

**Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS) / Geoscientists Nova Scotia  
A Brief History**

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Members of the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS) will recall that for several years prior to 2001, there had been a series of discussions and meetings regarding the regulation of the practice of geoscience in Nova Scotia. On several occasions there was consideration given to revising the *Nova Scotia Engineering Profession Act* to enable the registration of Professional Geoscientists along with Professional Engineers under one legislated Act that would encompass both professions.

The development process actually goes back to 1990, when there was interest across Canada for the registration of professional geoscientists in joint associations with engineers. This interest followed the long-established example of the engineering association in Alberta. Meetings within the Nova Scotia geoscience community lead to the formation of an ad-hoc committee of geoscientists (the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS)) and discussions with the **Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia (APENS)** in 1992.

As a result of these discussions, the principle of a joint engineering and geoscience association was presented and approved at the APENS Annual General Meeting in September of 1994. It was initially proposed that geoscientists could be included and regulated within a revised engineering profession act, however, after much work and many discussions, the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act*, sponsored by the Honorable Jay Abbass, MLA, was submitted and passed first reading in the Legislature in 1996. However, the proposed act was withdrawn later that year because of unresolved issues related to mutual recognition of professional definitions between APENS and the Nova Scotia Association of Architects (NSAA).

By late 1999, APENS was again working on a revision of the *Engineering Profession Act* and once again there was an intensive effort undertaken by representatives of APENS and APGNS. That work resulted in *An Act Respecting the Engineering and Geoscience Professions* which was sponsored by the Honorable James DeWolfe, MLA. That proposed act went to first reading in April of 2001. Work was continued at the Committee level to draft the regulations and by-laws for a joint Association. But once again the Act was withdrawn because of unresolved issues between APENS and NSAA.

By this time, events on the national stage mandated immediate action to establish professional geoscience legislation in Nova Scotia, to register professional geoscientists, and create a regulatory body, the **Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS)**. The Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA) had implemented new regulations as the National Instrument 43-101, which required that any geological reports for public release be prepared by a "Qualified Person" or "QP". A

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QP is defined by NI 43-101 as a Professional Engineer or Professional Geoscientist who is a member in good standing of a professional association, which is established by statute or legislation and has disciplinary powers.

Legislation to register and regulate Professional Geoscientists was already in place in joint Associations in six provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland), as well as in the Northwest Territories. Work was also underway that would lead to legislation and geoscience-only associations in Ontario and Quebec. By this time the Nova Scotia Department of Environment (NSDOE) was moving to require a professional designation for individuals undertaking environmental assessment, remediation and compliance work in the province. In response, APGNS, was registered under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and was set up to provide recognition for suitably qualified geoscientists. The NSDOE agreed to accept an APGNS registered Professional Geoscientist (P.Geo.) as an environmental site professional (SP) under the guidelines for management of contaminated sites in Nova Scotia and also to identify APGNS as a transitional society leading to a legislated professional association.

APGNS developed and submitted the *Geoscience Profession Act* to the Nova Scotia Legislature, sponsored by the Honorable James DeWolfe, MLA. So, APGNS was established, first under the Nova Scotia Societies Act, and eventually mandated by Nova Scotia legislation, the *Geoscience Profession Act*, which was given Royal Assent on May 30, 2002. The legislation established APGNS as a self-regulating professional organization with the mandate to protect the public through registration of Professional Geoscientists and regulation of professional geoscience practice in Nova Scotia.

The *Geoscience Profession Act* was modeled on the proposed engineering and geoscience professions act, as well as professional legislation in place in other provincial and territorial jurisdictions. While working with APENS toward the regulation of professional geoscience practice under joint legislation, APGNS was granted observer status with the Canadian Council of Professional Geoscientists (CCPG). On proclamation of the Act, APGNS was recognized as a Constituent Association (CA) of CCPG and the Canadian Geoscience Standards Board (CGSB). CCPG has since rebranded to Geoscientists Canada (GC) and the Board has been redesignated as a Council. APGNS is also represented on the CEO's Group, the Admissions Officers Group, the National Finance Officers Group, the National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE) and Advisory (NPPEAC) Committees, and other advisory bodies. This participation provided significant guidance and insight into the form and function of professional regulation in Canadian and international jurisdictions.

In 2013, APGNS underwent a rebranding exercise and Council approved a revised logo and, consistent with other Canadian regulators, the brand name Geoscientists Nova Scotia was adopted. There was no change to the official legislated name or logo of the Association.

APGNS registers individual members as Professional Geoscientists, Members-in-Training, or with a Licence-to-Practice. Corporate registration, the Certificate of Authorization, is also available. Registration as a member in APGNS is under terms which are similar to those for Professional

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Geoscientists and Professional Engineers in other Canadian jurisdictions, both joint engineering and geoscience associations as well as geoscience-only associations (i.e., Ontario and Quebec). APGNS applicants must meet the specific educational requirements, the Geoscience Knowledge and Experience Criteria for Professional Registration in Canada (GKE), as developed by Canadian Geoscience Standards Council (CGSC), adopted by APGNS Council and as administered by the APGNS Admissions Board.

Applicants for professional registration must also present good character and professional references as well as to document a minimum of four (4) years relevant, progressive geoscience work experience, usually through detailed work experience diaries. The APGNS Council has approved the Geoscience Competency Profile and the Competency Based Assessment (CBA) program for use by the Admissions Board. Prior to registration, an applicant must successfully complete the National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE). Members are required to maintain and annually demonstrate their professional development and competence through the Continuing Professional Development and Competency Assurance Program (CPD) as well as to re-affirm acceptance of the APGNS Code of Ethics.