

Guideline for Applicant Interviews to be Conducted by the Admissions Board Concerning the Fulfillment of Geoscience Knowledge Requirements

**the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia
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INTRODUCTION

This policy and procedure document is intended as an addendum to the current by-laws of the Association and reflects the currently accepted procedures as well as the by-laws under development for the revised *Geoscience Profession Act* and *Geoscience Practice Regulations*. Where accuracy is critical, please consult the current *Geoscience Profession Act* and the by-laws of the Association.

Forward

This guideline presents a suggested process for conducting an interview with an applicant for professional registration regarding the completion or fulfillment of the geoscience knowledge requirements. This suggested process is designed to demonstrate the due diligence of the APGNS Admissions Board. It is also to demonstrate consistency with policies and procedures applied by other geoscience regulatory organizations. The suggested process may be “tailored” by the Registrar and / or the Admissions Board to suit the specific situation and / or participants.

1. List of identified knowledge requirement gaps

The starting point of the interview process is the determination by the Admissions Board that the applicant has a deficiency in the academic training / knowledge requirement (Educational Units (EUs)) as defined by the Geoscience Knowledge and Experience Criteria (GKE). The Board may recommend an interview to further evaluate the deficiency.

The Registrar and / or the Admissions Board may also wish to document any concerns they may have concerning the identified knowledge gap area(s) and any items of interest or concern noted during the consideration of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

2. Identifying the Interview Subject Matter Experts

The Registrar and the Admissions Board shall identify the interview panel members. Experts may be members of the Admissions Board or may be invited interviewers. The members should be registered in good standing by APGNS or a similarly constituted professional association. Other professional experts, in the area(s) identified and to be reviewed during the interview may be appointed to the panel.

At least one of the interviewers should be an experienced practitioner in the applicant’s area of practise. A panel of three to four interviewers is recommended to provide a legally defensible position should an issue arise after an interview. A minimum of two interviewers are possible.

3. Set a date for the interview with the applicant and interviewers.

The Registrar will establish a date, time and location that is acceptable to the applicant and the members of the interview panel.

4. Information to be Provided to the Applicant Concerning the Interview

The applicant should be informed of the knowledge requirement areas that will be assessed during the interview.

The applicant should be advised of the type of information she or he may bring to the interview:

1. a copy of the academic assessment work sheet, if available, completed by the applicant;
2. any reports authored or partially authored by the applicant which concern the EU gap areas, clearly identifying the applicant authored portions;

3. a brief presentation to the interview panel concerning the EU gap areas identified (the Registrar will identify the amount of time that would be allotted for the presentation, if appropriate);
4. any course outlines that may provide evidence with regards to knowledge gained concerning the EU gap areas; and
5. any other information that the Registrar and/or the Admissions Board deems appropriate.

Any documentation to be reviewed by the panel should be provided to the Registrar in advance of the interview so that the members of the panel may review the information prior to the interview date.

The Registrar should indicate to the applicant that a decision concerning a recommendation regarding registration will not be provided at the end of the interview process. The results of the interview will be presented to the Admissions Board and a decision concerning registration will be forthcoming to the applicant from the Registrar.

5. Instructions and Materials to be Provided to the Interviewers

Instructions should be provided to the interviewers in advance of the interview date in order to allow time for interviewers to seek any clarification required from the Registrar or the Board.

The interviewers should be supplied with a copy of the application as well as a copy of the academic assessment work sheet identifying the EU gaps, the work experience record, and the transcript(s).

Individual interviewers may be requested to focus on specific EU gaps in order that they each may prepare appropriate questions prior to the interview. A lead interviewer may either be selected by the Registrar and / or the Board or the interviewers may be instructed to select a lead interviewer themselves.

The interviewers should be informed that all documents concerning the applicant and the interview are considered confidential and must be returned to the Registrar. As well, the interviewers should be informed that all discussions and reports concerning the applicant/application are also to be treated as confidential.

Each interviewer should prepare questions in the EU gap area(s) of his / her expertise, as identified by the Registrar and / or the Board, to be asked of the applicant. The initial two to four questions for an identified EU gap should be extremely foundational and relatively simple. Progressively harder and more in-depth questions should also be prepared; possibly as many as another five to ten questions. Knowledge gaps identified in the applicant's area of practice should, in particular, have additional in-depth questions.

