiation of contracts with private firms to franchise branch lines or to provide catering trollies, as well as the development of a plan to exploit commercially the organisation’s nation-wide telecommunications network. I was also the project manager for the then proposed sale of the Settle-Carlisle railway line to a private company.

I have engaged in another interesting activity on a voluntary basis. For more than 20 years I have led the joint risk-management initiative of the UK actuarial profession and the Institution of Civil Engineers. This has resulted in the publication of several guides on risk management, including *RAMP*, *STRATrisk*, and *Front-end Thinking*, as well as some recent work on how to avoid another Grenfell Tower disaster in existing buildings and infrastructure. The first two of these guides have formed the basis of the risk management system used by Crossrail, the organisation building a new underground railway in London.



“Actuaries are well-placed to participate, as members of institutional investment committees, in the formulation of long-term investment strategy and the appointment and monitoring of external investment managers.”

Future roles in wider fields

In 1918 Geoffrey Marks proposed the following definition of an actuary:

“One whose profession is to devise means to solve all questions involving the application of the theory of probability to human affairs, whether in conjunction with the rate of interest or not, and to apply them to the solution of practical problems.”

My own suggestion, somewhat in line with Marks, is that we should regard the actuary's normal role as being to provide practical professional advice on questions involving risk and finance, as well as questions involving risk alone. However, some actuaries will probably continue to go into positions calling for a wider range of work than this.

In thinking about the actuary's role, compared with the roles of other professionals, I suggest we should not follow T.Y. Strachan, an actuary of Newcastle-upon Tyne, when in 1888 he defined an actuary as being a 'scientific accountant'. Nor should we pay much attention to the old joke that an actuary will tell you now what an accountant will tell you in 20 years' time! I believe that an accountant's role, vital as it is, is entirely different from that of an actuary. Whereas the accountant assesses the past financial transactions of an undertaking and its current state, making provisions for known future liabilities and risks, an actuary is more concerned with the unknown future and how the undertaking may be able to keep afloat and prosper in a variety of future situations. The actuary, unlike the accountant, can model a range of scenarios and can advise on whether proposed risk mitigation options represent good value for money. Rather than actuaries and accountants regarding themselves as rival professions, I suggest they should see themselves as partners in developing statements of business risk. Perhaps the requirements for such statements, which were promulgated in 2014 by the Financial Reporting Council, will provide a stimulus for members of the two professions to work more closely together on wider business risk in future?

Investment work is a key opportunity for the future. Actuaries are well-placed to participate, as members of institutional investment committees, in the formulation of long-term investment strategy and the appointment and monitoring of external investment managers. There are also likely to be continuing opportunities for actuaries to work in firms offering investment management services, as some actuaries do today. If agencies that rate infrastructure bonds start to look more than just a few years ahead, they may have an increasing demand for actuaries. Insurance companies wishing to invest in infrastructure may also need to employ actuaries to carry out risk analyses on proposed investments, so that they can be placed in categories which need less capital to be held as reserves under solvency regulations.

Another interesting avenue which may emerge for actuaries is the opportunity to participate in joint activities or discussions with other professions, on a voluntary basis. There is every reason why our profession should seek to achieve, with the institutes of accountants, corporate treasurers, statisticians or risk managers, the kind of co-operation which has already been achieved with the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Not all actuaries are suited to wider-fields work. For those who are, and who are prepared to develop the necessary skills and expertise, and can work and communicate effectively with other professionals, the opportunities may turn out to be considerable in the years ahead. Our training in risk and finance is applicable to difficult questions in many fields and, even if it is relatively expensive to employ an actuary, I believe that



“Another interesting avenue which may emerge for actuaries is the opportunity to participate in joint activities or discussions with other professions, on a voluntary basis.”

more employers will gradually come to realise that this can represent good value for money. Moreover, unlike many other practitioners, actuaries belong to a professional body which has important ethical values and their advice can therefore be trusted to be objective. I believe that the IFoA will be making a sustained effort to get these messages out to the wider world, with the aid of the recently- published Statement of Actuarial Risk Principles, which can be downloaded at <https://www.actuaries.org.uk/learn-develop/attend-event/ifo-a-launch-event-actuarial-risk-principles>.

Can you help?

There must be many other examples of actuaries who are currently working in wider-fields or who have engaged in wider fields work at some time in the past, not necessarily as a phase in their main career. If you are in this category, Dawn McIntosh at the IFoA would love to hear your story, as it will help to build up an overall picture of the opportunities which may be available. Email: Dawn.McIntosh@actuaries.org.uk

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“For those who are prepared to develop the necessary skills and expertise, and can work and communicate effectively with other professionals, the opportunities may turn out to be considerable in the years ahead”

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Wider fields

“There would be no profession had previous generations not volunteered, developing the opportunities we take for granted today. I believe those interested in wider fields have a duty to do no less on our watch.”

A view from a member: John Young



“I am a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and volunteer Chair of the IFoA’s Banking Member Interest Group (MIG). I have volunteered for the profession for many years in various roles and in my day job I work for RBS.”

The experience of a volunteer working in the wider fields

“I have always enjoyed learning and when I qualified, this felt like this may have ended. Volunteering provided opportunities to keep learning and to keep exploring new ways to apply old knowledge. It also provides the opportunity to use some spare time productively.

This is especially important for wider fields such as banking. Only when it is gone do you realise how much support traditional employers and other actuaries provide. Volunteering is one way to talk and solve problems with other actuaries who talk a common language and have similar skills.

Getting involved is also a way to look to and shape the future. There would be no profession had previous generations not volunteered, developing the opportunities we take for granted today. I believe those interested in wider fields have a duty to do no less on our watch.

The Banking MIG should help develop a sense of community and pull scattered experts in banking together. I hope we can create a base of knowledge and perhaps even a new exam that can open the interest and fascination of banking to other actuaries. A window of opportunity exists today for actuaries to help banks develop better tools and understanding while creating future possibilities for the profession.

Actuaries may have little banking expertise but we do have hidden skills. It is no coincidence that I am developing Customer Value metrics across RBS while Brandon Horowitz the chair of the IFoA’s Finance and Investment Board does the same at HSBC. Being inside a bank lets me see that some interesting research and ideas can be generated by bringing together banking experts who can describe banking problems and actuaries who work on reserving, solvency II and probabilities of ruin should throw out some quick wins. Volunteering in wider fields provides a chance to look both inside and outside the profession.”



