

The Society of Chartered Surveyors

What is Geomatics?

The Society's Geomatics Division is in existence now for approximately 15 years. While this Division continues to be relatively small in membership numbers, it has been described many times by past Presidents as 'punching above its weight' as it actively and enthusiastically engages in the many Society committees and initiatives. However, many of our fellow members from other Divisions have little idea what competencies their fellow Chartered Surveyors from within the Geomatics Division possess! Indeed this lack of awareness of what 'Geomatics' encompasses both as discipline and as a career is not unique. It is experienced by Geomatics professionals worldwide.

In Ireland, there is only one Geomatics Bachelor level (BSc.) educational course available in Ireland and this is being delivered by the Department of Spatial Information Sciences (DSIS) at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). The DSIS is acutely aware that this course needs to continue to attract high quality applicants to secure its survival, and that this will only be possible through improved promotion of the course, the career and the profession itself in Ireland. Similar vulnerability is currently being experienced by Geomatics educational courses across Europe, Canada and Australia.

Since its inception in September 1999, the BSc. (Hons) Geomatics (DT112) degree programme has graduated seven cohorts, with an average of 24 students graduating per year. Due to resource and financial constraints, the DSIS maintains a target admission capacity of 40 students with actual intake numbers remaining at

c.35 due to a lack of awareness of the programme and the profession amongst school leavers, and the desire by the DSIS to maintain the highest possible intake academic standards. The DSIS is currently servicing the spatial information industry in Ireland by also delivering a Masters level programme (MSc.) in Spatial Information Management aimed at mid career professionals, with the first cohort of students just recently graduating. There are also a number of part-time programmes being delivered in such fields as Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Co-ordinate Reference Systems. Some courses are available through a variety of delivery mechanisms to service the needs of industry from the conventional classroom to an online eLearning environment. The DSIS also maintains a close liaison with practitioners in the Geomatics profession with representatives of state, semi state and private sector organisations being invited annually to meet with students, and to discuss employment opportunities. From feedback received at this event, it is apparent that this SCS accredited programme and its graduates are highly valued by the Geomatics/Spatial Information Management industry, and that DIT is perceived as the centre of academic excellence in Geomatics.

It is this educational excellence and unique learning opportunity that now needs further promotion. In recent times, a suite of promotional material has been produced and successfully used by the DSIS at Career Open Days and Secondary School visits etc. However, it was felt that such conventional methods needed to be broadened to include a new and innovative media video specifically developed to be utilized on social networking sites such as YouTube™, Facebook™ etc. This promotional media clip has been created by Baboom Ltd. and is now also available at the DSIS's website www.dit.ie/geomatics.



The simple aim of this 5 minute animation is to answer the very difficult question 'What is Geomatics?' which is often posed by prospective students, educators in secondary educational systems and the general public. This clip visually details the breadth of Geomatics professional competencies, the cross-sectoral nature of the discipline and the inter-professionalism of Geomatics as a potential career path. Just as the Land Surveying discipline has evolved into what is now Geomatics – a future-facing specialism, the way we communicate this message must now also change. This media clip marks the first of a number of novel methods the DSIS plans to use in the coming months to publicize Geomatics as a potential career choice. Please visit the DSIS website for further details of this and other Geomatics promotional material which is now available.

Contact:
Helen Murray MSc. FSCS FRICS
helen.murray@dit.ie
Lecturer
Dept. of Spatial Information Sciences
School of Spatial Planning
Dublin Institute of Technology
Bolton Street, D1