

CASE STUDY

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Jenny Roberts

MEng CEng MIED



Did you have any particular interest in, or aptitude for, design or engineering when you were growing up?

I was very creative as a kid, always seeking out a new craft kit to try and relishing any opportunity to make things with my hands. This continued throughout my school days, with design and technology being by far my favourite subject and the one that didn't feel as though I was studying at all. I've always had an aptitude for maths, too, whereas I find words much more difficult to work with.

At what point in your life did you decide that you wanted to be a designer? What do you think prompted you to make that choice?

I didn't really know what engineering was until I started researching option choices for my A-levels. It was my design and technology teacher who suggested that I look at engineering as a future career. It was a lightbulb moment when I realised that there was a subject that encapsulated everything that I enjoyed at school.

Did you go to university or college and if so, what did you study?

I studied Mechatronic Engineering (half mechanical and half electronic engineering) at Lancaster University.

What was your first job in design?

My first job was at a company called DCA in Warwick, working as a junior mechanical engineer. I loved that job! The company is extremely creative, had plenty of opportunities and a real 'work hard, play hard' ethic. If I hadn't relocated away from Warwick, I would probably still be working there.

What's your job now?

I'm a lecturer in mechanical engineering at Lancaster University. My time is balanced between teaching engineering management to third-year students, in both the UK and China, supervising student projects and undertaking research, primarily around utilising engineering design to benefit society.

Why did you join the IED?

I joined the IED because it aligned well with my interests in engineering design and provided a more accessible professional institution for my needs.

Do you have professional registration? What type?

CEng.

What route did you take to get registered?

I took the standard route.

How did you find the process?

The process was straightforward, requiring the collation of evidence against all of the competencies of the Engineering Council UK-SPEC, followed by a professional review interview with two Chartered members of the IED.

Why did you go for registration? what are the benefits to you?

While I was researching future degree courses, I realised that one day I wanted to become a Chartered Engineer. It was my ultimate career goal! So, the day I found out that I had been successful was a real milestone for me. I think that the main benefit, from a work perspective, has been credibility. However, it has also provided me with a confidence boost, with the knowledge that others recognise my capabilities

and that I'm worthy of being a Chartered Engineer.

What are some of the achievements of which you're most proud?

I set up my own product design consultancy back in 2009, working from home before it was widely accepted. I was a little naïve going into it and didn't really know where to start; however, after a rocky first year, I established a customer base, brought in a steady income and really enjoyed being my own boss. It's the most challenging job I've ever had, but definitely one of the most rewarding.

I'm also extremely proud of the fact that I brought a mobile bridge inspection system, BridgeCat, to fruition on time and on budget. Designed to assess river beds around bridge piers for scour (erosion at the base of the piers) following a flood event, the system was designed to ensure that bridges could be quickly assessed in order to minimise disruption to the local area.

Tell us a bit about your involvement with the IED

Having been a Member since 2014, I joined the IED Council in 2020 and am also a trustee. In 2021, I chaired the IED² working group, which was tasked with benchmarking where the IED was in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, and proposing how things could be improved. This has resulted in the formation of a permanent IED² committee, of which I'm a member.