“I have met and learned so much from a wide group of experienced people who see finance in a wide societal context. Inspiring.”

A view from a member: **Mike Clark**



Mike Clark is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) and Founder Director of Ario Advisory, a responsible investment advisory firm. Mike represents the IFoA on the global Advisory Council of the Sustainable Finance Programme at the University of Oxford’s Smith School and until earlier this year was a member of the Resource & Environment Research and Continuing Professional Development (R&E RCPD) Sub-committee.

The experience of a volunteer in a wider wider field

My actuarial career soon moved away from traditional life office actuarial work (anyone remember commutation functions?) into investment management and then to sustainable finance, via time spent teaching students when the profession employed staff tutors.

About five years ago I was appointed to represent the IFoA as a volunteer member of the global Advisory Council of the Sustainable Finance Programme run by the Smith School at Oxford University. During that time – which continues – I have met and learned so much from a wide group of experienced people who see finance in a wide societal context. Inspiring. It was originally named the Stranded Assets Programme, but that name became too restrictive and was changed to reflect a much wider perspective.

What is involved?

We have bi-monthly calls which keep us all up to speed on global developments, and I can feed relevant information back into the R&E RCPD. I am sometimes a panellist speaker. We have so much to learn from outside the profession. With the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, the Green Finance Taskforce and the European Commission’s Action Plan on Sustainable Finance, this evolving policy environment is most invigorating. I also teach an annual workshop for the Smith School.

How this links with my day job

My day job evolved a couple of years ago when I established a responsible investment advisory firm. My interests meant I became involved in the work supporting the profession’s Climate Change Risk Alert. That initiative, which I regularly promote, has gained the profession much respect in the investment industry, and beyond. Our 2017/2018 President’s initiative to promote the Sustainable Development Goals builds on this and means there is plenty for actuaries to do in this exciting area. Risk, finance and the future . . . What’s not to like?



*“You can contribute
your expertise,
learn a lot, and
meet some very
interesting people
along the way.”*

Opportunities

I am also currently a member of an IFoA working party which is grappling with the challenging notion of long-term value creation, looking at the regulatory and other constraints to its creation. Plenty of mental stimulation there! This year I have also been working as Specialist Adviser to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee for their inquiry into Green Finance. I hope this will also enable me to make useful contributions to the IFoA's work in the R&E area. For example, recently, I proposed that the IFoA consider becoming a reporting entity under Defra's Adaptation Reporting Power, flowing from the Climate Change Act. The response from my professional colleagues has been mixed! . . . Oh, and many years ago I was an Assistant Examiner.

I hope this brief ramble through the wider actuarial countryside gives some sense of the opportunities to get engaged with the volunteer work of the profession. You can contribute your expertise, learn a lot, and meet some very interesting people along the way. Highly recommended!



Inside story



ALAN RAE
Insurance strategy, capital and M&A consultant. Recently became senior partner at Longitude Solutions

Where are you based?

Amsterdam and Dunblane.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am a member of the IFoA Council, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Scottish Board, the CMI Executive Committee, and the NED Working Party.

How long have you been volunteering?

I joined the Life Convention Organising Committee in 2000. I became chair of the Life Convention in 2003, later joining the Life Board as chair of Life CPD, and was on the Faculty Council from 2005 to 2008.



What's involved in your roles(s)?

Most of the roles are oversight and governance, providing strategic guidance.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

I enjoy it! It is also symbiotic – I can hone my governance skills while adding value to the profession.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

I would like to help the IFoA move into the next stage of its international development, and ensure the governance and strategic financial model keep pace with international membership.



What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I hope I have learned to listen more! In the Council we have to give everyone space to contribute. There have also been some interesting lessons in relation to governance and decision making.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

I am always learning. The IFoA Conferences are useful, as they combine learning with networking.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Yes – it has given me chances to speak at conferences, and broadened my network.

Have there been any memorable moments?

When I chaired the 2003 Life Convention I wanted to get the audience to attend my opening remarks, so I asked the sound guy to play The Darkness' *I Believe In A Thing Called Love*. Job done!

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

I was not doing five days per week at my Dutch employer, so I had the time to volunteer.

How do you relax away from the office?

Electric guitar, craft beers, running and cycling.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Give it a go.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

David Bowie – apart from making great music, he kept reinventing himself.

What was your earliest dream job?

I remember wanting to be a bin man as a kid, but at high school it was to be a rock star!



What word best describes you?

Loud.

Do you prefer a staycation or a holiday abroad?

I live abroad, so it's the same thing!

If you were locked in a famous building for one night... which would it be and why?

Any major rock venue, with my guitar!

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

I was lead partner providing actuarial advice to private equity firms on their first insurance acquisition – a large part of what is now Phoenix Group.

To share your volunteer involvement or find out about volunteering for the IFoA, contact: debbie.atkins@actuaries.org.uk



**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



BEN STROUD
Life actuary for the
Financial Regulator,
based in London, UK

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

The most significant role has been as secretary of the Value of With-Profits for Consumers Working Party. I am also CPD co-ordinator and student employer contact (SEC) for my employer, and volunteer with the 400 Club.



How long have you been volunteering?

I became a career ambassador in 2011.

What's involved in your role(s)?

As secretary my role included organising and minuting regular meetings, liaising with the IFoA and keeping the group organised. I also carried out research, constructed surveys, contacted firms and drafted reports. CPD co-ordinator and SEC are similar roles as a point of contact between the IFoA and members at your employer; you are facilitating colleagues' development. Engaging with your firm's learning and development team, or regional societies, can uncover great opportunities.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

Volunteering provides access to members with different approaches but a common passion for making a difference. Celebrating this diversity of thought and reaching a shared objective can be very rewarding.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

My hope is that the final Value of With-Profits for Consumers

“Volunteering is a superb way to expand your horizons and interact with experts outside your firm”

Working Party report will prompt further thought on how firms manage with-profits funds and engage with policyholders.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

Obtaining useful results from a survey requires more work at the survey design stage than you might think!

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Definitely. Volunteering is a superb way to expand your horizons and interact with experts outside your firm.

