



Dear IAESTE alumni

I am delighted to introduce the first edition of **directions**, a quarterly newsletter for our fledgling group of IAESTE UK alumni. A mere 3 months have passed since we began sifting through old records and forms, as well as a previously-compiled alumni database, and writing to past participants, but I am pleased to say that already we have received over 190 enthusiastic responses - and the number of members is growing daily.

The IAESTE programme has been in existence since 1948 when it was founded at Imperial College, with just 9 countries involved. Today our membership covers 84 nations and the number is rising year-on-year. In 2003 IAESTE has passed the 300,000 mark in the total number of students sent on international placements, and that figure includes 22,000+ trainees who have travelled from the UK.

With the publication of **directions** we hope to keep alumni up-to-date on developments and successes in the IAESTE world, and to provide you with the opportunity to reminisce on your IAESTE experience, make suggestions or contribute stories. We are particularly interested to hear how you would classify the long-term benefits of your time as an IAESTE trainee - did your placement abroad influence decisions you took later in life? For those of you who are trying the reverse side of the placement experience, by becoming IAESTE UK employers, we would love to hear your account of the experience.

I hope you enjoy receiving **directions**. Your feedback would be most welcome as ultimately our aim is to shape it to members' requirements. I hope to be able to communicate some of the excitement we feel about our recent achievements and our continued work in providing global experience for the UK's future engineers and scientists.

Christina Vakomies
IAESTE UK National Secretary

directions

Top 3s in 2003

Destinations for UK students

Japan • Brazil • Canada

UK participating employers

BT Exact Technologies • Northern Ireland Housing Executive • Northern Ireland Electricity

UK higher education institutions

Queen's University Belfast • Imperial College • Cardiff University

This year's statistics for Great Britain & Northern Ireland

178 outgoing students • 251 incoming students •
61 exchange partner countries



BT values IAESTE students

BT Exact Technologies in Ipswich have for five years received the highest number of IAESTE trainees on placement compared to any other industrial employer in the UK. Standing with some of their BT supervisors and IAESTE UK staff are IAESTE students from nations as varied as Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Finland, Switzerland and Mexico.

The majority of the IAESTE students placed at BT are studying computer science and join teams involved in leading-edge research in network technologies. BT supervisors value the high-calibre students IAESTE provides and in the case of at least three IAESTE trainees so far, have recruited them following graduation.

The impact of the IAESTE placement on my life

Did you know that there is an International Friends of IAESTE network, which is being developed to allow alumni to communicate with friends from all over the world? You can register on www.iaeste.org/friends/



Michael Cowan wrote to us to describe the impact of his IAESTE placement undertaken in Portugal in 1958 with Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa (Lisbon Electric Tramways). At the time he was an undergraduate at Imperial College.

I learnt and continued to study Portuguese, which I still use today.

The following year I went back to Portugal to do a university summer course, which introduced me to wider cultural aspects. This also led to me learning Spanish and Italian. I worked in Italy for two years where I met my wife! All that helped me to develop my French and whilst still an Imperial student, I read a paper, in French, at a student conference at the Politecnico di Torino. Furthermore, I then went on to work for several years on the Channel Tunnel, using French daily for chairing meetings etc. For the past six years I have worked as a retired volunteer in a Christian Third World relief and development organisation, where I use Portuguese and French all the time, dealing with African countries.

In summary, my IAESTE experience did more for me than all the time at university!



Norman Roxburgh worked at a power station on the outskirts of Denmark in 1968.

I went to Copenhagen after the third year of my four-year BSc in Electrical Engineering at Glasgow University. There was another IAESTE student – from Spain. He was very critical of the Danish lack of style in clothes

and was very fussy about keeping his elegant clothes clean – in a power station!! The Danes enjoyed getting us to try to say a very difficult phrase which meant ‘strawberries and cream’ – something like *rolle grøvelle ma fruøelle* – then they would fall about laughing at our attempts. An interesting sense of humour and I did remember it!! It was an excellent experience and it gave me a taste for working overseas including France, Spain, South America and Malaysia.

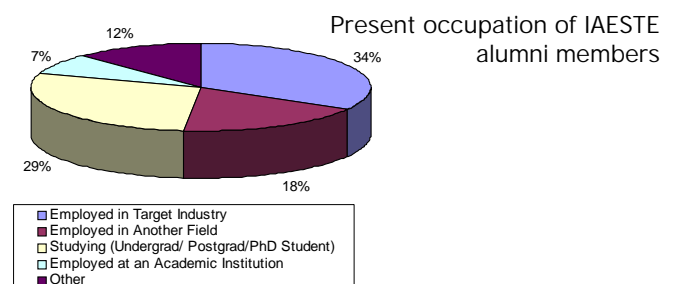
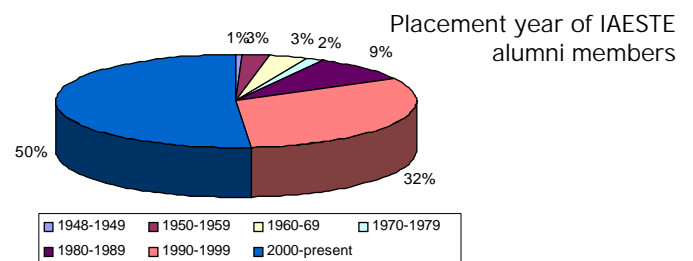
For many, an IAESTE placement means much more than getting work experience during the summer months: it can influence various aspects of a person's life. You may still be in touch with friends made from other countries or gone on to work for the company where you were placed. Please write and share your experiences either by e-mail - iaeste@britishcouncil.org - or by post - IAESTE UK Alumni Group, Education and Training Group, British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN



Dr Keith Barker undertook a placement in a steel-making company in Degerfors, Sweden in 1964 and remains fond of the town to this day.

