

COVER STORY: FUTURE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Emerging talent – UK Nuclear Skills Awards perspectives

Insight and advice from winning Nuclear Institute members

THE WINNERS OF THE 10TH UK NUCLEAR SKILLS Awards were recently announced at an event organised by the National Skills Academy Nuclear (NSAN) and Cogent Skills, the UK's strategic body for skills in the science industries.

As well as the prestige of winning, the Nuclear Institute offers a year's free membership to all the shortlisted entries at this and previous years' awards.

The UK Nuclear Skills Awards aims to showcase the exceptional quality of people of all levels, who are committed to careers in the nuclear sector. The dinner also celebrates the vital work done by the training and education professionals working in and with the nuclear industry across the UK.

We caught up with some of last year's winners to get their take on the impact of being recognised at last year's awards, as well as their subsequent NI membership.



Francesca Brandford-Adams

Risk Consultant,
Corporate Risk
Associates Limited
Nuclear Skills
Awards 2017
Runner-up

FRANCESCA BRANDFORD-ADAMS

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF BEING SHORTLISTED?

◆ As a result of being shortlisted for an award, I have been designated as CRA's relationship manager for NSAN. Alongside attending NSAN meetings, I now work directly with NSAN's Managing Director, Jo Tipa, to develop a strategy for awareness of diversity which can be applied in organisations in the nuclear industry. In particular, our focus is to promote the benefits that diversity can bring to organisations of differing sizes whether they are licensees or smaller companies and enterprises. The work encompasses all levels, from apprentices, to supply chain and board directors. As part of this work, we have discussed the importance of attracting young minds into the work place such as graduates and interns, recognising that they can bring a diverse mind-set and new and interesting ideas.

HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED SINCE THEN?

◆ Since the awards, I have had the opportunity to visit Heysham 1 Nuclear Power Station as part of a project I'm working on. I have gained a better logistical understanding of their systems and buildings which has a direct and positive effect on the work I do. I have also delivered a tutorial in PSA and fault-based modelling at Imperial College, London to undergraduate Engineering students.

YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE 2017 AWARDS?

◆ A particular highlight of my work at CRA is that as part of a separate project I've worked with a client abroad. I enjoyed this as the experience of working within a different culture is interesting and quite beneficial at this stage of my career.

WHAT VALUE HAVE YOU GAINED FROM YOUR NI MEMBERSHIP?

◆ I have gained particular value in my NI membership. One example is that as part of a research and development project that I manage on cyber security concerns in the nuclear industry, the NI's Special Interest Group (SIG) in security has agreed to work with us at the data gathering stage. This will involve support from the NI security SIG to run a workshop where experts, made up of NI security SIG members, will be invited to contribute to the project.

NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR CAREER?

◆ I intend to continue to grow my knowledge as a consultant and commit to further study to expand my skillset.

ADVICE TO OTHER APPRENTICES IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY?

◆ Work hard, look for opportunities and have fun.

"We have discussed the importance of attracting young minds into the work place"

UK NUCLEAR SKILLS AWARDS

LOUISE LEACH

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF BEING SHORTLISTED?

◆ The good news spread quickly around the Jacobs community and I was being recognised by people from all over the business for the nomination. As a direct result, I also established new connections that strengthened my network, including our President of Aerospace, Technology, Environmental and Nuclear, who I can go to for advice and support when I need it. I also received two job offers within Jacobs shortly after the awards which presented me with a very tough decision, but I chose to move into the Quality Department and personally feel this was the right move for me – I've never looked back!

HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED SINCE THEN?

◆ I have now gone from the administration side of the business to training to become a Quality Engineer. Jacobs is also sponsoring me through a CQI Diploma in Quality Management, a degree in Project Management and an NVQ in Project Controls. Juggling three qualifications alongside a full-time job has its challenges as expected, and will require three years of working extra hard and making some sacrifices in my personal life, but the rewards will be far greater at the other side. Jacobs have been incredibly supportive throughout this process, particularly my line manager who has done everything in his power to ensure I am not overwhelmed by the workload.

YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE 2017 AWARDS?

◆ The main highlight for me has been starting my



Louise Leach

Quality Engineer,
Jacobs Shortlisted
at Nuclear Skills
Awards 2017

new role and new qualifications, which have given me a real insight into a different part of the business, which I didn't previously know much about. I have also enjoyed meeting a wide range of new people I wouldn't usually have come across, and the networking opportunities this has provided.

NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR CAREER?

