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For latest information about IRSE events, news and how to become a member, visit www.irse.org. We welcome all those who are interested or involved in the fields of railway control systems, communications, data management or systems engineering.

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Articles of a newsworthy or technical nature are always welcome for IRSE NEWS. Members should forward their contributions to one of the Editors listed above.

If you have a view about something you've read in IRSE NEWS, or any aspect of railway signalling, telecommunications or related disciplines, please write to the editor at irsenews@irse.org.

It's that time of the year when engineers around the world take the IRSE exam. The examination is designed to test candidates' knowledge of railway train control and communications engineering principles and practices. The exam is not just a box-ticking exercise but is a thorough test of engineering ability. By studying for the exam candidates will have not only have learned about their specialist areas to a greater depth, but also a broader range of knowledge that will be relevant to their role in the profession, and which will allow them to develop further in their career.

The Institution is very appreciative of members who have organised study groups and supported candidates to learn and prepare for the exam, together with the exam invigilators and support staff, who are all volunteers. Without their help, the exam would not be the success it is.

Over the forthcoming weeks the examiners, who are also all unpaid volunteers, will spend many hours over several weeks marking and assessing candidate's papers. It is a very professional process with a robust system to assess each paper fairly and consistently. Early in 2018 it will all start again with the preparation of next year's questions and the time donated by the exam committee is significant, and very much appreciated.

Passing the exam helps engineers to qualify as full (corporate) members of the IRSE and for the most deserving candidate the Thorowgood Scholarship is awarded. This will enable them to undertake a short study tour of their choice. The exam is also a qualification that meets the UK Engineering Council requirements for further learning. This means that engineers who have passed the exam and have an appropriate Higher National award will be eligible to apply for registration at Incorporated Engineer (IEng), or with a suitable degree to apply for Chartered Engineer (CEng) level, providing they meet the standard required competences. IRSE NEWS looks forward to publishing the results of the 2017 exam when they are available early in 2018.

Paul Darlington, Managing Editor



This month's front cover shows part of a simulated operators screen for the Cologne light rail system, used in the Virtual Railway Operations Laboratory at TU Braunschweig. Students experience a very high degree of realism as the screens display exactly the same information as the screens in the actual control centre. Read more about this in our article on page 9.

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