



A day in the life of *a student co-ordinator* **Dan Wiseman**

Dan's role as Student Co-ordinator for the IET (Institution of Engineering and Technology) involves being a central point of contact for student activity across the Institution, ensuring strong links between IET staff and student volunteers.

Dan is heavily involved with the 'IET On Campus' initiative that provides engineering and technology students with fantastic opportunities they may otherwise not be exposed to, such as meeting the industry's leading employers, visiting engineering sites of interest and developing extra-curricular skills that will help them to make a seamless transition from university into the world of work. It also ensures that the IET has a presence quite literally on campus at various universities worldwide.

Whilst no two working days are the same for Dan, he takes us through what a day in his role at the IET is likely to involve.

On a typical day I am woken by an overly ambitious 6:45 alarm, and then again every five minutes until I eventually give the snooze button a break and drag myself out of bed, usually around 7:30. This leaves me with just enough time to get showered, dressed and ready for the day ahead, and to grab a slice of toast as I rush out of the front door. If I'm not completely awake by this point, then an early morning sprint to the train station usually does the trick. The irony of this rushed routine is that I genuinely love going to work each day. I guess I just equally love my sleep!

After a short train journey to Stevenage I make my way to the office, Michael Faraday House, which is the IET's global head office where approximately 400 members of staff are based. It's somewhat of a routine that I arrive at my desk around 8:40, log in to my computer, have a quick look at my calendar and the day's lunch menu on the intranet and begin to scroll through the e-mails that have inevitably appeared in my inbox overnight. I really don't like leaving e-mails sitting in my inbox so I tend to deal with simpler, quicker requests straightaway and add the longer, more complicated tasks to my to-do list for the day. All of this is of course accompanied by that all-important first cup of coffee to ensure my brain is fully switched on before the working day officially begins at 9:00.



Michael Faraday House, the global head office of the IET.

On a daily basis I communicate with IET student volunteers who are involved with the IET On Campus initiative. By engaging directly with these student communities all around the world, I am able to help identify new ways in which the IET can interact with students, enabling the organization to fulfil its strategic aims and objectives relating to student engagement. I also facilitate communication to students about relevant products, services and opportunities within the IET that will benefit them throughout their studies and the early stages of their career.

Whilst my background isn't in engineering, working for the IET has

helped me to realize that we must continue to inspire, inform and influence the next generation of engineers and technicians as these are the people who will be forging a better world to meet the needs of society for future generations. This is something that I am now extremely passionate about and I absolutely love the fact that my role allows me to assist these aspiring engineers and technicians at such a crucial stage in their progression.

'we must continue to inspire, inform and influence the next generation of engineers and technicians'

The great thing about working with student volunteers all around the world is that the clock never ever stops, so let's see what my inbox has got in store for me this morning! As ever, it's very much a mixed bag: a UK-based IET On Campus group is planning a visit to an engineering site of interest, CERN, and they are looking for some support; elsewhere, a Malaysian IET On Campus group would like to run a student lecture competition, so I'll have to let them know about the IET's Present Around the World competition, which could be exactly what they're looking for; oh, and apparently there's a cake sale downstairs in HR! (It's the little things ...)

At 9:30 my colleague and I have a meeting about how to further increase the engagement between students and the IET to enable students and young professionals to get the most from it. After all, it's not as if the Institution has a shortage of products and services that are useful for students. The IET publishes many high quality, widely acclaimed books and journals that can be used for students' research and information. In addition, it has its own digital library, holding over 190,000 technical reports, and also has a comprehensive abstract database, Inspec, containing over 15 million records. Furthermore, students have resources such as a 'Final Year Project Guide' and a 'Publishing Workshop' at their disposal. The IET also produces excellent video content through its IET.tv platform. Video content is becoming increasingly popular, particularly with students. We discuss the possibility of making these products and services more visible to students by creating a student research competition that would involve these products/services being used by them. We both agree that whilst this would take time to implement fully, it would be fantastic if our student volunteers could take full advantage of the vast resources the IET has to offer.

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The rest of my morning is taken up with administrative tasks that come with my position of Secretary to the YPCC (Young Professionals Community Committee). The YPCC is a global committee and several of the members are currently asking me to arrange their travel bookings to and from various meetings and events. Organizing worldwide flights, visas, hotel bookings, etc. for a committee of volunteers with different preferences requires strong organizational skills and, whilst it may not sound the most

exciting thing in the world, it's a part of my role that I really enjoy as it's allowed me to learn a huge amount about various countries around the world. Plus, I'm now officially an expert in naming worldwide airport codes, which does come in handy in pub quizzes from time to time.

After scoffing my £1 lunch (yes, our office really does offer lunch for £1), it's a quick trip to central London with my colleague for a venue visit at the RSA. We will be holding a YPCVC (Young Professionals Community Volunteer Conference) event within the next few months, which young professionals from around the globe will attend; however, we are yet to find a suitable venue for the day. After a whistle-stop tour, it's obvious that the RSA is perfect for the event – great news! It's also just a stone's throw from the IET's recently refurbished Savoy Place offices, so I'm sure many attendees will be rushing to check out this iconic building after the event.

No tour of Savoy Place for me unfortunately, as it's straight back to the office for another meeting with three of my colleagues. We discuss what steps we should take next with regard to the IET's Lifeskills programme that is currently being piloted in Australia. Lifeskills workshops are short, interactive workshops that help to develop a range of key skills for an engineer or technician looking to get ahead in their career. They include 'Communicating for Success', 'Effective Negotiation' and 'Continuing Professional Development' and are primarily targeted at students and young professionals. The aim of this pilot is to see if the UK-based workshops can be as successful elsewhere in the world as they are in the UK. The difference in Australia is that we are training our volunteers to deliver the workshops for us as we don't have the advantage of having a team of dedicated trainers there as we do in the UK. There is still an awful lot of work to do in order to get the workshops ready to roll out in other countries. However, if we are looking to inspire, inform and influence the next generation of engineers and technicians then we should be putting students and young professionals in the best position to secure their dream job. It is agreed in the meeting that we will try to iron out the issues we're having with the pilot before taking the Lifeskills workshops elsewhere.

Back at my desk I begin to work through my e-mails and it's only a matter of minutes before the phone rings. It's a student I met at a Freshers' Fair event not so long ago who is keen on volunteering for the IET at their university. As it happens, updating the IET On Campus student volunteer role description is something I'm actually working on at the moment, so after a lengthy chat about the joys of university life (with a little bit of IET On Campus thrown in there for good measure) I agree to send the role description over to them once it's finalized.

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'Here's a photo of me (far left) pretending to be a student again whilst representing the University of Reading's IET On Campus student group at their Freshers' Fair.'

99 The best thing about this job is the fact that I get to interact directly with some of the most interesting people you could possibly wish to meet. Young engineers and technicians have such incredible ideas and it's my role to engage with these people on a daily basis to establish how the IET can better support them. The role is incredibly varied and very much keeps me on my toes; I'm constantly having to adapt and use different skills depending on the situation to ensure that the IET is staying not only relevant but actually at the forefront of the engineering and technology world for students.

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Before I know it, it's 17:00 and time to go home. Where has the day gone? It's going to be an early night for me tonight as I'm off to Edinburgh tomorrow, where I will be presenting about IET On Campus to several of the IET's Diamond Jubilee Scholars. Like I say, never a dull moment.

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To cite this article:

Wiseman, D, A day in the life of a student co-ordinator, *Insights*, 2016, 29(1), 96–99; DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1629/uksg.288>

Published by UKSG in association with Ubiquity Press on 07 March 2016