Have there been any memorable moments?

My working party highlights included presenting at the 2017 Life Conference, being published in *The Actuary* and sharing our final report at the end of 2019.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

Most employers put time aside to support personal and professional development, so the CPD co-ordinator role has been possible within working hours. For the working party, it helps to be involved in a topic you feel passionate about.

How do you relax away from the office?

In a trendy bar or beer shop, in between **trips to Belgium** for all the best beer.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

‘Just do it’. Find an opportunity you feel passionate about and put yourself forward.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

I enjoy a city break abroad, observing the local culture and finding hidden gems.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night, which would it be and why?

The **windmill De Arkduif** in the Netherlands. This houses Brouwerij de Molen's Brouwcafé – a beer-focused restaurant, beer shop and tasting room.



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Inside story



+ DAVID HARE

Various non-exec roles, mainly in life assurance and workplace pensions. David was president of the IFoA in 2013/2014

Where are you based?

Edinburgh.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

Currently joint chair of the organising committee for the 2019 IFoA Asia conference. Also IFoA Membre Suppléant at the Actuarial Association of Europe.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since soon after I qualified in 1988. My first volunteer role was as the actuarial career adviser at Glasgow University – I didn't realise that I was helping to recruit a future president when I met with a PhD student called John Taylor!

What's involved in your role(s)?

Current role is to make the most of the skills and experience of the volunteer actuaries and events team members on the organising committee so that the conference in May is another successful IFoA event.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

It's fun and worthwhile. A small profession like ours needs its members to volunteer if it is to continue to punch above its weight.



What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

For the Asia conference to be a really worthwhile event for those who attend, and to enhance the role of the IFoA in the region.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I've learned a huge amount in my 30 years of volunteering – not just about actuarial matters, but also governance skills and strategic thinking.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Hearing others' views has really helped my understanding of actuarial issues.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Very much so.

Have there been any memorable moments?

Lots, particularly during my time on the presidential team.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

Now that I'm semi-retired, it's not an issue. In the past, I didn't balance things well – and didn't get enough sleep as a result!

How do you relax away from the office?

Spending time with my family, playing the piano, reading books and walking the dog – we have what we think is the cutest cocker spaniel in the world!

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Just do it. It will be time well spent.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

My late businessman-friend, Don Davidson – the most encouraging person I have had the privilege to know.

What was your earliest dream job?

Being a concert pianist.

What word best describes you?

Thoughtful.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Abroad – Scotland is beautiful, but we all need vitamin D!

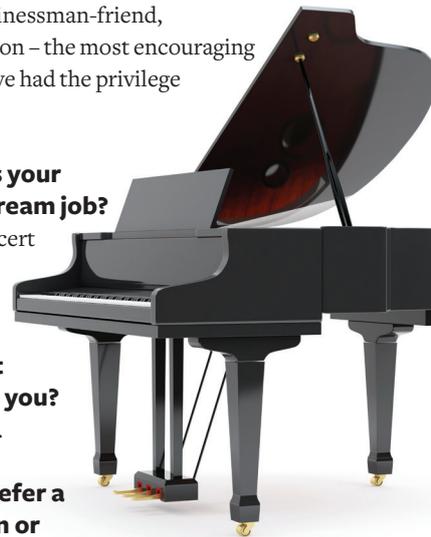
If you were locked in a famous building for one night...which would it be and why?

The Rijksmuseum – to get an unhurried chance to enjoy the Vermeer paintings.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Presenting a President's Award to my wife, Caroline, and son, Iain, to thank them for putting up with all my volunteering!

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**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



DICK RAE

At the end of an executive career, principally in life insurance; now contemplating non-executive work. Based near London.



“At times of change, involving myself in the right working party has kept me at the leading edge”

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I'm currently chair of the Finance & Investment Board and chair of the Banking Member Interest Group. I'm also in a new working party that is looking at banking education for actuaries.

What's involved in your role(s)?

Working with the members of the F&I Board and the Banking MIG to agree and implement their strategies for the year ahead. This covers research, education, international, communication, consultations and diversity.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

It's my way of paying back the benefit I have received from past volunteers. The then Institute of Actuaries had a strap line that quoted Francis Bacon: "I hold every man a debtor to his profession". I think the IFoA must be unique in the extent to which it is a member-led profession reliant on its volunteers.

What do you currently hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

To promote and serve the interests of the finance and investment community. Actuaries should be more involved in banking – members need to have a better understanding of banking and how we can benefit it, which means the IFoA needs to provide an appropriate level of education.

Has volunteering assisted your lifelong learning and helped you in your day job?

At times of change, involving myself in the right working party has kept me at

the leading edge. It's helped build my credentials and reputation in those fields.

Have there been any memorable moments?

Discussions at the sessional meetings held in London and Edinburgh on a paper that I co-authored entitled 'A review of Solvency II: Has it met its objectives?' It was a terrific experience to have something I authored debated by the best in the profession.

How do you relax away from the office?

Walking with my wife and family or skiing with friends. As a season ticketholder I watch most of West Ham United's home games, but I'm not sure if that counts as relaxation!

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Absolutely do it. Once you've volunteered it's important you support your colleagues and provide good quality input on time. I would suggest you dip your toe in the water first. Start on something light that you know you can commit to and learn from the experience.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

My role model is a montage of many people whom I have admired and respected – usually aspects of their behaviour or the way they manage situations. Obviously a disproportionate number are actuaries!

If you were locked in a famous building for one night...which would it be and why?

I've done it already! I stayed the night at Upton Park before it was demolished and West Ham United moved to their new ground at the London Stadium.



What would you consider to be the most brilliant time of your career to date?

My time at Deutsche Bank before the financial crisis. We put in place some huge market risk hedges with life offices to protect their balance sheets against falling interest rates, high inflation and adverse stock markets. To develop our opportunities further we started investing in insurance companies, culminating in the purchase of Abbey Life, at which I became CEO for a short time. Without the hedges that we and others put in place, many insurers and their policyholders could have found themselves far worse off.

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Inside story



+ ELLEN YANG

is a Fellow, and director, insurance advisory, KPMG



Where are you based?

Beijing, China.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am the head of the Beijing regional members group, a career ambassador, and a member of the Risk Management Board.

