

## Professor Richard J. Millar,

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Professor Millar tells us why BCS accreditation has been so important for the University of Ulster and the benefits received. He finds the independent recognition and the opportunity to compare your programmes against those offered by other institutions especially useful. Giving students confidence in their chosen course and recognition of their achievements by future employers is also a key part of why they decided to seek accreditation.

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## MOTIVATION

We sought BCS accreditation for courses at the University of Ulster for a number of reasons. Primarily to demonstrate an external mark of quality, standards and professional relevance. Additionally, in today’s competitive higher education market, having the BCS accreditation gives us a marketing advantage.

## VALUE

I think one of the most important aspects of acquiring BCS accreditation for the University of Ulster was the opportunity to receive assessment from an independent organisation and gain useful feedback from other industry professionals on our courses and materials. Seeing the BCS logo affiliated with a course gives a student reassurance in their choice. BCS also accredit degree programmes for Chartered or Incorporated Engineer (CEng or IEng) status as well as for Chartered Scientist (CSci) status. Consequently, they can be an accelerated route to these Chartered registrations by satisfying the underpinning knowledge requirements.

Accreditation is still relevant for the student when they finish their degree and look for employment. Studying an accredited course may offer them an advantage in the employment market, giving prospective employers confidence in the applicant’s qualifications and the level of professionalism instilled in their future staff.

In this age of consumerism, applied to third-level education, this is another stamp of approval for students (and their parents) deciding where to spend their money. However, I suspect that students realise the full value of professional recognition at a later stage in their course – indeed it could be after graduation when they have the opportunity to compare themselves with colleagues from courses that are not professionally recognised.

BCS accreditation information is included in our promotional materials used to present our courses to prospective students and is part of the Key Information Set (UniStats). We also explain what it means when prospective students attend Open Days and other information events.

## MEMBERSHIP

We encourage our students to become BCS members usually through talks from staff who are members and/or speakers from the local BCS Branch. We see it as important so that students start out thinking of themselves as trainee professionals and understand the implications of working as a professional.