

MCIQB – INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

NAME	Ivan McCarthy
JOB	Senior Contracts Manager
COMPANY	John Sisk & Son (Holdings) Ltd.
WEBSITE	http://www.johnsiskandson.com

Background

Ivan McCarthy, FCIQB, has the cream of the project crop on his CV including the iconic National Conference Centre in Dublin and the five star Ritz Carlton Hotel in Enniskerry, but with typical modesty the 47-year old senior contracts manager with Sisk says of his achievements, “I’ve been extremely lucky.”

The last few years have seen Ireland’s construction activity nose dive and force many of his colleagues to seek employment abroad, but Ivan has remained as one of Sisk’s ‘go to’ construction managers in his native City of Dublin. No mean feat when you consider output has fallen for 60 consecutive months and only now is the construction economy showing faint flickers of life.

Again, “lucky” is the word Ivan reaches for: “Construction traditionally has been a very mobile industry. A number of my friends and colleagues have been commuting to the UK for work, returning home at weekends. I’ve been lucky that I’ve been able to remain in employment in Ireland.”

Whilst many construction managers have to earn their spurs proving themselves on less complex schemes, even Ivan’s first job threw him in at the deep end. He left Dublin Institute of Technology with a construction technology degree and landed a job as an engineer on the expansion of Dublin airport before joining Sisk in 1988 as a site engineer. During his 25 years at Ireland’s premier contractor he has managed over 20 projects including most recently a number of projects for the Irish Prison Service.

Ivan put this wealth of experience to good use in progressing his membership designation. In 2013, Ivan moved from ICIQB to MCIQB to FCIQB in a matter of 12 weeks. It’s not as difficult a journey as is perceived, says Ivan, as he talks us through the process.



“I first became aware of the CIOB when I was in college and at the time, I didn’t realise the potential benefits that membership would have on my career. It was only as part of a Sisk staff review, when I was encouraged to join a professional organisation that I considered becoming a member of the CIOB. The CIOB, with its emphasis on construction management, as well as being a recognised international organisation, was the best fit for me.”

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So what has been the process of getting from ICIQB to FCIQB – and why now?

Despite good intentions, I have only recently progressed from my ICIQB following a degree of “gentle persuasion” from high profile CIOB members including Past President Alan Crane and Chief Executive Chris Blythe, together with encouragement from my colleagues on the Council of CIOB Ireland. I am extremely pleased to have progressed to FCIQB. I managed to go from ICIQB to FCIQB in the space of three months, and my advice to others is it can be achieved.

My progression from ICIQB to MCIQB involved following the Experienced Practitioner Assessed Report (EPAR) route which provides an accelerated pathway to chartered membership for senior managers with typically 10 or more years in the industry. Candidates like me, who opt for this route, are likely to have significant responsibilities for resources, finances and technology. The EPAR application is a two stage process; it requires the completion of a report based on your competencies under various headings including technology of the built environment, contract & commercial practice, management, health, safety and the environment, and is followed with an interview that focuses on the report. Looking back, the hardest part of that process was getting into the mind-set to complete the application and actually making a start.

Having achieved MCIQB, I then went on to apply for Fellowship, which seemed like a perfectly natural progression for me.

The process was relatively straightforward, requiring the completion of an application form which was then assessed and ratified, based on specific criteria by the CIOB’s Fellowship panel. It is an important achievement for me personally to achieve FCIQB. It is a globally recognised designation that clearly acknowledges that I meet the very highest level of professionalism. I would state that CIOB membership is highly beneficial for those wishing to further their career.

Are you active in the CIOB?

Yes, I’m Chair of the CIOB’s UK and Ireland Time Zone, Senior Vice Chair of CIOB Ireland and most recently a member of the CIOB’s resources committee. I firmly believe the more you put into anything, the more you get out and I would encourage any member to get involved and make their voice heard within the Institute. Being active in the CIOB has also provided me with a network of contacts globally, but particularly useful to me within Ireland and the UK. It also brings me together with like-minded people who are passionate about the industry, with different ideas that can be adapted and used in the business.

What have been your career highs and lows?

The high for me was winning the Silver medal in the Irish Construction Manager of the Year competition in 2013, for the management of the refurbishment of C wing at Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, in recognition for both mine and my team’s efforts in managing and delivering this complex project. The low has been experiencing the decimation of the construction industry as a result of the economic downturn and seeing many colleagues and friends experience uncertainty in their careers. The good news, however, is that the industry is showing some tentative signs of growth. I am looking forward to future projects and future challenges, and I am proud to move forward as FCIQB.