I started volunteering as a guinea pig for the ST2 exam, then I was an assistant marker from 2010 to 2012. I was elected to Council in 2015 and served for two years.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since 2009.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

When I started being a volunteer, I just wanted to know the IFoA more. When I relocated to Beijing, I decided to provide my service to help the members based in Beijing.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

Well, this is a difficult question for me. I had the honour to serve on Council for two years as the youngest member. I do hope that I contribute to make the IFoA a more worldwide recognised brand.



What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I remember one of the past presidents told me just before my first Council meeting: “Changes do not happen overnight – as long as we are on the journey to the final goal, do not give up.”

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

I believe so.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

I am a consultant, so networking is part of my day job and volunteering definitely helps.

Have there been any memorable moments?

The night I was elected as a Council member.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

It is difficult, especially with time differences, as most of the time the meetings are at off-work hours in my time zone.



How do you relax away from the office?

Travelling.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

It is worth trying – you never know who will be the next president!

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

I do not have anyone in particular, but I learn from a lot of people by studying their strengths.

What was your earliest dream job?

You might not believe it, but I wanted to become an actuary when I was 12, so I guess this is my dream job.

Do you prefer a staycation or a holiday abroad?

Definitely a holiday abroad.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night... which would it be and why?

The Forbidden City – too much to see and you never get a good opportunity during the day as it is always crowded.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Relocating to Asia.

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**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



**+
HAIJING
WANG**

is a Fellow at Ping An Asset Management Corporation, specialising in asset management in China's market

Where are you based?

Shanghai, China.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am an IFoA Council member, a member of the IFoA Nomination Committee, co-founder of CANUK (a Chinese actuarial networking group), committee member of the first and third IFoA Asia conference and I support all sorts of IFoA events in China.



How long have you been volunteering?

I started my volunteering in 2009 when I finished my exams and qualified as a Fellow. I thought it was the right time to give back to the community.

What's involved in your role(s)?

The roles are all different. For instance, when I was a committee member for the Asia conference, I chaired the investment strand responsible for assessing the topics submitted and liaising with the speakers to ensure quality presentations delivered to the audiences. As a Council member, I attend meetings throughout the year and help to shape the future of the profession.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

When I was a student member, I got lots of help from our profession. I attended various member events, got a lot of inspiration and lots of encouragement from *The Actuary* magazine. After I finished my exams, I felt I had enough time and skills to contribute back to the

profession and to the actuarial communities.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

Working with the IFoA is always full of joy and achievement. It also provides me a learning curve added to my work. For example, as a Council member, I am involved in lots of discussions about education reform. This gives me opportunities to reshape our education and exam framework to better equip our members with marketable skills for the future. In the meantime, I have learnt a great deal about where the actuarial world is going, both technically and strategically.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

Communication skills and strategic thinking.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Absolutely!

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

It helps in terms of meeting new people, knowing what is happening in the industry, understanding issues and brainstorming ideas with intelligent people.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

Most of my volunteering is done in my own time. The eight-hour time difference between the UK and China helps to work with colleagues at the IFoA in my off-work hours.

How do you relax away from the office?

Hot yoga is something I found very helpful to relax, especially when I am stressed at work.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Just do it!

What was your earliest dream job?

Scientist or mathematician.

What word best describes you?

Fun.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Definitely holidaying abroad. I have a long list of places and it keeps getting longer.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Every day is different so I have had many brilliant moments in my career! Outside work, my most memorable moment would be seeing my four-month-old son Aaron for the first time.

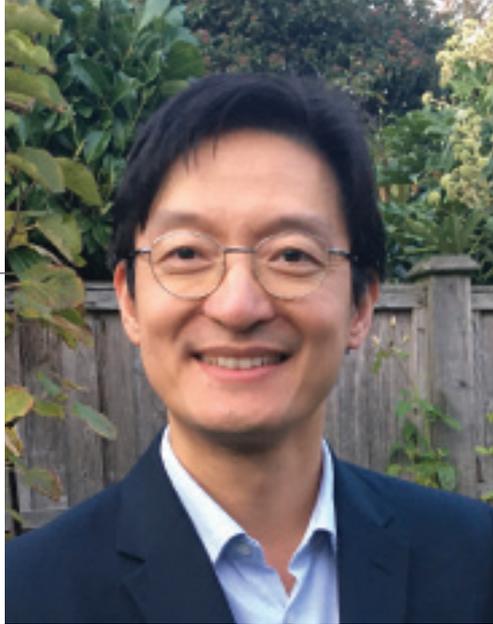
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**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



JO LO

Head of actuarial research and development at Aspen Re, based in London, UK

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am in my second year of being chair of the new GI Research and Thought Leadership (GIRTL) Committee, a sub-committee to the GI Board.



How long have you been volunteering?

I started volunteering when I was a student in 2006-2007, contributing to the Best Estimate and Uncertainty Working Party. Since then I have been a member of other IFoA research working parties on a variety of topics. I was on the GIRO Committee for a number of years, before being one of the first members on the GIRTL Committee last year.

What's involved in your role(s)?

Listening must come first. This could involve short informal free-flowing meetings with individual members of the committee, or pop-up calls between the more formal meetings.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

I enjoy working with actuaries from different backgrounds with a variety of insights. Diversity is a good ingredient for yielding solutions to tricky challenges.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

It is great to be part of an effort to energise the GI actuarial community on collective research. For several decades, this has been a key pillar for the community, adding value to our clients. We risk forgetting about this in our hectic professional lives. It was

“There are many different styles when you look at how actuaries apply their skills to solve problems”

fantastic to engage with a thoughtful group at GIRO on steering research.

actuarial community needs member-led research initiatives.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

It has led me on to interesting CPD tasks. I have reviewed a number of fascinating research papers. Helping researchers at various stages of their work gives me a deeper insight into their final output.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

When you look at how actuaries apply their skills to solving problems, there are many different styles. Volunteering on research working parties and committees has kept me in touch with these approaches in a way that just attending conferences would not.

Have there been any memorable moments?

I was asked to make closing remarks for a sessional last year on managing uncertainty. It was wonderful to see the thoughtful research presented and how well received it was. It was a good example of why the GI

How do you relax away from the office?

