

The Honorary Graduand: Dr Sarah Prichard

Doctor of Engineering

Sarah Prichard is Partner and Global Director of Projects and Operational Excellence at Buro Happold, the global engineering and consultancy practice. A structural engineer by training, she has devoted her professional career to advancing engineering excellence, multidisciplinary collaboration, and effective leadership within the built environment.

Born in Oxford, England, Sarah moved to Ireland at the age of three, where she was educated and spent her formative years. She attended Alexandra College in Dublin, a girls' school with a strong academic tradition that fostered intellectual curiosity, independence of thought, and a commitment to learning. She went on to study Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering at Trinity College

Dublin, graduating before undertaking doctoral research at the same institution. Her PhD, completed in 2000, examined the response of confined concrete to low velocity hard impact, combining theoretical rigour with applied engineering relevance.

In early 2001, Sarah relocated to Bath to join Buro Happold as a graduate structural engineer. She has remained with the firm ever since, building a career that spans more than twenty-five years. During this time, she has held a number of senior leadership roles, including Engineering Director, Managing

Director for UK Buildings, and UK Chief Operating Officer, with responsibility for the UK business alongside operations in Hong Kong, China, and Greece. In 2024, she was appointed Global Director of Projects and Operational Excellence, where she focuses on strengthening governance, driving consistency and innovation, and supporting high-quality project delivery across the firm's global portfolio.

Sarah's professional experience has been shaped by major international projects, notably three years in Qatar leading engineering supervision for Msheireb Downtown Doha, one of the world's largest sustainable urban regeneration programmes. This work reinforced her belief in the importance of collaboration, trust, and clarity of purpose in delivering complex projects successfully. She is widely recognised for her commitment to project excellence and to fostering inclusive, engaged teams.

Beyond her role at Buro Happold, Sarah serves as Chair of the Board of the Association for Consultancy and Engineering and is a member of the Confederation of British Industry's UK Competitiveness Committee. She is a Fellow of the Institution of Structural Engineers and a Chartered Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and a strong advocate for inclusion, gender equality, wellbeing, and mental health within the engineering profession.

Sarah acknowledges the profound influence of her parents in shaping her values and aspirations, and the unfailing support of her husband Philip and son Oscar throughout her career. She also recognises the importance of friendship, mutual support, and collective endeavour, particularly for women in engineering, as essential contributors to professional success.