



## **Gary Kehoe - Cross Industry Graduate Programme**

As the water services industry in Ireland continues to transform, Irish Water is delighted to work with our industry partners to collaborate in a unique programme, the first of its kind in Ireland at a national level, to train engineers to become specialists in the water engineering space.

We talk to Kildare native Gary Kehoe from Newbridge, Co. Kildare who secured a full-time role in Irish Water following the completion of the Cross Industry Graduate Programme. The programme involved a one-year rotation in Irish Water, a year in one of the participating consultancy firms (Jacobs Engineering; Nicholas O'Dwyer; RPS; Ryan Hanley); and another year with one of the contractors (EPS; Glan Agua; Veolia; and Ward & Burke).

Gary's qualification on entering the programme was a BEng in Manufacturing and Design Engineering from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). He explained how he became interested in engineering and why he applied for the Cross-Industry Graduate Programme: "My interest in engineering started in Transition Year when I carried out work experience in Dublin Airport with Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) in the maintenance team. I really enjoyed going around the airport carrying out checks and problem-solving issues that came up. The work was so varied everyday had a new issue or job to tackle which really appealed to me. I applied for the Graduate Programme because it offered a unique opportunity to try a mixture of different disciplines and to gain experience in both office and on-site work."

“My first year was with EPS in Mallow working as a project coordinator on the Skibbereen Regional Water Supply Scheme from September 2018 to September 2019. This was a €20 million upgrade of Skibbereen’s and the wider area’s water network. It was a fantastic learning experience as it had a mixture of office and site work. It was great to work on a project in the office and then have the ability to go to site and see it being constructed. I learnt a lot on report writing and project health and safety. It was also great to move to a new part of the country, to see and meet new people.

“Next I worked in Irish Water as a graduate engineer for the Land and Utilities Team from September 2019 to September 2020. My role was to assist the team progress projects that required land and wayleave and road opening licences. This position was great as you were always dealing with project managers and external services providers so was great at developing your people skills and at resolving conflicts between stakeholders.

“My third and final placement was in Nicholas O’Dwyer working as a Graduate Engineer from September 2020 to September 2021. I worked with senior and assistant engineers on various project such as aqueduct rehabilitation and pipeline projects learning a lot about feasibility reports and design. During my time here I got to work on a really interesting project in Saudi Arabia where I was developing the water standards for a new mega city in the desert. To be involved in a project of this scale was an amazing experience. This project offered me valuable experience in design and working with multiple stakeholders.”

The Cross Industry Graduate Programme is designed to give participants on the job training and mentoring and there are a number of permanent positions available to participants upon completion of the programme in Irish Water and the consultancy and contractor firms involved.

Gary was lucky to qualify for one of these roles in Irish Water, “After the programme finished In September 2021, I re-joined the Land and Utilities team in Irish Water as a Land and Statutory Consents Co-ordinator. In my role I assist in the acquisition of Land and Wayleaves by consent and/or compulsory acquisition. I also provide support in the preparation of reports, maintaining databases, etc. as well as maintaining key relationships with external professional service providers. I really enjoy the interaction with internal and external stakeholders. It’s so important to have good communication with the project teams in order to progress the project and ensure that the project stays on track.”

Speaking about why he thinks engineering is a great career choice, Gary commented, “I’d highly recommend a career in engineering. The skills you develop in college set you up for a great career and are transferrable to a number of different engineering disciplines. I’d recommend anyone interested in engineering to do work experiences or internships to get an insight to what it’s like on a day-to-day basis and see which area of engineering appeals to you the most.”

We are currently recruiting for the next intake of the Water Cross Industry Graduate Programme, which will commence in September.