I love **geocaching**. It is a worldwide treasure hunt that takes me to interesting places, doing lots of steps and solving puzzles.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Find something interesting and be generous with your time.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Staycation. The UK has beautiful countryside, and London has so much to see.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night...which would it be and why?

Lloyd's Coffee House in the 18th century – seeing how insurance deals were underwritten, how they worked out premiums, and feeling the buzz.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

31 December of every year since I have been involved in reinsurance pricing. It is an amazing feeling when we have gone through yet another 1/1 renewal season!

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**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



**KAREN
BROLLY**

Life consultant at
Hymans Robertson
LLP

Where are you based?

Glasgow.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

Deputy chair of the IFoA Life Board.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since 2012. My first role was on the IFoA Life Conference organising committee.

What's involved in your role(s)?

We have five board meetings per year where we discuss activities that sit under its responsibilities. The agenda includes technical topics and how we can support members' needs. I also take on roles such as peer reviewing working party reports.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

It's a great profession that I love being part of. Volunteering has given me a lot of insight into the workings of the IFoA.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

I am keen to ensure that the Life Board represents the interests of consumers.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I have gained a much more rounded actuarial perspective.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Absolutely, I often get new ideas for research from my fellow board members.



Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Yes, I find it really valuable to meet people from different organisations and backgrounds. There is a big overlap with my day job as a consultant and it helps me to understand what is going on in the market.

Have there been any memorable moments?

As part of the Life Conference organising committee, I was sitting at the top table when we were treated to an energetic performance from the Red Hot Chilli Pipers.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

My employer is supportive of my IFoA work, so this helps me balance things.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night... which would it be and why?

My favourite art gallery is Musée D'Orsay – it would be great to visit while it wasn't busy. It has a lovely café, so I

could enjoy a midnight feast of cheese and pinot noir.

How do you relax away from the office?

I enjoy watching football and I have a season ticket at Celtic Park. This isn't always relaxing!

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

I would encourage it and recommend finding a role that you are genuinely interested in.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

I'm not sure if this counts, but I read a great book called *Quiet* by Susan Cain which I found very helpful in developing my career.

What was your earliest dream job?

Fashion designer.

What word best describes you?

Resilient.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Abroad (and as often as possible).

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Watching the growth of the life consulting team in which I work – it has been fantastic to be part of a team that has developed from one or two consultants to now a team of almost 40.



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Inside story



+ MIKE SHELLEY
is a Fellow,
and retired
in 2004

Where are you based?

We live in Oxfordshire.

What volunteer roles do you do for the IFoA?

Recently I have been chairing adjudication panels and am a member of the 400 Club.



How long have you been volunteering?

I have been a volunteer every year since 1969, when I volunteered as a tutor. In 1974, I was asked to join the Board of Examiners, then in 1988 I was elected to Council, where I chaired the Education Committee and was a member of the Life Board.

What's involved in your roles?

They have all involved working closely with others to understand their point of view and to come up with a solution to a shared problem.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

It has given me the opportunity to work closely with some exceptionally bright, clever people. It's not the main motivation, but it has also got me out of emptying the dishwasher on numerous occasions.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

I have always been pushing to improve the reputation of the profession. I steered through the first practicing certificates and later pushed hard for compulsory continuing professional development for all actuaries. Being part of the disciplinary system is a natural extension of that.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I have learned a huge amount from the people I have worked with: listening, focusing, analysing and persuading.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Of course.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

The large number of contacts that I made was very helpful.

How did you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

My employers always saw the value of the work I was doing and the personal development I was getting.

How do you relax away from the office?

We have five children and eight grandchildren and spend a lot of time with them. I have built a ride-on railway in the garden, which the younger grandchildren love.



What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Don't hesitate. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet influential people and to be seen to achieve something really worthwhile.

Who is your role model in life or in business?

I think I have learned skills by watching a lot of different people, not least my children.

What was your earliest dream job?

To drive a steam train.

What word best describes you?

You need to ask those I have worked with.

Do you prefer a staycation or a holiday abroad?

We ski for two weeks in Vail each winter. Until recently, we had a pool in the garden, so spent the summer entertaining the grandchildren.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night, which would it be and why?

Definitely Hogwarts with the grandchildren. They would love it.

What do you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career?

Being invited to a Buckingham Palace garden party has to be one of the highlights.

To share your engagement or find out about volunteering for the IFoA, contact: debbie.atkins@actuaries.org.uk



At the back
Volunteer

Inside story



NATALIE GREENE

Qualified actuary with experience of working in both pensions consulting and life insurance

Where are you based?

Woking, Surrey.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am on the cross-practice Programming for Actuarial Work working party, and am a facilitator on the online Professional Skills Course.

How long have you been volunteering?

Three years.

What's involved in your role(s)?

My working party role involves exploring key programming concepts and techniques in the context of actuarial work, supporting members in developing their programming skills and providing a platform for members to collaborate in developing software for actuarial applications.

My facilitator role involves guiding participants as they discuss pensions case studies that explore ethical and professional issues. I ask questions, suggest ideas and provide factual input.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

I am currently taking a break from paid employment to look after my children. Volunteering has been invaluable in allowing me to continue actuarial work and keep my skills up to date.

What do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

In my working party role, I want to develop my programming skills and support others in developing theirs. As a facilitator on the

Professional Skills Course, I want to help participants think through ethical and professional issues that could arise in their day-to-day jobs.



How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

I focus on volunteering during term time.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I have gone from knowing little about the latest programming languages to writing fairly complex programs in R. I have used my new coding skills to generate dummy annuitant data for a large number of lives, visualise the characteristics of the data graphically and then build a model to project the future cashflows.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Definitely. As well as developing new skills, I also have the confidence to do so in future.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Yes. It has helped me to keep my skills up to date, network and push myself into new areas. This will be very helpful for returning to employment.

Have there been any memorable moments?

The first time I wrote my own code in R to clean a few lines of data – very satisfying.



How do you relax away from the office?

Writing and recording songs.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Go for it, and don't be afraid to do something a bit different from your day job.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

Tim Peake. He has an amazing ability to remain calm under intense pressure.

What was your earliest dream job?

Record producer.

What word best describes you?

Productive.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Holiday abroad – I like seeing new things.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night... which would it be and why?

