

Questionnaire for Professional Engineering Institutions. Project RETURN.

This questionnaire is being carried out by the Women's Engineering Society as part of a Royal Academy of Engineering Diversity Concordat programme of work called RETURN, to look at the support and services that Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs) offer to their members who take time out of their careers due to maternity or caring responsibilities, or for any other form of career break.

A survey carried out in 2014 with 5000 respondents provided evidence that many women and men with caring responsibilities will not return to engineering and related careers after a break, and this is exacerbated when the break has extended beyond the statutory period of maternity leave.

PEIs have a unique role to play in supporting these engineers, as the professional institutions are in a position to retain contact with their members when links with the employer are severed.

This survey seeks to measure the level of support (actual and perceived) that this group of members currently receive, and the idea of the project is to build on this baseline and improve the provision by identifying some best practices that can be piloted.

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions on behalf of your Professional Institution. If you would like to remain anonymous then that is optional. We hope that a number of Institutions will wish to improve their practices by offering to implement the best practice solutions that are identified to support this group of members at this critical point in their career.

Please complete the following questions giving as much detail as possible, and indicating where you think that improvements could be made in the future. We would be grateful if you could return the information to Dawn Bonfield at president@wes.org.uk by 10 April 2015.

1. Do you measure the number of your members on a career or maternity break at any one time? If so, please give this number as a percentage of your membership. Do you think that this is an accurate measure?
2. Do you monitor and record the reasons why your members are taking career breaks (e.g. maternity leave, caring responsibilities, change of career, secondment abroad etc)?
3. What method do you use to find this information? (E.g. Do you ask directly when members renew their membership? Do you rely on members offering this information voluntarily?)
4. Do you offered reduced membership rates for people on career or maternity breaks? If so, what are they?
5. How do you communicate these rates to your members? (Do you actively tell them or do you wait for them to ask?) Please give details.
6. Are you aware of the implications for career breaks on members' professional qualifications with the Engineering Council (CEng, EngTech etc), and do you pass this information on to your

- members? Is there anything that you think could be done by the Engineering Council to encourage members to keep up their professional registrations whilst on career breaks?
7. Do you require your members on career/maternity breaks to continue to undertake and record CPD? If so, do you offer any guidance about relevant types of CPD that can be done whilst on a break?
 8. Do you have any other services or provision to offer to your members on career /maternity breaks?
 9. Would you consider offering training, mentoring, CPD or other forms of support (e.g. financial) to your members whilst having a career/maternity break, or on returning to work afterwards? Please give details.
 10. When members leave your Institution do you ask why? If so, do you have any data that indicates the number of members who leave because they do not return to their previous careers as a result of being on a maternity or career break?
 11. Once members have left your Institution, do you ever reconnect with them at a later date to see whether their circumstances have changed and to ask whether they would consider returning, or whether there is anything that would help them return?
 12. Are there any benefits that you can identify as a result of supporting these members during and after a career or maternity break? Please give details.
 13. Would you be willing to implement on a trial or long term basis any recommendations that this work identifies as best practice in supporting this group of members?
 14. Do you have any other comments or ideas that you would like to add for consideration?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. The results will be anonymised and shared with the other members of the Diversity Concordat at the meeting in May. Please let me know if you would like to see full details of this programme in support of this group of members.

Please complete and return the information by **10 April 2015** to president@wes.org.uk

Dawn Bonfield
President, Women's Engineering Society

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