

Steve Durbin CITP, FBCS & CCP Assessor

My background and career

I started out in IT in a steelworks in South Wales back in the late 70s, and you can see the machine I started on at the Science Museum in London (an ICL1903). It's rather humbling to realise that my fridge now has more RAM than the machine that used to run the steelworks! Over the years I've probably done almost every job in ICT on a wide variety of platforms, but for the past ten years my main focus has been on strategic management.



Most of my work since the 1980s has been in the public sector space; either working in the sector or as a supplier to the sector. Today, I'm a self-employed consultant currently working as an interim contract director for a major outsourcer in north London.

Why I wanted to be an assessor

When I started in the ICT business, we didn't have professional training, and the professionalism agenda was not high on people's list – a lack I felt keenly compared to others in accounting and legal, who didn't look at us as a profession; they still don't. Getting proper peer reviewed professional qualifications, with a strong discipline code as we see in other professions is vital if we are to be recognised as professionals; contributing to that was an opportunity I couldn't miss.

What I like about being an assessor

Aside from the professionalism improvement noted above, the key thing for me is the sheer range of people and ideas you come into contact with. Whilst we must respect the NDA, the ability to learn from others about their challenges and areas of development is very helpful in my practice – you get exposure to a much wider range of issues than you would in your personal practice.

It also helps expand your professional network; many people I interview look me up on LinkedIn after the discussion – I have got a number of useful professional contacts from that.

What it's like being an assessor for BCS

A bit of a roller coaster; but, like a roller coaster, it's fun! You sometimes have applications you know you're going to have to fail, and you can't help feeling for the applicant. Generally, when people are clearly going to pass, it's fairly easy work – the ones who are likely to fail or are on the borderline are the hard ones, because you have to work hard to make sure the evidence is clear and that you've not missed anything that could get them over the line.

The assessment team are great, and very helpful, as are all my fellow assessors; many have become friends as well as colleagues. I've learn a lot from them too – and hope I've done the same for them.

For a few hours' work a week, you get all this great networking, improve the profession, and get the warm fuzzy feeling of helping your fellows – what's not to like?