The Sistine Chapel – the ceiling is stunning.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Playing a key role in a large bulk annuity deal where a bespoke approach and process was needed. I learned a huge amount.

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At the back
Volunteer

Inside story



+ PATRICK KELLIHER

FIA CERA
Shares his experience
engaging as an
IFoA volunteer

Employer and area of work?

Self-employed consultant specialising in risk management.

Location?

Edinburgh, but I frequently find myself operating out of London and around the UK for extended periods of time.

What IFoA volunteering do you do?

I am chair of the Operational Risk Working Party; a member of the Risk Management Research and Thought Leadership Committee; previously chair of the Risk Classification Working Party; and a speaker at IFoA conferences and events. I am also a contributor to actuarial profession responses to consultations on banking and operational risk topics.

What's involved?

I focus on research projects. As chair of a working party, I am responsible for ensuring it is well run, adheres to IFoA governance, and delivers a high-quality end product.

What was your motivation for volunteering?

Helping the IFoA to be at the cutting edge



“You can build a great network of contacts, not just potential clients but also people you can bounce ideas off”

of research increases the brand value of actuaries in general, as well as my own personal brand. This is very important in risk management, where actuaries face competition from other risk professionals. It is why I helped set up the Operational Risk Working Party, which I hope will place actuaries at the forefront of this growing field.

What do you hope to achieve?

To deliver a high-quality end product, which adds to the reputation of the working party as well as the IFoA as a whole.

What new skills and knowledge have you developed?

You can build a great network of contacts through involvement in working parties, not just potential clients or business contacts but also people you can ask questions or bounce ideas off. As I expand my knowledge in a way relevant to my role, this allows me to claim CPD for my volunteering.

Has volunteering helped your career?

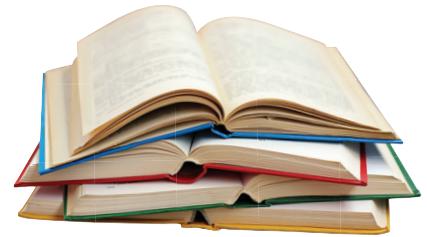
It does my CV no harm to be involved with cutting-edge research.

How do you balance your day job with your volunteer role?

Being self-employed, it involves a considerable amount of my private time. It can be tiring at the end of a day to devote another hour or two to research. But it is worth it.

How do you relax away from the office?

Hill-walking and reading, particularly books on history.



Who is your role model?

Irish leader, Michael Collins.

And your earliest dream job?

A soldier.

If you were locked in a famous building for a night... which would it be and why?

The Ritz-Carlton – I like my comfort.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Holiday abroad.

What do you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Qualifying as a FIA. Nothing really beats it.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

What we as actuaries gain from the profession depends on what we put in.

To share your engagement or find out about volunteering for the IFoA, contact: debbie.atkins@actuaries.org.uk



C**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



+
**PEI
(GRACE)
GUAN, FIA**
chief actuary of
Generali China Life
Insurance

Where are you based?

Beijing, China.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am the IFoA CPD co-ordinator in Beijing and the mentor for the actuarial students at the University of International Business and Economics and the Central University of Finance and Economics. I am also a committee member of the IFoA China Technical Member Interest Group.

How long have you been volunteering?

I have volunteered as an actuarial mentor since 2014, when the IFoA set up its first overseas office in Beijing, China.

What's involved in your role(s)?

As a CPD co-ordinator, I help the IFoA Beijing office organise CPD member events. As the committee member of the IFoA China Technical Member Interest Group, I am now working with other volunteer FIAs to provide a platform for actuaries from all practice areas to be able to discuss issues.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

I enjoy the work I do, which aims to promote the profile of the IFoA, actuarial science and education, and the profession in East Asia.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

I want to help more people understand the value of actuarial science, not only for the insurance industry, but also for the whole business world and society. I also hope that the IFoA will become a more influential professional body in this region.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

Being an IFoA volunteer allows me to make the most of my executive skills, innovation and leadership. The voluntary work also allows me to hear cutting-edge knowledge and trends first-hand.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

It has expanded my outlook and tapped into my potential.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Yes, I was one of the initiators and the key corporate contact in the cooperation between the Sunshine Insurance Group and the IFoA. The alliance helped to promote the Sunshine Insurance Group's brand, and this formed part of my day-to-day job.

Have there been any memorable moments?

In September 2016, when Sunshine Insurance Group became first partner of the IFoA in China, and when I qualified as an FIA in 2011.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

My voluntary work is part of my day job – I don't feel I need to work extra.

How do you relax away from the office?

Stay with my family and kids.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

If you want to meet great people and become a greater person, join us!

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

My friend Coco Feng, who qualified as an FIA in five years and became a really good role model for me.

What was your earliest dream job?

Believe it or not, an actuary!

What word best describes you?

Majordomo: I am used to taking care of everyone in every aspect of my work and life.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Either, as long as I'm staying with my family.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

As an actuary, I am future-oriented. Instead of looking back for the 'most', I look forward to the 'next'.

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At the back
Volunteer



+ RICHARD GALBRAITH
Actuary and senior enterprise risk manager, Aviva Health Business

Inside story

What was your earliest dream job?

To be a pilot.



What volunteer role(s) do you do?

I'm the IFoA representative on the Advice and Assistance Committee for the International Actuarial Association (IAA), and a member of the IAA African sub-committee. I also present Stage 3 Professional Skills Training (PST).

What's involved in your role(s)?

I've attended the past three IAA conferences in St Petersburg, Cape Town and Budapest to engage with the committees I'm a member of. For the Stage 3 PST, I develop sessions based on the IFoA professionalism content and facilitate the sessions internally within my company, at Staple Inn and this year at some conferences.

What motivates you to volunteer?

I am proud to be a member of the actuarial profession and what you give definitely comes back 10-fold. I started as a way of developing my own skillset, to network outside my company, and gain a more global view of how the profession works.

What do you hope to achieve?

I want to develop my confidence, skillset, and my view of the world. Everything else is a bonus.

What new skills or knowledge have you developed?

To be able to stand up and present to a large audience. As part of our day jobs, we don't often get such opportunities, and when we do, they're few and far between, so we don't get to practice and improve. As actuaries, we often wrongly get attributed with a lack of communication skills, and I don't think this is fair. I want to prove we are good at it.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Definitely. It's helped my confidence, and hopefully my credibility. It's useful to bring back knowledge from these global events and understand how the bigger issues are being managed, which helps me make suggestions at a local level.

