



Costain's winning 'The Blue Revolution' team surrounded by the other finalists with (left) ICE's Hugh Ferguson who presented the main prize and Prof Ron McCaffer.

Costain hold off international competition to win MERIT for first time

*Hugh Ferguson,
Institution of Civil Engineers*

A team from Costain scooped the 2011 MERIT prize at Loughborough University in April, as six teams competed in the finals of the construction management computer simulation game. MERIT has been played as the Institution of Civil Engineers' National Construction Business Game since 1988.

For the first time in the competition's 21-year history, two teams from outside the British Isles were present in Loughborough for the final – Limelight QLD from Australia and SNIKTA from Hong Kong, sponsored by Aurecon and Atkins respectively.

But in the end it was two British teams who were competing head-to-head for the trophy. Game Ove (Arup) briefly took the lead at the end of the first day, but on day two The Blue Revolution (Costain) pulled steadily ahead, winning by a convincing margin.

MERIT – an acronym for management, enterprise, risk, innovation and teamwork – is a web-based computer simulation that allows participants operating in groups of up to six, acting as a board of directors and managers, to manage their own construction company. In the early rounds, the teams all compete against the computer and then the six leading teams are invited for the finals, where they meet and compete against each other.

Originated by Loughborough's Professor Ron McCaffer and supported by ICE's Management Board, MERIT started as a paper-based competition in 1988, and some 23,000 young engineers and managers from more than 200 different employers have now participated. The game demonstrates the value of teamwork, and shows how managerial and technical decisions made today unfold into tomorrow's operational and financial results. It is an excellent introduction to company, business and financial management in a construction context. Given the large number of past players one claim by Loughborough is that MERIT has been responsible for introducing financial management to most of the construction industry!

The 2011 sponsors prize went to Arup who had sponsored six teams, two of which reached the finals.

www.MERITgame.com



Loughborough's Professor Ron McCaffer (left) with ICE management board chairman Charly Clark (centre) and Nigel Hailey of Arup, winners of the sponsors' prize (right). Nigel Hailey himself is a graduate from MERIT having competed in MERIT some 20 years ago.



The Blue Revolution (Costain) with (left to right) Duncan James, George Chou, Jonathan Han and Adam Ran Xu.



Game Ove (Arup) with Louise Walley, Nathan Hubbard, Andrew Clarke, Ajminder Dhani and Areeb Khan



Limelight QLD (Aurecon) from Australia with Amber Jones, Adam Broit, Oleg Belov, Ki Johnson, Tanya Syddall and Alexis Trevethan



SNIKTA (Atkins) with Willis Hon and Anna Yeung: the remainder of the team was playing remotely from Hong Kong.

developing successful managers