



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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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.”

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