



Aidan Loughlin

Cross Industry Graduate Programme

As the water services industry in Ireland continues to transform, Irish Water is delighted to work with our industry partners to collaborate in a unique programme, the first of its kind in Ireland at a national level, to train engineers to become specialists in the water engineering space.

We talk to Leitrim native Aidan Loughlin from Kinlough who has secured a full-time position in Irish Water following the completion of the Cross Industry Graduate Programme. The programme involved a one-year rotation in Irish Water, a year in one of the participating consultancy firms (Jacobs Engineering; Nicholas O'Dwyer; RPS; Ryan Hanley); and another year with one of the contractors (EPS; Glan Agua; Veolia; and Ward & Burke).

Aidan's qualification on entering the programme was a BSc in Environmental Science from the Institute of Technology Sligo. He explained why he applied for the Cross-Industry Graduate Programme: "I applied for the programme as it seemed like a great start to a career after college and I had an interest in water treatment having done my work placement in wastewater treatment operations.

"My first position was with Veolia Water Ireland where I was placed in the process department (ideal place with my science degree). I started out doing jar testing which help design water treatment plants by getting the correct dose rates. After a time I was sent to site where I learned a lot about how a wastewater plant works which gave me an understanding of design and the treatment process.

"My second role was in the water department in RPS consultants based in Dun

Laoghaire, Dublin. I was put on the lead mitigation team where I learned a lot about report writing and preparing design reports. I was also sent as a Resident Engineer to Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant which is the largest water treatment plant in Ireland. I was on site here for eight months.

“My third and final placement was with Irish Water. I was placed in capital programmes where I worked on the Orthophosphate, Disinfection and Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) Programmes. This gave me great experience on how programmes are managed.”

The Cross Industry Graduate Programme is designed to give participants on the job training and mentoring and there are a number of permanent positions available to participants upon completion of the programme in Irish Water and the consultancy and contractor firms involved.

Aidan was lucky to qualify for one of these roles in Irish Water. “After the programme finished there was a bit of uncertainty – but interviews were held in August 2020 and I was one of the lucky two to get hired by Irish Water (the other four that finished the programme also got hired by different industry partners). I am currently a Programme Management Coordinator and I moved over from Water ECI to Wastewater ECI which was a great transition as I knew most of my new team from previous meetings and workshops. It has been a strange year with COVID and working from home, but I really enjoy my work and I’m kept very busy.”

The next Cross Industry Graduate Programme will be commencing in September 2021 and details will be advertised in advance.