Degerfors is now my adopted Swedish home, still visited at least once every year. I have been able to see the town develop in the intervening years and shared its

feelings as the steel industry was rationalised to a shadow of its former self. Next year will be the 40th anniversary of my IAESTE days and I am planning a celebration over there. I look back on my exchange with immense satisfaction and would hope that all IAESTE students accrue the benefits from their exchange that I have gained. It has been an experience for life.



Trainee of the Year 2003

'This work experience is something I will always look back on with pride. I can now say I went to a world previously unknown to me and not only did I survive and learn a lot of new chemical processes and Japanese phrases, I came back equipped with a new knowledge about myself and my future.'

Jasmin Jantschy, IAESTE Trainee of the Year 2003

On Friday 28 November the 6th Annual Trainee of the Year Award was held at the British Council in London. The Final featured 10 UK students who have been abroad on work experience through the IAESTE programme in 2003, each of whom was required to give a timed presentation on the benefits of international training before a panel of judges. This year's panel was headed by Professor Sir Brian Smith, former Vice-chancellor of Cardiff University, as well as Liz Rhodes MBE, Director of the National Council for Work Experience, Peter MacKenzie Smith of Prothero Ltd, Anne Harper from the International Unit of the Department for Education and Skills and Robert Gorczynski, 2nd prize winner two years previously.



First prize of £1,000 went to Jasmin Jantschy, a final-year chemistry student from Imperial College who spent two months this summer working in Kakogawa, Japan with the company Harima Chemicals. Her account of the varied technical skills she learned and the wonder of her encounter with Japanese culture put her in the lead. Second prize went to another Imperial College student, Alistair McKendrick, who spent two months in Johannesburg working for WSP Consulting Engineers, an experience which allowed

him to build on his Mechanical Engineering degree and formed his intention to pursue a career in international consultancy work after graduation. Katherine Davidson, an engineering student from Cambridge University came third with her account of working for Ramboll A/S, an engineering company in Denmark.

The 10 finalists were short-listed on the basis of written entries received from a record 60 applicants this year.

The Award is designed to allow returning students to convey the skills and knowledge gained during their time working abroad and to test key skills in written and oral presentation. Other finalists on the day spoke of work experience in destinations as diverse as Iceland, Peru and Tanzania.



Above The ten Trainee of the Year finalists, left to right: Lynne Miller, UMIST; Christopher Dibbs, University of Liverpool; Jasmin Jantschy, Imperial College; Elizabeth Meehan, Queen's University Belfast; Adam Ezzamel, Imperial College; Robin Campbell, Cardiff University; Katherine Davidson, Cambridge University; Alistair McKendrick, Imperial College; Elizabeth Powell, Birmingham University; and Alice Brook, University of Bath.

Left Jasmin Jantschy receiving her first prize cheque from Professor Sir Brian Smith, Chair of the panel of judges.

News & Events



Northern Ireland: Home to the new IAESTE General Secretary

Over 1,000 IAESTE trainees have travelled abroad from Northern Ireland since Pauline Ferguson first began working as the IAESTE programme officer in 1989, based first within the Queen's University Careers Service and then later within the British Council. Many of the alumni members signing up will remember Pauline as the person who took them through the steps of interview and nomination, securing them a variety of challenging placements across the world.



In September, Pauline left the British Council and the position of programme officer she held for 14 years. But IAESTE has not left her. In a landslide victory at the IAESTE Annual Conference in Trondheim, Norway in January 2002, she was elected to take up the position of the international IAESTE General

Secretary commencing in January 2004. Pauline will take over from Jim Reid, the current General Secretary who is based in Dublin and has held this position since 1998. As General Secretary, Pauline will be responsible for the administration, finances and promotion of the international organisation in a period of continued expansion and change. One of her declared aims is to expand membership into Latin America, hopefully developing links in countries like Chile and Venezuela.

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How you can help IAESTE

As an alumni member, there are many ways in which you can help IAESTE UK. These include:

- **becoming an IAESTE employer**
Join the increasing list of companies and academic institutions that benefit from having a foreign trainee during the summer months. At the same time, be safe in the knowledge that you have provided an opportunity for a British student to go abroad.
- **providing accommodation for a foreign student**
Foreign trainees who visit the UK are usually housed in university halls of residence, flatshares or with host families. However, finding such accommodation often provides a major headache. If you can help, please get in touch.
- **promoting IAESTE to others**
If you work in an academic institution you can promote the IAESTE programme to undergraduate students by displaying posters, distributing leaflets and arranging a presentation.

What the students say:

'I gained valuable insight into the approach a commercial chemical company takes towards scientific research, which I found extremely informative whilst considering my future plans, having previously only undertaken academic research. Overall I found my placement was thoroughly fulfilling and enjoyable and feel that it has provided me with knowledge, skills and challenges that will assist me greatly in the future'

Rachel Evans
Switzerland 2002/2003

'Entirely different but really interesting experience in every aspect of working, travelling, entertainment, friends ...'

Sumith Gamage
Sri Lankan student based at BT Technologies 2003

