

Strategy Meeting 2023: Pre-Meeting Reading & Questions

Introduction & context

The IAQM is the professional body for air quality professionals, acting as the voice of air quality in the UK by producing useful and timely guidance on matters affecting air quality professionals and by responding to Government consultations. The IAQM represents both ambient and indoor air quality professionals through professional recognition, guidance and CPD opportunities. IAQM is not a campaigning group. It also does not provide a consultancy service, offer advice nor endorse products.

The mission of the IAQM is to be the authoritative voice for air quality by maintaining, enhancing and promoting the highest standards of working practices in the field and for the professional development of those who undertake this work.

IAQM’s administration is managed by the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) and all members of IAQM must also be members of IES. The structure of the IAQM within the IES family is highlighted below and is replicated in the structure for CEDHE (formerly CHES, which deals with environmental education) and now the Foundation for Water Research (FWR, which merged with the IES in 2022). This structure gives IAQM a large degree of autonomy. The IAQM has its own brand, website, membership structure and some activities which are unique to the IAQM. IES also has another four communities (Climate Action, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Land Condition and Marine & Coastal) which have steering committees but less autonomy.



Figure 1. Illustration of governance structure of IAQM

Following the last strategy meeting held in 2019, several changes were enacted:

- The IAQM extended its mission to cover those working in indoor air quality. A work programme accompanied this including the publication of the guidance document Indoor Air Quality Guidance: Assessment, Monitoring, Modelling and Mitigation in 2021, an edition of the environmental SCIENTIST, Improving indoor air quality in 2021 and an online Indoor Air Quality conference held in 2020.
- The IAQM has undergone changes to its governance, with a move to a smaller Committee and direct elections for Committee vacancies.
- The IAQM has started work on developing a competency framework for IAQM membership grades.

The purpose of the meeting is to consider the strategic direction of the IAQM to ensure it is meeting its mission and providing the best support it can to its members. The meeting will also discuss the position of the IAQM in the wider sector in order to understand how its impact can be maximised through its activities and potential collaborations. This meeting is designed to provide a forum for current and past IAQM Committee members, and Honorary Fellows, to input to the IAQM strategy.

Main activities undertaken by the IAQM

- **Guidance** – we publish guidance and recommendations to aid members in their work.
- **Positions Statements** – we issue statements on matters that could affect the way in which Members carry out their professional tasks and on air quality topics and issues where we can provide a unique perspective from which to give a professional opinion.
- **Conferences** – we tend to hold two conferences a year (RTCA and either DMUG or MAQ). An IAQ conference was held in 2020.
- **Discussion meetings** – we hold two discussion meetings throughout the year which are free for our members to attend.
- **Webinars** – Lunchtime webinars are held every month when another IAQM event is not scheduled.
- **Working groups** – working groups are set up on an ad hoc basis dependent on need/new workstreams.
- **Early Careers Network** – tailored activities for members in the first 10 years of their careers.
- **Standards** – includes setting membership standards and assessing applications for membership, monitoring members’ CPD, and publicising a Code of Professional Conduct and maintaining a disciplinary process to enforce this.
- **Policy** – consultation responses to ensure that the Government and other relevant organisations are aware of the opinions of the AQ profession on matters of relevance.
- **Endorsement of short courses** – professional review of CPD opportunities for air quality professionals.

Membership

The IAQM currently has over 650 members. 105 of those members work solely or partly in indoor air quality. Its membership has grown in every year of its 20-year existence, although the rate of growth has been slowing. Figure 2 shows the membership growth rate over the past 6 years and Figure 3 the breakdown of our membership by sector.

