

# BECOMING A FELLOW

What does Fellowship really mean? Leaders share why it is less about status and more about impact, influence and shaping the future of the profession

**I**IRSM Fellowship is often seen as a mark of seniority, a set of post-nominals which signal experience and achievement. But for those who have made the journey, it represents something far deeper: impact, responsibility and the confidence to shape the future of the profession.

For Loveness Marabwa, Senior Risk Officer at Zimbabwe Power Company, the ambition was sparked by representation and possibility. “For me, it was admiring other Fellows, especially women – seeing their impact sparked a desire to follow in their footsteps.” She realised that her leadership experience and perspective had value beyond her immediate context. “Pursuing

Fellowship was about paving the way for others, especially in Africa, and showcasing the continent’s potential on a global scale. It was about demonstrating that we too can lead, innovate and drive change.”

Fellowship, she says, is “a stamp of excellence that opens doors” and gives her a seat at the table with other leaders but is also “the opportunity to contribute to shaping the future of risk management, both locally and globally”.

Karen J Hewitt, Director of Leaderlike Ltd, wanted to become a Fellow to become part of a global community of professionals looking at risk holistically. The process itself proved powerful and has reinforced her confidence. Her

**“THE STRUCTURED PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR FELLOWSHIP WAS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-REFLECTION”**

advice is: “You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”

For Priya Kalyanasundaram, Senior Manager, Technical Programs, Health and Safety at Amazon, Fellowship marked a shift in perspective. “I wanted to be part of an institution where professional recognition is tied to participation, contribution and responsibility, not just a title.” She knew she was ready when her thinking evolved from managing risk to improving how it is done. “My perspective shifted from ‘How do we manage risk?’ to ‘How do we make risk management easier to do well?’” Fellowship gives her a platform to mentor and contribute globally.

Susan Chapple, Founder and Director of JBSafe Ltd, describes the application process as transformative. “The structured process of applying for Fellowship was a fantastic opportunity for self-reflection.” The recognition has encouraged her to “think beyond my own role and to consider ways that I can influence and positively shape the future of the profession”.

She also highlights the value of the networks that Fellowship brings, connecting her with peers across different sectors and perspectives who continue to challenge and inspire her thinking.

Elaine Osborne, EHS Manager at AG Wilson Civil Engineering,



Loveness Marabwa



Karen J Hewitt



Priya Kalyanasundaram



Susan Chapple



Elaine Osborne



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believes Fellowship created confidence in her judgement. It reinforced that leadership in risk and safety “is not about certainty or control, but about influence, judgement and creating space for better decisions, especially under pressure.” She is also keen to dispel the myth of exceptionalism. “You need to be reflective and clear about your impact.” In her view, Fellowship recognises professional maturity, not perfection.

For Emelia Ntiamoah, former Systems Interface Lead at OneSubsea and STEM role model, Fellowship also highlights the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of safety and risk leadership. Her career spans engineering, systems integration and safety-critical infrastructure projects and she believes Fellowship recognises that safety thinking can sit at the heart of many professions.

“The biggest myth is that you need to be a safety professional by job title to qualify,” she says. “If you’re actively identifying hazards, implementing controls and driving



risk reduction in your daily work, you are already doing the work of a Fellow.” For her, Fellowship reinforces the idea that risk-informed thinking should underpin technical decision-making and leadership across sectors.

Lauren Crawley, Business Continuity Lead at OXB, says becoming a Fellow legitimised a shift already under way: “It marks a shift from practitioner to architect.” Rather than simply delivering safety or risk processes, she now focuses more on shaping

the systems and conditions that allow organisations to manage risk effectively.

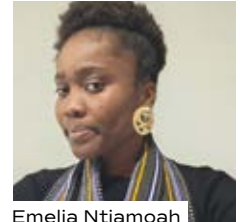
Hugh Maxwell of Maxwell Safety Ltd sees Fellowship as a standard rather than a status. “Fellowship isn’t a destination – it’s a standard you carry with you.” At its core, he believes, it is about responsibility and legacy, not titles.

Across each story runs a common thread. Fellowship is not about perfection or hierarchy but about influence, integrity and contribution. It is about moving from delivering tasks to shaping systems, from operating within frameworks to designing them. Above all, it is about belonging to a global community committed not only to managing risk, but to advancing the standards, diversity and impact of the profession itself. ♥

Read our Fellows’ full interviews at [www.iirsm.org/knowledge/articles](http://www.iirsm.org/knowledge/articles)  
Read more in Institute News on pages 41-43



Lauren Crawley



Emelia Ntiamoah



Hugh Maxwell

Strathclyde Centre for Occupational Safety and Health

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