

Chartered status enquiries rise as recession tightens the job market

THE UK's **Engineering Council UK (ECUK)** reports that it has recently noticed a marked increase in the number of engineering professionals enquiring about registration for Chartered Engineer (CEng), Incorporated Engineer (IEng), and Engineering Technician (EngTech) status. The organization has, therefore, been taking steps to accommodate this surge in interest, which it believes is a result of the increasingly competitive job market.

Significantly improving job security and career prospects, professional registration is open to any competent practising engineer, with different levels and pathways available. The three categories – EngTech, IEng, and CEng – have been developed to provide a progressive registration structure, reflecting the recognition that lifelong learning and career development are the norm, and will remain so whatever the short-term economic situation may be. “Evidence of employing registered engineering professionals is a frequent requirement for the award of contracts both in the UK and internationally,” says Andrew Ramsay, Chief Executive of ECUK. “So it is hardly surprising that registrants generally find it easier than non-registrants to gain promotion or a new job. As an added bonus, many employers place such high importance on registration that they are happy to pay the fees on their employees’ behalf.”

In the UK, gas and power supplier National Grid is one of numerous organizations aware of the advantages of employing professional staff who are already registered or plan to work towards registration. Tony Moloney, National Grid’s Manager, UK Learning and Development says, “At National Grid we are committed to maintaining a professional workforce. The advantage to us as employers is that by taking-on registered engineers or technicians we have the assurance of knowing that our key personnel hold an internationally recognised mark of competence.”

Applicants for any of the three ECUK-administered levels need to join one of the professional engineering institutions it has licensed to assess candidates. They will be required to demonstrate competence to perform professional work to the necessary standards, as well as show commitment to maintain their competence, work within professional codes and actively participate within the engineering profession. The Professional Institute of Pipeline Engineers is already looking at ways it can become one of these licensed institutions, and will work towards this on behalf of members as rapidly as possible.

The financial benefits of holding the designatory letters CEng have recently been proven in the Institution of Chemical Engineers’ (IChemE) Salary Survey 2008. The report reveals that chartered chemical engineers aged 45-54 can now earn, on average, around £7,000/yr more than their non-chartered counterparts. Further evidence is provided by the Engineering and Technology Board’s (ETB) 2007 survey of registrants, which demonstrates that average salaries for Chartered Engineers starts to significantly diverge from average salaries for non-chartered mechanical and electrical engineers from an early age, becoming around 40% higher by age 45. Andrew Ramsay adds, “In the long term, maintaining registered status ensures that engineers are continually kept up to date with new developments in their profession. It also means that they are governed by a professional code of conduct and receive reminders and assistance in determining their obligations under this code.

“And on top of the benefits of registration, institution membership brings its own advantages. All licensed engineering institutions provide news of job vacancies, library and support services, as well as access to continuous professional development. Some have club facilities and many have job pages or career-finder services. The conferences, meetings and seminars they organize, many of them free to attend, open-up opportunities to meet and network with professionals in the relevant field.”

The PIPE Secretariat is pleased to see the ECUK's initiatives are really proving of value to individual engineers in many disciplines, and is committed to making this opportunity available it PIPE members as soon as possible.

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