Have there been any memorable moments?

My volunteer roles have luckily complemented each other. Off the back of the professional skills training I've been leading on a thread of work for the African sub-committee on 'Professionalism in Africa', I was asked to develop and facilitate a two-day professional skills course in Kenya at the end of May 2017. That by far has been the most amazing and memorable moment. The safari I booked myself onto after the session was pretty memorable as well!

How do you balance your day job and volunteer role?

An understanding manager, a company that supports the volunteer work, and

a few hours extra when necessary. Most importantly, I have a very supportive wife.

How do you relax away from the office?

I'm a keen long-distance runner. When not running, I like baking or cooking.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Don't consider it, just do it. Being part of the IAA has been one of the best experiences I've had in my career.

Who is your role model?

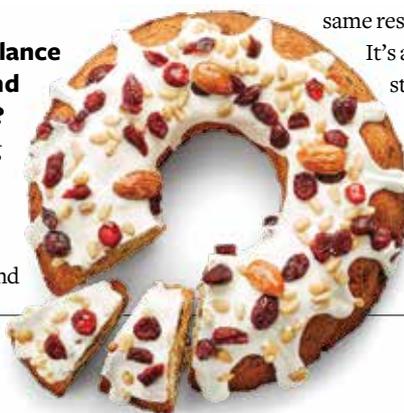
I believe in taking the best attributes from the people I meet and building them into what I do. If I had to pick one, it would be my late father. I had great respect for his work ethic, and the fair way he treated people. Since volunteering, I've gained great respect for Chris Daykin and Sundeep Raichura. Both have such big ideas for the profession, and go out of their way to give as much time as possible to develop it globally.

What has been the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

I had the opportunity to work in Paris for two years, and Amsterdam for another two with my current company. I was given a MoSeS pensions valuation model and told to 'make it faster'. I managed to improve the run time by optimising the code, taking it down from two and a half hours to eight minutes, with the same results on back testing.

It's a bit of a geeky answer, but it does stand out in my memory as 'brilliant'.

“What you give definitely comes back 10-fold”



To share your engagement or find out about volunteering for the IFoA, contact: debbie.atkins@actuaries.org.uk



Inside story



+
ROSALIND ROSSOUW
FFA, Shares her experience engaging as an IFoA volunteer



Employer and area of work?

I work at Sun Life Financial of Canada (UK) as the head of business planning and capital management.

Where are you based?

Basingstoke in Hampshire.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

- The value of with-profits for consumers Working Party
- The Diversity Advisory Group
- The Life Conference Programme Committee.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since August 2016.

What's involved in your roles?

Participation in meetings, research, review and leveraging my creative skill set and network for the benefit of the group.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

The opportunity to contribute and add value by making a positive difference to others and to the profession.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

Each volunteering role has specific aims which I would like to deliver, for example, I would like to aid the promotion of diversity and inclusion by leading the development of an online diversity forum to support members of the profession.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

Volunteering has helped me to develop my leadership and interpersonal skills.

“I have found volunteering to be incredibly rewarding”

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Without a doubt.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Yes. The volunteer chairs have set very good examples which have helped me to strengthen my meeting style, especially when chairing meetings at work.

Any memorable moments?

Presenting the research that the Value of With-Profits for Consumers Working Party had completed to date at CILA this year.

How do you relax?

I play tennis and garden.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

I complete all of my volunteering in my personal time, so I instead find it more challenging to balance my personal time and my volunteering role. I tend to devote an evening a fortnight to review and research. I am fortunate as my company offers flexible working hours, so if there is a meeting during the day, I either come into the office earlier or work slightly later than usual to accommodate this.



What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

I would encourage them to do so, particularly as I have found volunteering to be incredibly rewarding.

Who is your role model?

My Mum – she is the strongest and most amazing person in my life.

What was your earliest dream job?

I wanted to be a paediatrician.

What word best describes you

Happy.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

I have a holiday home abroad, so enjoy the best of both!

If you were locked in a famous building for one night...which would it be and why?

Chatsworth House, so I could experience authentic stately home living, and enjoy the exquisite beauty of the gardens the following morning before the crowds arrived.

What was the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Presenting at the International Congress of Actuaries in Washington D.C. in 2014.

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Inside story



SOPHIA CH'NG

Consulting actuary; lecturer in actuarial practice at Sunway University, Malaysia

Where are you based?

I am based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I am a member of the IFoA's IFRS17 Working Party and the Risk Management Wider Fields Working Party. I am also president-elect of the Actuarial Society of Malaysia (ASM) and I support the IFoA by helping to co-host and deliver a range of IFoA events in Malaysia, such as the recent Professionalism Skills Training event for over 160 attendees.

How long have you been volunteering?

I started in 2017 and find it very fulfilling – so much so that I intend to do more in the future, and encourage others to do so.

What's involved in your role(s)?

My roles focus on technical research, facilitating discussions and writing papers. The working parties bring together people with relevant expertise, experiences and interest from different countries and backgrounds to work on specific topics. In addition, as the president-elect of ASM, I am involved in a number of events that we co-host with the IFoA in Kuala Lumpur.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

The actuarial profession has provided me with an exciting career and I would like to give back. During my career as a qualified actuary, I was given the chance to hold various senior roles such as CFO, appointed actuary, head of strategic planning, head of product pricing and



product management, and consulting actuary. I was also head of risk management for the 16th Commonwealth Games, held in Malaysia. After gaining this experience, I now feel that I have the time and skills to contribute to the profession and to the actuarial community.

What have you/do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

Besides giving back, working with the IFoA is a good learning platform. One such example is being part of the IFRS17 and risk management working parties.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

Through the working groups I am involved in, I have learned a great deal about the latest technical knowledge and developments in IFRS17 and risk management.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

Yes, it puts me in the forefront of the development of relevant topics.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

It has widened the scope of my knowledge, and this is useful when I meet new

people in the industry. My volunteering roles mean that I am up to date with, and understand, industry developments, and am therefore well equipped to share and discuss ideas on these topics.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

The time difference between the UK and Malaysia helps, as often I will be doing my volunteering activities out of office hours and in my own time.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

It is a great experience! You get to meet new people from different parts of the world with different backgrounds. You can learn new skills and knowledge, and it is a good way to give back to your profession.