When interviewing for EU gap fulfillment, the panel should consider the applicant's stage in their career and degree(s) obtained. For example, an international applicant with 30 years of geoscience experience and a PhD in geology may need to provide evidence of knowledge in several EU areas in which his / her practise is focused because some of the course titles on the transcripts did not clearly identify the knowledge gained. However, seeking to confirm knowledge of first year calculus may be unnecessary and / or inappropriate at this stage of his / her career, depending on their specific area of practise. A recent graduate would need to demonstrate knowledge in all the requirement areas.

Clarity must be provided to the interviewers by the Registrar and/or the Board to assist them with focusing the interview on the appropriate areas.

6. The Interview

By this time, a lead interviewer should have been selected. The lead interviewer is responsible for chairing the meeting and writing the final report which will be presented to the Registrar and / or the Board.

At the beginning of the interview, the lead interviewer:

- introduces him / herself and the other interviewers;

- informs the applicant of the purpose of the interview (i.e. to determine the applicant's knowledge in the knowledge requirement (EU) gap area(s) identified);
- informs the applicant of the general amount of time the interview will take;
- inquires as to whether the applicant has prepared a presentation or supporting materials;
- indicates whether the interview will be recorded, notes taken;
- indicates that smart phone or similar devices may not be consulted or used to look up information, and preferably they should be turned off during the interview;
- indicates that no decision will be supplied at the end of the interview; a report on the interview will be presented to the Registrar and/or Board and a decision will be made by the Admissions Board at a later date.

The lead interviewer then initiates the interview. The lead may ask the applicant to begin his / her presentation, if there is one; to introduce themselves; may ask another interviewer to identify the EU they will be seeking information on and ask that interviewer to begin his/her questions; or may him / herself identify the EU for which she / he will be seeking information and begin his/her questions.

The interviewer asking the questions begins with their simplest questions. Notes should be taken on the applicant's response including;

- familiarity with the topic;
- comfort level with the material;
- confidence in the answer provided;
- level of detail provided; and
- whether the answer was appropriate/correct.

In general, it is usually readily apparent whether applicant understands the question asked and whether he or she has an appropriate understanding of the material to provide a correct and appropriately detailed answer. Should the answers to the first few questions be correct and have sufficient detail to satisfy the interviewer, the interviewer may move on to the more in-depth questions. Should the applicant be unable to answer the initial questions, the interviewer may:

- attempt to rephrase the questions, or
- determine that there is no evidence that the knowledge has been gained and move on to the next EU gap area or indicate to the lead interviewer that s/he is finished with the questions.

As above, notes are taken on the applicant's responses. After the interviewer has completed his / her questions, the interviewer provides his / her opinion of the applicant's understanding of the EU gap identified, **but in his/her notes only – not verbally to the applicant.**

Each interviewer takes their turn asking questions of the applicant in their area of expertise. Generally, as the questions are asked, it should become readily apparent to the interviewers whether the applicant has an appropriate professional level understanding of the EU gap areas identified.

While one interviewer is asking questions, the other interviewers may choose to ask the applicant clarifying questions concerning the same subject matter. This is a decision for the panel to make.

7. Concluding the Interview

As the interview process concludes, the applicant should be offered an opportunity to provide a closing comment if she / he wishes. The applicant should then be thanked for their time, reminded that a decision will be forthcoming from the Admissions Board, and excused.

8. Interview Panel Discussion and Report

The interview panel then reviews their notes and discusses the results. The notes may be supplied to the lead interviewer at this time or typed up and supplied to the lead interviewer at an agreed upon time. The lead interviewer then completes a final report, indicating the opinions of the interviewers, and any details thought appropriate, to the Admissions Board.

The panel must conclude that some, all, or none of the noted EU gap areas may have been satisfied through the interview process. Once the Admissions Board has received the interviewers' final report, the Board may determine, based on the interviewers' recommendation(s):

- that some or all of the EU gaps have been satisfied and the application should proceed;
- that the EU gaps have not been addressed and additional evaluation of the applicant is required (e.g. a second interview; confirmatory exams; etc.); or
- that the required knowledge has not been completed or gained by the applicant and the application should be rejected or that remedial action should be recommended.

General Notes on Interviewing

It is generally desirable to make the applicant as comfortable as possible since the interview process can be quite stressful for the applicant.

A closed door for privacy and an offer of a glass of water, coffee, or tea can help lower the stress level.

The interview should be kept at a professional level. The topics of family, recent holidays, country of origin, religion, etc., should **not** be introduced by the interviewers. The discussion should remain focused on knowledge acquired by the applicant. Should the applicant bring these topics forward, allow the applicant to express him / herself (unless the topic is inappropriate) and then return to the business of the interview.