

# Careers

**Justin Long**, an engineer with the Dublin branch of Atkins, tells ICIM what the benefits are to working for a multi-disciplinary company and explains why he took the long route into engineering

**Why did you choose Atkins?**

Having graduated, I was eager to work with a dynamic company with a varied work load to extend my portfolio and help me progress to Chartered status. I knew Atkins was working on interesting projects in Ireland and abroad including the M1 Toll plaza in Dublin and the Bahrain World Trade Center. The benefit of working in Atkins was that it's a multi-disciplinary company so it gave me a greater appreciation of the various different disciplines required for the successful completion of a project. When I joined the company, the building structures department was relatively young with five team members and this provided me with an excellent opportunity to grow with the department. I was made an associate director in 2007 and lead the building structures department which currently comprises over 30 civil and structural personnel.

**What's the work like?**

My work with Atkins to date has been varied but with a good mix of civil and structural design. One project I managed was the civil and structural design of the DHL Distribution Centre. The civil works included lime stabilisation treatment to existing soil for re-use as bulk fill and capping material and on-site storm water attenuation design. It gave me the opportunity to use emerging technologies. Another interesting project I was involved in was a five storey superstructure over basement adjacent to the river Tolka. We were responsible for the drainage and services design, installation of basement structure incorporating a new river wall and scour wall in an area susceptible to flooding. This project allowed me to gain an appreciation of working on confined space sites with difficult temporary construction criteria.

**What does your job involve on a day to day basis?**

My day depends on what stage of the project we're at but a lot of time is spent delegating and organising teams and ensuring we meet deadlines. I'm the face of the company for clients so I attend site meetings, sign off on designs, calculations, drawings and specifications. Some of my day is spent on site and the rest delegating work for the engineer's.

**Why did you choose a career in engineering?**

Since I was a child I was interested in what makes things work and what is required to make structures stand. In second level the subjects I chose were all geared towards a career in the construction industry. I had done very well in maths, science, technical drawing and construction studies so a career in engineering was the logical choice.

**Is there a good social life in the company?**

We have an active social club which most employees are members of and also have nights out within each department and team. We also have a rugby, soccer and golf team, which is good as people can get to know each other from other departments.

**What advice would you give to graduates?**

I'd highly recommend the route I took, which was studying part-time, as I gained practical experience so you can immediately see where you're going to apply this in the workplace. One of the first things you'll learn when you join the workplace is the protocols each company has for its ISO system and for logging correspondence. I would also strongly advise graduates to gain their chartered status as soon as they finish college.



**Name:** Justin Norman    **Age:** 31  
**Current employment:** Atkins' Dublin Building Structures team  
**Qualifications:** Engineering degree from Dublin Institute of Technology, Bolton Street  
**Career history:** Justin has worked in the engineering industry since 1996, first as an engineering technician and then as a civil/structural engineer for various consultancies. He joined Denis Wood Associates (litigation engineers) on the condition that he could attend DIT part time. He then began work with Michael Punch and Partners Consulting Engineers as an engineering technician in 2000 and joined the Atkins' Dublin Building Structures team in July 2003.

**What issue do you think are most salient in the industry at present?**

I can see a move towards environmental and sustainable development. There are new emerging technologies coming onstream all the time; reusing site worn materials, lime stabilisation, sustainable urban drainage development and rainwater harvesting. There's always some new emerging technology, a better way to do things or a better product or material to use so it's constantly changing and you're always learning. ■