What was your earliest dream job?

Teacher. Today I am a part-time lecturer in a university, lecturing on actuarial practice.

What word best describes you?

Brilliant!

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

It is the people that I spend the holiday time with, rather than the destination, that is important to me.

What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Being the first woman, and first Malaysian, to be awarded the annual Young ASEAN Manager Award by the ASEAN Insurance Council.

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**At the back
Volunteer**

Inside story



**+
TZE LEONG
CHAN**

heads the strategy and business development for one of the South-East Asia markets at Gen Re

Where are you based?

I am currently based in Singapore, although I used to be in Kuala Lumpur.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

I currently sit on the Quality Assurance Scheme (QAS) sub-committee. I have also volunteered in the education area as a Guinea Pig and assistant examiner.

How long have you been volunteering?

I started in 2014, just after I obtained my Fellowship. I have also volunteered time and effort with the Actuarial Society of Malaysia.

What's involved in your role(s)?

My role in the QAS involves reviewing applications by firms employing actuaries for QAS accreditation and monitoring them after accreditation. In particular, I provide insight and perspective on matters related to applicants from Asia, many of which come from the region that I am familiar with.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

Knowing that I can help someone across the globe with my contributions gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling. In addition, volunteering is a gateway to greater exposure to global developments in our profession beyond the daily work.



What do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

The Asian growth wave applies just as much to our profession as it does to other industries. I would love to be part of the IFoA's efforts in developing our presence here in a strategic and sustainable way.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

I was surprised by how much various stakeholders appreciate having a QAS accreditation in the UK. The QAS expansion into Asia continues to be eye-opening as Asian companies are responding rapidly.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Yes. You would be surprised by how differently you approach problems when you are in tune with the great big actuarial world outside the day job.

What word best describes you?

Unconventional.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

Anthony Bourdain was an inspiration with his passion for both learning and educating. Harold McGee and Heston Blumenthal demonstrate that rigorous analysis can result in amazing outcomes – I still bear the hope of tasting the fruits of their labours.

How do you relax away from the office?

Cooking and exercise – two activities which allow for introspection while testing my abilities to create.

What was your earliest dream job?

Globetrotting food show host.

What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Don't sell yourself short or think that you are not good enough for a role. You will ultimately chart your own path and find your own value. Volunteering helps you achieve that faster.

Do you prefer a staycation or holiday abroad?

Holiday abroad.

If you were locked in a famous building for one night...which would it be and why?

La Boqueria in Barcelona, because I'm a fan of cured meats.



What would you consider to be the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

I'm not sure I can really pick one. I recently realised that an obscure area of study was not very well known in our actuarial community and decided to present this topic at a few large seminars. To reveal more about the actual topic and content would be spoiling it.

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Inside story



WAQAS AHMED

Actuarial analyst at esure, working in the reserving team

Where are you based?

Reigate, Surrey.

particularly useful for my personal development.

What word best describes you?

Motivated.

What volunteer role(s) do you do for the IFoA?

Volunteer career ambassador.

Do you think volunteering has helped you in your day job?

Certainly, it's given me confidence to communicate effectively with different stakeholders.

Do you prefer a staycation or a holiday abroad?

Holiday abroad – I love experiencing new cultures.

How long have you been volunteering?

For around eight months.

How do you balance your day job and your volunteer role?

My employer is very supportive and allows me to work flexibly.

What's involved in your role(s)?

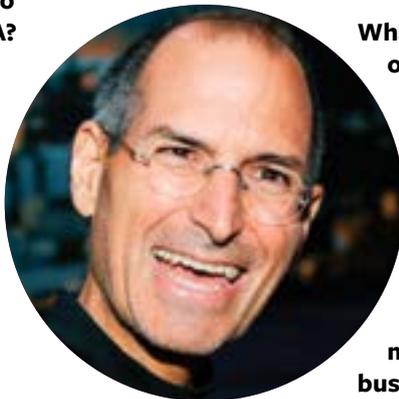
Representing the IFoA, engaging with school and university students to help them understand how to enter the profession and the joys of working as an actuary!

How do you relax away from the office?

Working out, reading and listening to music.

What motivates you to volunteer for the IFoA?

It's an enjoyable experience. It provides me with an opportunity to help people while enhancing my communication and presentation skills at the same time.



What would you say to others considering a volunteer role?

Definitely give it a go. There are so many opportunities available and the experience is enjoyable.

What do you hope to achieve in your volunteer role?

I hope to raise greater awareness of the profession and to inspire the next generation of actuaries.

Who is your role model – in life or in business?

Steve Jobs – he inspires me to always “stay hungry, stay foolish”.

What new skills or knowledge do you think you have developed?

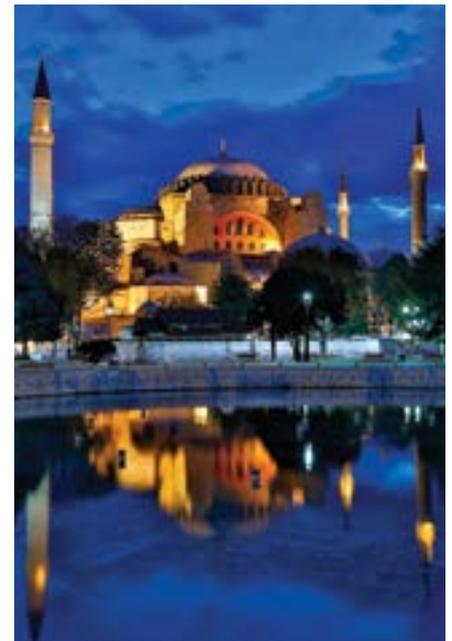
I've learned to manage my nerves more effectively when presenting in front of an audience.

What was your earliest dream job?

I remember wanting to be a police officer as a kid.

Has this assisted your lifelong learning?

It certainly has – it's been



If you were locked in a famous building for one night...which would it be and why?

Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. It's such a breathtaking place, full of history.

What do you consider the most brilliant moment of your career to date?

Passing my first actuarial exams while working.

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