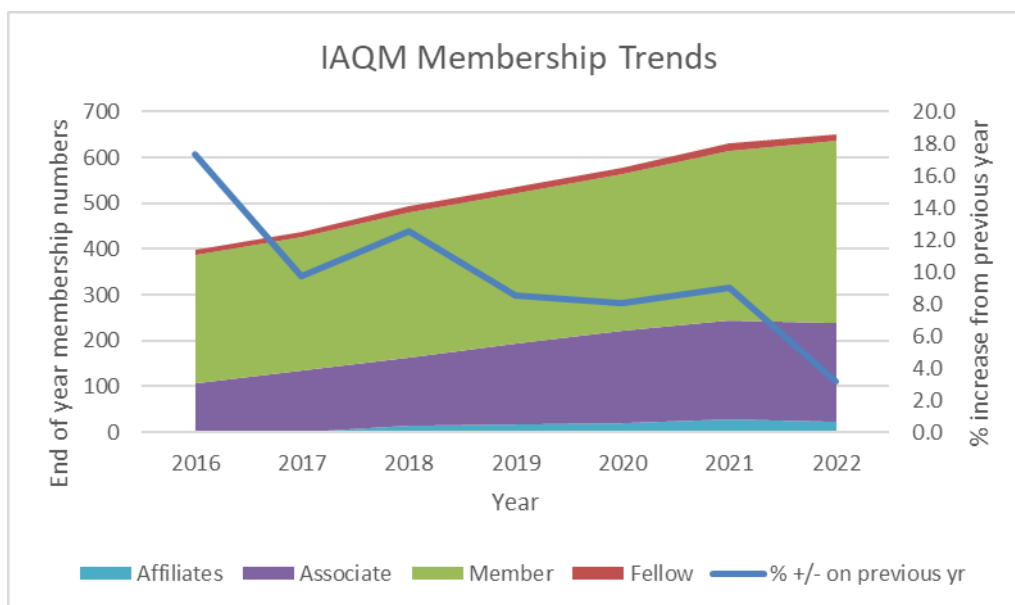


Figure 2. IAQM total membership and trends 2016 – 2022

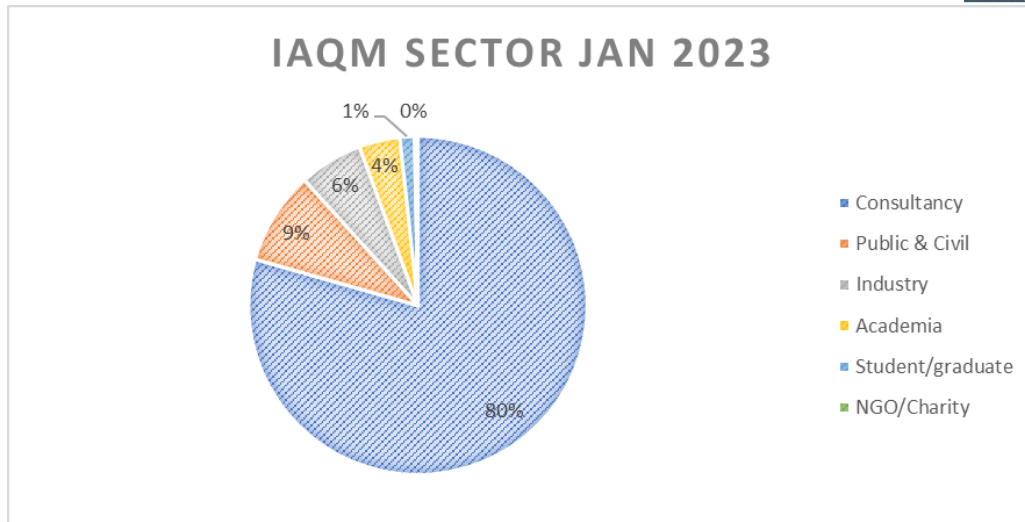


Figure 3: Primary sector of IAQM members (all grades) in January 2023

The percentage of IAQM members in consultancies has fallen slightly from 83% in 2019 to 80%, with public/civil (which covers those working in government departments, local authorities and arm's length bodies), industry, and academia increasing by a modest 1%.

In order to determine the potential for membership growth it is important to have an understanding of the size of the air quality profession in the UK, and its expected growth over the coming years. This will be useful to estimate growth rates for the future, and whether the IAQM has saturated the UK market and should explore other options for membership diversification.

Government data on employment on the Environmental Goods and Services Sector shows that current levels of employment in the '*protection of ambient air and climate*' has grown from 14,200 FTE employees in 2010 to 21,000 in 2019¹. This classification however could be misleading as it groups ambient air professionals and climate professionals in the same job type. Therefore, the growth may be more focussed on climate roles rather than air quality roles. There is no separate classification for indoor air quality professionals. In terms of 'noise and vibration abatement' FTE roles has decreased from 3,400 to 3,100.

The international picture differs depending on the region. EU data on the Environmental Goods and Services Sector shows that employment in the '*protection of ambient air and climate*' has reduced by 14% in the same time period (2010 – 2019)². However, data from the US Bureau of Labour Statistics indicates that the job demand for Air Pollution Analysts is projected to grow 8% between 2020 and 2030³ and a report produced by the International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology estimates that air quality management sector requires at least 50,000 new jobs in India⁴.

