

***Engineering Associates Australia's
Career Resources***

***- including discussions from the
Online Career Days held March 2003***



**ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA**

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ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA is the trading name of the Institution of Engineers Australia

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Engineering Associates Australia (EAA) is a group within ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA committed to:

- gaining wider recognition for Engineering Associates within the engineering industry and the wider community;
- creating opportunities for Engineering Associates to participate in activities to enhance their skills and careers;
- representing Engineering Associates on National and Divisional Boards and Committees;
- initiating and presenting Associate-related issues to ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA's governing Congress through the Board of Engineering Practice; and
- organising Associate groups within each of ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA's Divisions across Australia.

Engineering Associates Australia's Career Resources

Introduction

On 19 and 26 March 2003, Engineering Associates Australia (EAA) held Online Career Days with special guest Jenny O'Donovan, the National Careers Adviser for Engineers Australia.

Through EAA's online discussion group, members were able to discuss with Jenny, and each other, a wide variety of career and professional development issues. In addition, these Career Days enabled ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA to better understand the career needs and concerns of our Engineering Associate members, and to identify how these can be best addressed through our Careers service.

The online discussion group for our Engineering Associate members operates through our Members Zone E-Comms facility (supported by Yahoo Groups), with 30 members now participating.

This document is designed as a resource for our Engineering Associate members to assist them with their career and professional development inquiries. The issues raised during the Online Career Days are presented in question and answer format and separated in to relevant topics (see the Contents page).

Career Resources

Engineering Associate members seeking further assistance on any of these or related issues are encourage to use the following resources made available by ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA:

Engineer.Career Exclusive for members of ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA and available online in our Members Zone, this secure site contains a comprehensive package of careers information for all members including salaries, resumes, student needs and information about working in Australia and overseas. There is also a link to **ENtrain**, a searchable database containing details of short courses, seminars, workshops, conferences etc that are recognised by Engineers Australia for Continuing Professional Development purposes. **ENtrain** is produced by Engineering Education Australia, a wholly owned subsidiary of Engineers Australia.

The **Engineering Employment Database** is one of the largest database of engineering-only positions available in Australia. This is a brilliant tool for members looking for work or who want to hire additional staff. Search positions by discipline, location, keyword and type of employment. Select the Job Alert feature for an early warning on positions you are seeking.

To access the Members Zone please register at www.ieaust.org.au (**Please Note:** the Members Zone is exclusive for current financial members of ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA. Registration is free and easy to complete).

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Careers Adviser ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA's National Careers Adviser can provide personal advice and assistance on any career related issue. Jenny O'Donovan can be contacted direct as follows:

Phone: 1300 366 613
E-mail: jodonovan@ieaust.org.au

EAA Webpage EAA has its own section on ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA's public website, providing a range of resources on topics of interest to our Engineering Associate members, including careers and professional development.

Go to: http://www.ieaust.org.au/about_us/sig/associates/

EAA Online EAA's Associates-only online discussion group provides members with a valuable opportunity to discuss issues, receive advice from each other, and to engage with special guests (eg. Careers Adviser).

Registration is free and easy to complete. To register either:

OR go to E-mail: EAMembers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Website: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EAMembers/>

Please Note: Access is only for current Engineering Associate members of ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA and membership confirmation may be required.

Engineering Associate Career Issues

Engineering Associates face a variety of career and professional development challenges, some of which are unique to this group of members, while others are common to the engineering profession as a whole.

This section covers the issues raised by members during the Online Career Days, and, therefore, does not include all career-related issues. If you require further assistance on any of the following or other career-related issues we encourage you to use the Career Resources outlined above.

1. Salaries and Employment Conditions

Question: What salary should I be getting as an Engineering Associate?

Answer: There is currently a lack of comprehensive information on salaries for Engineering Associates. The *Engineer.Career* section of our Members' Zone contains comprehensive information on average graduate salaries for a variety of engineering fields, but this information mainly looks at Professional Engineers.

The National Careers Service is currently planning a new salary survey covering all engineering fields and membership categories (eg. professional engineers, technologists and associates). This will provide us with valuable information for members.

Members have provided the following examples of positions and salaries:

- **Graduate Qualified Design Drafter** (experienced in AutoCad 2002 with 1.5 years MX Design experience): expect salary \$25,000 to \$28,500
- **Tracer** (basic experience, knows only 1 program, opportunities for part-time study, traineeships): expect salary \$24,000+
- **Drafter** (knows 1 program & can do a bit of design, needs a lot of guidance, knows the principals): expect salary \$27,000 to \$33,000
- **Design Drafter** (several years experience, ongoing personal development, maybe using a second package such as MX, LDD, 12D, etc): expect salary \$34,000 to \$38,000
- **Project Drafter** (design skills & experience, project control over drawings & filing. After 4-6 years of drafting & design with continual development then you should be on par with an engineering graduate with 4 years study + work experience): salary by negotiation, minimum \$38,000

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Question: What conditions should be included in a contract for a full-time position?

