Dr Gillian Ragsdell

Industrial Fellowships Scheme

Dr Gillian Ragsdell is a Reader in Knowledge Management at the School of Business and Economics at Loughborough University. From 2015 to 2016, the Royal Academy of Engineering Industrial Fellowships Scheme enabled her to work with the Energy Technologies Institute (ETI) to further develop an understanding of Knowledge Management (KM) in a way that would inform the ETI's KM strategy to add value into the energy sector.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF **ENGINEERING**

"The fellowship has been a great way to accelerate my personal and professional development – it has invigorated both my teaching and my research."

RESEARCH

Dr Ragsdell's industrial fellowship saw her take on the role of 'knowledge manager' at the ETI where she assisted in embedding a more rigorous approach to KM within the organisation. Efficient processes for capturing and sharing information are key to any organisation's success and this collaboration enabled Dr Ragsdell to work on the ETI's KM strategy while broadening her research by applying it to a new context.

"The main research outcomes were the lessons learned about implementing a KM strategy in an organisation that has the special characteristics of engineering knowledge as its core product and a known lifetime," Dr Ragsdell explains. "My adoption of an ethnographic approach to research – being immersed in the organisation that was being studied – will also trigger methodological lessons for the KM field. Both of these aspects will be written up in future academic journal papers."

IMPACT

Innovation in the energy sector is an important research challenge and Loughborough University's Science and Enterprise Park has a significant cluster of energy-related organisations and supporting academic disciplines. Dr Ragsdell's collaboration with the ETI has had a broader spill-over effect on the students, graduates and researchers there. Since the fellowship, the ETI has co-hosted an event with the School of Business and Economics entitled *Knowledge Management in the Energy Sector*.

The collaboration also continues through Dr Ragsdell's supervision of two PhD students funded by the ETI and there are plans for the ETI to call on her capabilities on a consultancy basis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr Ragsdell's fellowship brought together experiences from different stages of her career.

"I am always keen to apply my academic thinking to the real world so the industrial fellowship was a great opportunity to do that," she says. "The engineering context was particularly important to me as I had been an engineer in the semiconductor industry prior to postgraduate studies and joining academia. I was keen to refresh my understanding of engineering management and, on my return to full-time academic life, be in a better position to support both qualified engineers and business students to become leaders in contemporary engineering organisations."

INDUSTRIAL FELLOWSHIPS SCHEME

The Industrial Fellowships Scheme provides an invaluable opportunity for early- to mid-career academics to undertake a collaborative research project in an industrial environment. The scheme aims to strengthen the strategic relationship between the university and the industry host by providing an opportunity to establish or enhance collaborative research between the two parties and enhance the quality of teaching.

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First printed 2016