

GETTING CHARTERED

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Acoustics is one of several professional bodies licensed by the Engineering Council to register members as professional engineers.

Acoustical engineers come from fields as diverse as material manufacturing, acoustic signature recognition and reduction, active noise and vibration control, architectural acoustical design, enclosure and sound attenuator design, aerospace engineering, loudspeaker design, measurement and analysis instrumentation, sonar systems, speech recognition, mobile telecommunications, vehicle noise control and vibration isolation.

Through the Institute's Engineering Division, suitably qualified and experienced engineers may gain this internationally-recognised award.

2 REGISTRATION PROCESS

Registration is available for both Chartered (CEng) and Incorporated (IEng) Engineer through the Institute. The process requires candidates to present evidence of their professional development and responsible experience for consideration at interview. This evidence is usually drawn from several years of experience leading up to the time of interview. The Institute provides on-line services for support in developing, recording and authenticating a candidate's professional development in preparation for the Professional Review Interview.

There are two routes to registration - the "standard route" for those holding an accredited engineering degree listed on the Engineering Council website¹ - and the "individual route" for those holding degrees in related subjects such as physics, or unaccredited engineering degrees. An assessment for each candidate is made by the Institute during the application process. For graduates after 1999, a four year accredited course is now required by the Engineering Council, and the Institute's Diploma in Acoustics has become an accepted qualification in addition to an accredited three year course.

3 MENTORING

Because of the nature of the acoustical engineering profession, the Institute recognises that many of its members seeking CEng or IEng registration will need guidance and assistance in developing the evidence to demonstrate that they satisfy both the educational and the professional development requirements.

Preparation of materials for registration is a meticulous yet rewarding process of articulating competency against the requirements of UK-SPEC, and many candidates decide that they are not ready or able to undertake the work of preparing the papers required when the guidance notes first arrive. Experience has shown that most candidates benefit from being mentored through the process, where help can be gained in understanding the requirements, completing the paperwork, and preparing for the face to face interview.

Members seeking to achieve registration are given personal advice and support through the process. Some of the larger companies provide in-house mentoring schemes and training.

¹ <http://www.engc.org.uk/registration/acad/search.aspx>

However, upon request, the Institute will endeavour to provide a mentor for anyone who asks for one.

4 PROFESSIONAL REVIEW REPORT

After collecting the evidence, candidates will complete a professional review report. This normally takes the form of 4-6 project write-ups describing how in the course of their work the competencies listed under UK-SPEC have been achieved. The process is very much evidence driven, so candidates are advised to undertake a gap analysis against the UK-Spec competencies when first starting to collect the evidence, and to aim to capture the missing evidence over the course of their next few projects. Candidates do not need to be an expert in every area, but need to show an adequate awareness of each area to be examined. As a general rule, at least two examples of each competency should be included. CPD logs of candidates are also examined.

5 PROFESSIONAL REVIEW INTERVIEW

Following submittal and acceptance of the Professional Review Report, candidates are invited to attend an interview. The interviews are carried out under the Engineering Council UK-SPEC² procedures, which require more work by candidates in preparation, but also make the process more straightforward by setting very clear criteria for the assessment of professional experience.

During the interview, candidates will be examined on the contents of their professional evidence reports by two trained interviewers. It therefore follows that each candidate should be prepared to answer questions on any topic contained in their reports. Unlike some Institutes who have the luxury of examinations for the technical elements, the academic parts of the UK-SPEC are examined during the interview for acoustic engineers.

6 POST INTERVIEW

Following completion of the interview, the recommendation of the interviewers goes to the Engineering Committee, which has the final say for each candidate. Successful candidates will be informed, and registration using occurs within a few weeks, at which time candidates can start to use their new post-nominals. Candidates who do not make it through the first interview are given feedback on which areas need further evidence, and are invited back after an appropriate period.

7 REFLECTIONS

The author has been interviewing candidates for over ten years, and in that time only a handful of candidates have been unsuccessful at the first interview. However, all candidates that come back for a second interview have been successful, which is testament to the support provided to the candidates by the committee members, mentors and the Engineering Manager.

It is accepted that Engineering Council registration may not be relevant for the career path of all Institute members, but most candidates find the process very rewarding and useful at articulating the skills needed to succeed at the highest levels in their relevant fields. The Engineering Division looks forward to helping you on the path to registration.

² <http://www.engc.org.uk/ukspec>