



Association of Professional Geoscientists
of Ontario

Entry to Practice Review Report

for the

Office of the Fairness Commissioner

March 1, 2011

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1. Executive Summary

This limited scope Entry to Practise Review Report analyzes and discusses the following elements of the application process of the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario (APGO):

1. The necessity and relevance of the requirements for practical training and/or work experience;
2. The efficiency and timeliness of decision-making as it applies to registration; and
3. The reasonableness of the fees charged in respect of APGO registration.

These elements are reviewed in the interest of ensuring a straightforward, timely, fair and easy to follow application process for all applicants to APGO.

The review produced the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. **Conclusion:** That the APGO requirements for work experience are necessary to demonstrate that applicants have sufficient experience and exposure to the decision processes of a professional to appropriately protect the public and the environment. The required experience also facilitates mobility within Canada as all Canadian geoscience regulating jurisdictions have identical or similar requirements. The APGO requirements for work experience are also in line with other geoscience regulating jurisdictions or to similar organizations globally. As well, the requirement, as set forth in the Registration Regulation O.Reg. 59/01, assists with the facilitation of the recognition of prior learning assessment as it pertains to the fulfilment of knowledge requirements.
Recommendation: No action is required at this time
2. **Conclusion:** One of the key limiting areas noted in the efficiency and timeliness of decision-making as it applies to registration is the availability of the Executive Director & Registrar. This limiting factor has been noted by the Council of the APGO.
Recommendation: The Council has approved the split of the Executive Director & Registrar position and has formed a Registrar Task Force to oversee the hire of a new Registrar. The APGO is currently actively seeking a candidate for this position.
3. **Conclusion:** That the fees charged by the APGO with respect to registration are in line with other Canadian geoscience regulators.
Recommendation: No action is required at this time.

2. Objectives

At the request of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner and in the interest of ensuring a straightforward, timely, fair and easy to follow application process for applicants to the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario (APGO), the APGO has undertaken a limited scope review of the following Entry to Practice requirements and practises:

1. The necessity and relevance of the requirements for practical training and/or work experience
2. The efficiency and timeliness of decision-making as it applies to registration
3. The reasonableness of the fees charged in respect of registrations.

3. Methodology

The current entry to practise requirements and practises of the APGO pertaining to the three points above were documented in detail. Where possible, an environmental scan was conducted and comparisons made. These results have been documented and analysis of the data completed. Conclusions were drawn and, where appropriate, recommendations have been made.

4. Analysis and Findings

Work Experience

Analysis

The following indicates the current work experience requirements as stipulated in the Registration Regulation O.Reg. 59/01 (available at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_010059_e.htm):

8. (1) An applicant for a practising member certificate of registration shall meet the following requirements:
 1. Hold,
 - i. a four-year bachelor of science degree or its equivalent, awarded by a Canadian university, in an area of geoscience and ***have at the time of applying at least four years of qualifying work experience, as determined by the Registration Committee, in an area of geoscience that was obtained within the previous 10 years,***
 - ii. an equivalent credential, as determined by the Registration Committee, from another institution, and ***have at the time of applying at least four years of qualifying work experience in an area of geoscience, as determined by the Registration Committee, that was obtained within the previous 10 years,*** or

- iii. a credential acceptable to the Registration Committee evidencing knowledge in an area of geoscience and ***have at least 10 years of qualifying work experience in an area of geoscience, as determined by the Registration Committee, that was obtained within the previous 15 years.***

.....

Work experience

9.1 (1) This section and sections 9.2 and 9.3 apply for the purpose of determining whether a person applying for a practising member certificate of registration under section 8 or 9 has the work experience necessary to qualify for the certificate. O. Reg. 378/01, s. 1.

(2) The applicant shall provide sufficient information with respect to his or her work experience to permit an assessment of its nature, quality, duration and currency

.....

Experience before obtaining degree

9.2 (1) An applicant who holds a four-year bachelor of science degree or its equivalent, awarded by a Canadian university, in an area of geoscience, or an equivalent credential, as determined by the Registration Committee, from another institution, may submit for assessment and credit a maximum of 12 months work experience acquired after completion of the second year of studies and prior to completing the degree requirements. O. Reg. 378/01, s. 1.

(2) An applicant who holds a master of science degree or its equivalent, awarded by a Canadian university, in an area of geoscience, or an equivalent credential, as determined by the Registration Committee, from another institution, may submit for assessment and credit a maximum of 12 months work experience acquired after the commencement of the master of science degree program and prior to completing the degree requirements. O. Reg. 378/01, s. 1.