- Do you think the air quality market in the UK is currently growing or declining, and what might the future picture be?
- Have we achieved brand recognition in the indoor air quality market?
- Should we be doing more to increase membership by:

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/ukenvironmentalgoodsandservicessectoregss/2019>

² https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Environmental_economy_%E2%80%93_statistics_on_employment_and_growth&oldid=583805#Employment_by_environmental_domain

³ <https://www.environmentalscience.org/career/air-pollution-analyst>

⁴ <https://www.deccanherald.com/business/business-news/fifty-thousand-jobs-can-be-created-in-air-quality-management-sector-report-1143004.html>

- Targeting groups outside of consultancies? What are they interested in and how can we reach them?
- Expanding our international membership base?

Collaborations and influence

The IAQM has a history of partnering with a number of different organisations, whether through supporting networks (Future Urban Ventilation Network), developing joint guidance (EPUK) or past contra agreements for events (Air Quality News).

There are a number of potential avenues for the IAQM to explore in terms of collaborations and exerting influence in the sector, particularly around the development of policy:

- Membership organisations (e.g., CIBSE, EPUK, IEMA etc.)
- Research organisations (e.g., Research Councils, Met Office, Higher Education Institutes)
- NGOs (e.g., Sustrans, Client Earth etc.)
- Expert policy stakeholder groups (e.g., AQEG, COMEAP etc.)
- Government organisations (e.g., Defra etc.)

- Who should the IAQM be collaborating with? What do we want to achieve through these partnerships?
- How should we manage collaborations and assess new collaboration opportunities?

Offering and engagement

In 2022 the IAQM conducted a survey of its members to gather information on member views on current services and explore areas of interest moving forward. The results from the membership survey are attached as an appendix to this paper and provide comments on topics of interest for future events and guidance.

The IES has recently started exploring developing a training offering. As the only professional body for air quality professionals in the UK, this could represent an opportunity for the IAQM to build on its support for the professional development of air quality professionals and support best practice in the sector. This would be complementary to the competency framework being developed for IAQM membership levels and would provide CPD opportunities aligned with the competencies identified. There are only a limited number of air quality higher education courses in the country, so many air quality professionals come through a more general environmental science, chemistry or physics route. A credible industry specific training programme may therefore help maintain the professionalism of the sector and support air quality professionals looking to expand into climate or indoor air quality work.

Expanding the IAQM membership offering will be dependent on increasing engagement with the wider IAQM membership in IAQM activities, as many of these activities will require significant volunteer time. Developing a framework for engaging with the wider membership will be key to delivery of new projects and ensuring the voice of the membership is represented.

To move members up the 'engagement ladder' we need to consider some key things: what are the motivations for volunteering? What are the facilitators for allowing people to volunteer? What are the challenges of volunteering? What would make people disengage from volunteering? Consider these questions for yourself before the meeting.

- Should the IAQM expand its membership offering? What key topics should the IAQM be exploring? How can the IAQM distinguish its offering from others in the sector?
- What motivated you to volunteer for the IAQM Committee? What aspects of volunteering with the IAQM do you find most valuable to your own career or are sources of personal satisfaction? Are there any parts of the experience of volunteering for the IAQM that you do not enjoy or find demotivating?

Governance

In 2021 the IAQM introduced direct elections to the IAQM Committee and are in the process of transitioning to a smaller sized Committee. This has been successful with 11 members standing for election in 2022, and 12 in 2021.

When these governance changes were approved there was a second stage to the governance structure which was proposed in order to demarcate the technical discussions from the governance discussions and streamline Committee meetings and Sub committees. This structure is illustrated below. Technical Panels consisting of both Committee members and non-Committee members will handle technical matters and will report back to the Committee.



- Should we move forward with a new Committee structure? Is this the right structure to deliver the IAQM strategy?

From time to time the IAQM receives media queries and questions on their guidance and position. It would be useful to develop a policy for dealing with these types of requests and agreeing a process for dealing with queries for the IES Office to action, including assigning a key contact within the IAQM Committee to assist.

The IES also has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan which is currently being reviewed and updated to and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Plan. This plan will include key requirements of Committees underneath the IES umbrella and set new targets for the organisation and its sister organisations. Part of this plan is the requirement for an ED&I Champion to sit on all Committees, including the IAQM Committee. The ED&I Champion will be responsible for ensuring ED&I is embedded within Committee activities and making sure we are delivering on our ED&I plan.

- How should the IAQM deal with media requests or requests for expert input?
- How should the IAQM elect an ED&I Champion and manage ED&I across IAQM activities?