

Qualified planners spread word of worthwhile efforts

It is a year since the first Transport Planning Professional candidates successfully completed their professional reviews. Consultant Mouchel has four TPP qualified transport planners who are now mentoring others pursuing various routes to the qualification. Victoria Millins reports.

The first Transport Planning Professional (TPP) candidates sat their reviews in 2008 and more this year have become fully qualified 'Transport Planning Professionals'. Some of those who have gained TPP status in the last 12 months are now passing on their experiences and helping others compile their reports and portfolios.

The TPP was established by IHT and the Transport Planning Society. The objective was two fold: to provide a recognised professional qualification specifically appropriate to transport planning; and to give all transport planners route to professional recognition – including those without an engineering background.

"This recognition will not appear overnight," says Mouchel's technical director for transport planning Keith Youngman. "It will take a while for it to filter through the industry and reach outside the profession, but it will happen, especially if those already qualified promote TPP by mentoring others."

Keith recently gained the TPP through the 'senior' route (see box below) and after further assessment by a specialist panel is now an assessor for the qualification.

"Becoming TPP qualified gives transport planners the status they deserve. Often



One recent award winning transport planning project by Mouchel is the Truro Park & Ride for Cornwall County Council which was completed in August 2008

transport planners are involved in public enquiries and discussions and are asked 'what qualifications do you have?' The TPP is a way of demonstrating experience."

Keith has been an avid supporter of the qualification since the first ideas and consultations were put together and has helped make Mouchel a leading consultant in training transport planners to a high standard.

"I am in the position of having an engineering degree so I became a Chartered engineer specialising in transport planning. But I have worked with many planners who have not been able to

gain professional standing because of their non engineering backgrounds," he says.

Four Mouchel transport planners have now gained the TPP qualification. Stephen Moriarty, Jeh Chan and Dunstan Westbury followed the 'standard' route. All have now taken on roles of mentoring colleagues aspiring to the same level of qualification and are profiled on the following page. >

Xtra-info: Submission deadline for the next Transport Planning Professional Review interviews is Friday 2 October. Contact jennifer.allen@iht.org or call 0207 336 1571.



Mouchel's Keith Youngman is now a TPP assessor

Routes to qualification

There are two main routes to becoming TPP qualified – 'senior' and 'standard'. The former is for experienced planners interested in becoming an assessor for the TPP, while the latter includes routes to qualification for three different groups:

1. Candidates with a transport related Masters degree or a UK Honours degree and having completed a graduate training scheme can proceed direct to preparing a portfolio of evidence and applying to sit a professional review.
2. Those with a UK Honours degree but who have not completed a structured training scheme must submit a description of their experience to demonstrate they have the required knowledge before proceeding with the portfolio of evidence and review.
3. Lastly, the same is required of transport planners without an Honours degree, but they are also asked to submit a technical report to show the same level of 'learning outcomes' expected of other candidates.

Modeller beating a path



Mouchel's chief modeller in transport planning Stephen Moriarty was among the first group of Transport Planning Professional candidates to sit their professional review. He gained the qualification in June 2008. "I had read various articles about the TPP qualification ahead of its launch and decided that I wanted to volunteer to lead the way," Stephen says.

Stephen graduated in 1978 with a BSc in Engineering from Manchester University. He joined Preston Borough Council where he worked while studying for an MSc in Transport Engineering & Planning. After this he developed his specialism in transport modelling while working with the London

Borough of Havering, Halcrow Fox, Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners and Kellogg Brown & Root before moving onto Mouchel in 2005.

His current role often involves showing graduates how to build accurate models. "Modellers' roles are very important, particularly their effective dialogue with clients," Stephen says.

"I found the review a tough discipline, but then nothing worth doing is easy and we have since been rolling out the initiative to our younger staff. At Mouchel we employ transport planners with a wide variety of backgrounds and the TPP will be very useful for giving them an opportunity to gain a recognised qualification."

Qualification brings promotion

Senior transport planner Jeh Chan joined Mouchel in 2005 and since successfully sitting his TPP review in December last year, Jeh has been promoted.

"My interest has always been in transport planning, but I spent the first years of my career as a civil engineer as that was where the opportunities were in Malaysia at the time," says Jeh. He was then given opportunity to study for an MSc in Transport Engineering & Operations at Newcastle University.

After graduating Jeh joined Atkins before moving to Mouchel in 2005. In 2007 he took seven months out from his career with Mouchel to gain wider experience working in

China. "This period made me realise how fortunate I am to be working as a transport planner in the UK where our work benefits many people," Jeh says.

"I want to progress further and work in different areas of the country to gain further knowledge in transport planning so that I can contribute to the improvement of day to day travel for everyone." Jeh is currently involved in traffic modelling and economic appraisal works for an advanced motorway signalling and traffic management feasibility study.

"Taking the professional review was hard work but it was definitely worth it," he says. "It helped me focus on what I have learnt over the past years and bring all of it together."



Senior planner gets what he sought



Team leader and senior transport planner Dunstan Westbury had wanted to pursue professional qualification but considered becoming a Chartered Engineer inappropriate for his role. So launch of the TPP qualification presented the opportunity he was waiting for. Dunstan was successful in his review in December 2008 and is now passing his experience on to others.

Dunstan works in Mouchel's Euston office in London where he deals with traffic assessment and modelling for the area encircled by the M25, including recent work creating traffic models for planned works at Dalston Junction station on the East London Line.

"I was looking at becoming a Chartered

Engineer before hearing about the new TPP qualification, but it never seemed appropriate as I do very little engineering work in my every day role. After six years working as a transport planner I was beginning to consider putting in the extra work needed to become Chartered for the sake of gaining a professional qualification. When I heard about the TPP I decided to go for that straight away instead.

"Taking the review was a good experience and I enjoyed putting together a presentation on my work at Dalston Junction. It was definitely worth the effort and I am now mentoring four others that are working towards sitting their TPP reviews and hoping to gain the same professional recognition."