(3) An applicant who holds a doctor of philosophy degree or its equivalent, awarded by a Canadian university, in an area of geoscience, or an equivalent credential, as determined by the Registration Committee, from another institution, may submit for assessment and credit a maximum of 12 months work experience acquired after the commencement of the doctor of philosophy degree program and prior to completing the degree requirements. O. Reg. 378/01, s. 1.

Criteria

9.3 (1) A practising member certificate of registration shall not be issued to an applicant unless the applicant demonstrates work experience that meets all of the following criteria:

1. The work provides practical experience in the application of geoscience theory.
2. The work provides practical experience in the understanding of geoscience processes and systems.
3. The work provides experience in the management of geoscientific projects.
4. The work provides experience in demonstrating proficiency in both oral and written communication.

5. The work provides experience that promotes an awareness of the implications of geoscience practice for society in general, including its environmental and economic implications and its implications for safety. O. Reg. 378/01, s.

The following tables provide a comparison of the work experience requirements of the APGO to that of other Canadian and international jurisdictions.

Table 1. APGO Work Experience Requirements Compared to Other Canadian Geoscience Regulators

Canadian Geoscience Regulator	ON (APGO)	NL	NB	NWT	AB	MB	BC	QC	SK	NS
Years of Work Experience Required	4 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs (after graduation from university)	4 yrs	4 yrs

Table 2. APGO Work Experience Requirements Compared to Other Geoscience Regulators or Similar Geoscience Organizations Globally

Other Geoscience Regulators or Similar Organizations	ON (APGO)	American Institute of Prof. Geologists	European Federation of Geologists	Institute of Geologists of Ireland	Geological Society of London	Austral-Asian Institute of Mining & Metallurgy	Australian Institute of Geoscientists	S. African Council for Natural Scientific Professions
Years of Work Experience Required	4 yrs	8 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	3 yrs

Conclusions

In order to practise geoscience and to be able to make appropriate professional geoscience decisions which will protect the public and the environment, a professional geoscientist needs sufficient experience to gain the minimum required practise experience and exposure to the decision processes of a professional.

As is evidenced by the comparison of the data above, the requirement of four years of qualifying geoscience work experience for a practising member designation is in line with requirements of other geoscience regulators within Canada and with other geoscience regulators or similar organizations globally. The requirement for four years of geoscience work experience not only fulfills the purpose indicated above, but also facilitates mobility due to same or similar requirements by all Canadian geoscience regulating jurisdictions.

Timeliness of Decisions

Analysis

Application Review

Once all application documents are received by the APGO, review of the application and notification of the applicant of the decision of the Registrar/Registration Committee may take as little as two months or less. This review time is, however, dependent on several circumstances.

- *Timing of the next Registration Committee Meeting and completion date of the required documentation.* The Registration Committee generally meets every six to eight weeks.
- *Number of Applications Received and Ready for Review.* The Registration Committee meets every six to eight weeks for a full day of application reviews. If a large number of applications are ready for review on a given Registration Committee meeting date, the Committee may not be able to review all the applications on the docket for the day. The applications which were received nearest the meeting in the APGO office are held over to the next Registration Committee meeting.
- *Availability of the Executive Director & Registrar for final review of the application.* The Executive Director & Registrar reviews all applications before the letter of the decision of the Registration Committee is sent to the applicant. The review helps to ensure that all information is complete and accurate before being submitted to the applicant. Acceptance decision letters usually go out a few days to up to two weeks after the Registration Committee meeting and final review of the documentation by the Registrar. Deferral and denial decision letters are generally sent to the applicant within one to six weeks of the Registration Committee meeting and the Registrar's final review depending on the availability of the Registrar and amount of information required in the decision letter in order to provide the applicant with sufficient information to move the application forward. The availability of the Registrar can also help to expedite the application process in some circumstances, where the Registrar is competent to do so, the Registrar may register an applicant as a member as per *The Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000* c. 13, s. 10 (1).

Appeals

Once an appeal and the appeal deposit are received, the appeal date is generally set within two weeks. The Practice and Procedures for Appeal of a Decision of the Registration Committee, as approved by Council on July 5, 2002, indicates that "The Registrar shall notify the appellant, in writing, of the date, time, place and format of the appeal hearing not less than thirty (30) days before the appeal hearing is to take place."