Answer: The contract should include the following conditions and information:

- 20 days annual leave per year;
- public holiday entitlements - its usual not to have to work on these days, but still be paid for them;
- 8 days sick days per annum;
- details of your work location;
- details of to whom you report;
- a brief description of your role or a job description as an appendix, so that you are aware of your responsibilities; and
- an explanation of remuneration, salary, superannuation and any other benefits that you are entitled to, which may include time in lieu if you are working excessive hours.

2. *Positions Available for an Engineering Associate Qualification*

Question: How can I as an Engineering Associate best compete against a Professional Engineer or Engineering Technologist when going for engineering positions?

Answer: Often its not so much a case of competing against another applicant for work, more showing how your skills, experience and attributes fit in better with the company you are applying for a position with. Go for an overall experience and qualifications skill set and you should always be employable.

In terms of experience counting for more than qualifications, one doesn't outweigh the other. If a certain level is asked for its assumed that the underpinning knowledge is there - proved by a qualification. Most employers use behavioural interviews now so that they can test the reactions (behaviours) of an individual to a certain situation, as this will usually be repeated.

Question: I just want to know how to get the first job for fresh engineering graduate because most engineering positions require work experience.

Answer: As a graduate, prospective employers should understand that you will have little or no experience. If you completed a work experience component as part of your degree, it is important to promote this. You may also like to gain some volunteer work to give you some more exposure. Any other work that you undertook during your degree, paid or voluntary such as involvement with uni groups could also be used as examples of work. Your local Division can assist you with finding work experience placements – further details are available from Engineer.Career in the Members Zone.

3. Professional Development

Question: I currently have an Associate Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering accredited as Nationally Recognised Training through the ACT Accreditation Agency by the Australian Airforce in 1996. I wish to upgrade my qualifications to Engineering Technologist or to Degree level. What is the best way to achieve this. Will my current Associate Diploma be recognised for exemptions in any engineering courses I undertake?

Answer: If you are interested in upgrading you qualifications there are three steps to take. First, do your research - at which level do you wish to work? Speak with both Professional Engineers and Engineering Technologists to determine which qualifications will enable you to do the job you want. Also speak with the companies that you hope to work for and find out what qualifications they look for? Second, decide if you wish to study via correspondence or attend University and whether on a part-time or full-time basis. Third, talk to the University that you wish to attend and ask about recognised prior learning (RPL), as each University has its own system for determining this.

Question: I am studying an Advanced Diploma of Mechanical Engineering and would like your advice on traineeships - are they common, or few and far between?

Answer: My understanding is that there are a reasonable number of traineeships available and you should ask for assistance from your teachers, as well as approaching companies in your local area to help obtain one.

Question: Is CEngO status equal or less than CPEng status?

Answer: While CPEng is currently more recognised than CEngO, the fact that there are more and more companies now signing up for our professional development program which covers all 3 categories of membership (professional, technologist and associate). This will result in increased recognition of CEngO as more people achieve it, and hopefully more companies/sectors will require it. We must wherever possible spread the word about what CEngO means, which in simple terms is the achievement of work related competencies assessed by your peers. CPEng, CEngO and CEngT are various brandings given to Chartered status at the three occupational categories. The 'C' is the main part as this stands for chartered which means that you have gained recognition from your peers. One is not better than the other.

Question: What is the Graduate Development Program and what are the benefits of participating in it?

Answer: The Graduate development program (GDP) is used as a route to Chartered Membership of ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA in either of the three occupational categories: Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng), Chartered Engineering Technologist (CEngT) and Chartered Engineering Officer (CEngO).

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Traditionally, public utilities and larger companies primarily undertook training of graduates. However with the new business environment of out-sourcing and downsizing, especially in the public sector, this practice has almost disappeared. Provision of initial training or a planned period of professional formation can no longer be taken for granted by graduates in their first job. Therefore, ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA established the national GDP to support Graduates to acquire competencies for Chartered status. Although Chartered competencies can be acquired in a variety of ways, the preferred route is through participation in the GDP.

The benefits of the GDP include the following:

- It provides a structure for graduates to acquire work-related competencies and to document their related professional experiences over a continuous period, providing clear evidence of how these competencies have been achieved.
- It facilitates the relationship between graduate and supervisor, with each graduate required to present their career episodes to his/her supervisor for checking and verification.
- It enables the graduate and employer to receive guidance from ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA's locally-based Accredited Assessor on the graduate's progress against the relevant competency requirements.
- It facilitates the preparation of the graduate's application for Chartered status, which incorporates each career episode report into an Engineering Practice Report. This report is then submitted by the graduate in support of his/her application for Chartered status, which is followed by a one-hour Professional Interview, the final assessment of the graduate's competencies under the GDP.

4. Clarification of Title 'Engineering Associate'

Question: My experience is that most employers don't really know what an Engineering Associate is and don't understand our role in relation to that undertaken by Professional Engineers and Engineering Technologists? What is the suggested reply to use when asked to define the role of the Engineering Associate in the industry?

Answer: This is an issue the EAA National Committee is currently dealing with. Their aim is produce a resource pack for Associate members and their employers to clarify these issues. This will be available within the next couple of months.

However, wherever possible, EAA and ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA are promoting Engineering Associates as making a vital contribution to the engineering team by applying established codes, practices and procedures.