◆ I am currently developing a formal Learning from Experience system, so in the medium-term, I am working towards getting the system ready to launch across Jacobs, and then in the long-term managing its process and developing its capabilities, and hopefully in the future recruiting a small team to help manage it.

WHAT VALUE HAVE YOU GAINED FROM YOUR NI MEMBERSHIP?

◆ Being a member of the NI, you get to hear about a wide range of events that you wouldn't otherwise get to hear about, these can benefit both professional and personal development and the amount of support available within the Nuclear Institute community is amazing. There are also the added benefits of being a member of a widely-recognised and respected professional body.

ADVICE TO OTHER APPRENTICES IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY?

◆ Take every opportunity that comes your way, no matter how scary it seems, and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone – it will be well worth it! And remember, the harder you work and the more you network, the more opportunities will come your way.

“The good news spread quickly around Jacobs”



Jason Savage

Sellafield Ltd
Winner Nuclear
Skills Awards 2017
- Business Support
Apprentice of the
Year 2017

JASON SAVAGE

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF BEING SHORTLISTED?

◆ It was fantastic to be shortlisted, especially after seeing what all the other apprentices had done, and to win was completely unexpected, but I'm very proud of what I have achieved.

HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED SINCE THEN?

◆ Although I am in the same team, I am given much more responsibility in delivering our strategy. Winning the award motivated me to do more, achieve more and as a result I know I am working to a level far greater than that which is expected of me at this stage in my career – and I don't intend to stop!

NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR CAREER?

◆ I started a HNC in Business Management in September which I plan to progress on into a degree. With that further education I want to move into a team leader/management role supporting individuals and driving the business forward.

YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE 2017 AWARDS?

◆ I've enjoyed all of the networking and the further reach I have had since winning the award but the highlight has to be speaking at the Department for International Trade's Civil Nuclear Showcase, an event attended by over 400 delegates from the UK and overseas – it was nerve-racking but exciting and a fantastic opportunity.

WHAT VALUE HAVE YOU GAINED FROM YOUR NI MEMBERSHIP?

◆ The NI send updates on a regular basis which include the hot topics in the nuclear industry which I have found useful for applying to my work. I have also attended a number of webinars on a variety of topics which have supported my development. It was well worth getting involved.

ADVICE TO OTHER APPRENTICES IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY?

◆ Being an apprentice is the one time you will be able to explore a much wider view of your own business and the industry, take all the opportunities available to you and look for ones yourself. Yes, apprenticeships are about getting qualifications while working, earning a wage, but they are also about developing you into a well-rounded skilled individual for the future of the industry.

“I know I am working to a level far greater than that which is expected of me at this stage in my career”



Calum Murdoch

Chemical Engineer,
DSRL Shortlisted
at Nuclear Skills
Awards 2017

CALUM MURDOCH

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF BEING SHORTLISTED?

◆ Since being shortlisted and attending the NSAN awards, I have an increased confidence and pride in the delivery of my work as a chemical engineer for DSRL. Being shortlisted for the award has positively affected my career as since then, I have been promoted from my Graduate Engineering to a Professional Engineering role.

HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED SINCE THEN?

◆ The national recognition of achievement the shortlisting represents has led to increased opportunities in my work where I have been given more responsibility for the delivery of engineering work packages.

NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR CAREER?

◆ I am currently enjoying my role as a Process Engineer for DSRL and my short-term goal is to become a Chartered Engineer. My next career step is to move into a senior engineering role at DSRL where I aim to manage the delivery of packages of work.

YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE 2017 AWARDS?

◆ Since the awards I have continued to remain involved in the nuclear community through managing a workshop at the European Nuclear Young Generation Forum (ENYGF) which was held in Manchester last year. This week-long conference was an excellent opportunity to see the impressive work throughout the nuclear industry, as well as network with other young professionals.

WHAT VALUE HAVE YOU GAINED FROM YOUR NI MEMBERSHIP?

◆ Through my membership of the NI I was able to reduce the cost of attending this ENYGF conference which factored into the business case that was presented to attend the conference. I have also begun liaising with my branch in order to help make activities such as webinars to be available for other young professionals.

ADVICE TO OTHER APPRENTICES IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY?

◆ Embrace the unique opportunities that the nuclear industry offers and get involved. The nuclear industry promotes knowledge sharing which provides excellent opportunities for apprentices and graduates to attend events such as NI courses and conferences which increases your knowledge network vastly.

“My next career step is to move into a senior role at DSRL”