Once the appeal has been heard by the Special Meeting of Council Panel, the decision is usually made on the day of the hearing, or within 24 hours. The decision of the Special Meeting of Council Panel is generally conveyed to the applicant within seven days of the decision. On occasion, extenuating circumstances may be encountered where the Panel may need to request further information from the applicant or may need to confer with legal counsel. This would in turn delay the decision and its conveyance to the applicant.

Conclusions

As concluded from the above information, the most notable limiting factor in the timeliness of decisions is the availability of the Registrar to complete a final review of the application file, to convey the decision of the Registration Committee to the applicant, and to provide the necessary supporting information/documentation.

Fees

Analysis

The APGO application fee is \$275. Other potential fees in the application process are third party fees. The APGO requires that International transcripts undergo a course by course equivalency evaluation. The APGO requests that World Education Services (WES) be utilized for the equivalency evaluation, although alternate arrangements can be requested. WES currently charges between \$210 and \$240 for the course by course assessment, dependent on the type of service utilized. The cost of translation, should it be required, is additional and dependent on the length of the document and the translation service utilized by the applicant.

The following tables reflect several distinct types of organizations. In Table 3, the Canadian associations are all provincial geoscience regulators. Several of the provincial geoscience regulators also regulate the profession of engineering. The combined geoscience and engineering regulators are: Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. The regulators in Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia are geoscience only.

In Table 4, only one of the organizations included, other than the APGO, is a regulating body, the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNSP). All the organizations are national or multi-national bodies.

Table 3. APGO Application Fee Compared to Other Canadian Geoscience Regulators

Canadian Geoscience Regulator *	ON (APGO)	NL	NB	NWT	AB	MB	BC	QC	SK	NS
Application Fee for Practising Category	\$275	\$220	\$247.80	\$300	\$280	\$300	Cdn. Trained \$501.33 Int. Trained \$531.46	Cdn. Trained \$233 Int. Trained \$495	\$210	\$100

*Note: For the regulators indicated above, all are combined geoscience and engineering regulators, with the exception of Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia which are geoscience only.

Table 4. APGO Application Fee Compared to Other Geoscience Regulators or Similar Geoscience Organizations Globally

Other Geoscience Regulators or Similar Organizations	ON (APGO)	American Institute of Prof. Geologists	European Federation of Geologists	Institute of Geologists of Ireland	Geological Society of London	Austral-Asian Institute of Mining & Metallurgy	Australian Institute of Geoscientists	S. African Council for Natural Scientific Professions
Application Fee* (several different categories of membership)	\$275	\$50	\$40 through ILB** or applicable fees through a recognized national association	\$67	\$120 (for chartered member)	\$200 (for chartered member)	\$90	\$101

*Membership application fees converted to Canadian dollars as of the exchange rate on February 23, 2011

**International Licensed Body operated by European Federation of Geologists

Conclusions

The fee charged for an application is in line with other Canadian provincial regulators, with four regulators charging more and five charging less. Of the five regulators charging less, three are combined engineering and geoscience regulators with a greater membership pool for cost disbursement.

The APGO fees are higher than other geoscience organizations outside of Canada where membership is generally voluntary. However, these organizations are national or multi-national and have a wider membership pool on which to draw. As well, the process involved in these applications is unknown and therefore not known to be comparable to the process required for registration as a geoscientist in Canada.

5. Recommendations

1. Review of the necessity and relevance of the requirements for practical training and/or work experience.
Recommendation: No action required.
2. Review of the efficiency and timeliness of decision-making as it applies to registration.
Recommendation: One of the key limiting areas noted in the efficiency and timeliness of decision-making as it applies to registration is the availability of the Executive Director & Registrar. This limiting factor has been noted by the Council of the APGO. The Council has approved the split of the

Executive Director & Registrar position and has formed a Registrar Task Force to oversee the hire of a new Registrar. The APGO is currently actively seeking a candidate for the position.

3. Review of the reasonableness of the fees charged in respect of registrations.

Recommendation: No action required at this time.

6. Implementation

As noted under Recommendations, the APGO is currently seeking a Registrar under the guidance of the Registrar Task Force implemented by Council. The goal date to have a new Registrar in place is June of 2011. The achievement of this goal is, of course, dependent on applications received for the position.

7. Statement of Approval

This limited scope Entry to Practice Review Report has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee of the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario.



March 1, 2011

Andrea Waldie, P.Ge.
Executive Director & Registrar

Date