

National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE) updated February 2023

Introduction to the NPPE

Successful completion of the National Professional Practice Exam (NPPE) is required by most professional geoscience associations in Canada, including the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS), as a prerequisite for professional registration and licensure. Successful completion of the NPPE is also required for transfer of professional registration in most jurisdictions.

The NPPE is a computer-based exam, set for APGNS candidates, and consists of 110 multiple choice questions with two- and one-half hours allotted for completion.

General Information

All applicants for registration by APGNS are required to write and pass the professional practice exam prior to registration. The exam is also available to current members on request. It is anticipated that applicants for a License to Practice (LTP) will have successfully completed the exam as offered by their home association.

The NPPE is prepared under the supervision of the National Professional Practice Exam Advisory Committee (NPPEAC). The exam is administered by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Alberta (APEGA). The content of the exam has been developed by the NPPEAC, which includes representatives appointed by APGNS. Additional information regarding the exam is available on the NPPE website (www.NPPEexam.ca).

Candidates may apply to write the NPPE by completing the APGNS application form, attached to this document or available on the Association website (www.geoscientistsns.ca).

The application form must be accompanied by proof of payment of the applicable fee. The fee to write the exam in Nova Scotia in 2023 is \$325.00 + HST (see Table below for 2023 rates). Candidates should make cheques or money orders payable to “APGNS”, or alternatively, payment may be made by e-transfer (info@geoscientistsns.ca) or payment may be made using the secure e-payment system available on the Association website (www.geoscientistsns.ca).

APGNS National Professional Practice – 2023 Exam Fee:

	Total Payable (plus HST)
Written in Nova Scotia	\$325.00
Written within Canada	\$375.00
Written within USA	\$375.00
Written Overseas	\$450.00

Engineers Nova Scotia Workshop

Engineers Nova Scotia offers a workshop to help prepare candidates to write the NPPE. This one day workshop covers the topics which are applicable to engineering and/or geoscience, including law, professional practice, business and professional ethics. These are the same subjects that are tested in the NPPE. APGNS's recommends that candidates attend the workshop.

Candidates must apply, and pay the applicable fees to attend the workshop, directly to Engineers Nova Scotia. Information is available on the Engineers Nova Scotia website (www.engineersnovascotia.ca).

2023 Exam and Registration Dates

Year	NPPE Date	Registration Deadline
2023	January 23-25, 2023	December 2, 2022
	April 3-5, 2023	Feb 10, 2023
	June 5-7, 2023	April 28, 2023
	Sept 11-13, 2023	July 14, 2023
	November 6-8, 2023	Sept 29, 2023

2024 Exam and Registration Dates

Year	NPPE Date	Registration Deadline
2024	January 22-24, 2024	December 1, 2023
	April 8-10, 2024	Feb 16, 2024
	June 3-5, 2024	April 26, 2024
	Sept 9-11, 2024	July 12, 2024
	November 18-20, 2024	Oct 4, 2024

Study Materials

There are several reference texts available for exam preparation. These study materials are available directly from the publishers, at prices which are applicable to APGNS candidates.

The recommended texts are:

- Canadian Professional Engineering and Geoscience: Practice & Ethics, Sixth Edition (2014 Gordon C. Andrews; Nelson Education, ISBN 13: 978-0-17-650990-3); and
- Practical Law of Architecture, Engineering, and Geoscience, Second Canadian Edition (2011 Samuels & Sanders; ISBN 13: 978-0-13-700408-9).

Several guidebooks and pamphlets may also be available for download from Industry Canada which may also be useful references, for example:

[A Guide to Copyright](#)

[A Guide to Industrial Designs](#)

[A Guide to Patents](#)

[A Guide to Trademarks](#)

[Royal Bank of Canada article – “The Soul of Professionalism”](#)

Scope and Blueprint of the National Professional Practice Examination

The computer-based exam is comprised of 110 multiple-choice questions. It is a “closed book” exam and two- and one-half hours in duration.

The exam subject areas and the questions are common to the professions of engineering and geoscience.

The exam questions are broken down into seven (7) subject areas as follows:

A. Professionalism (10%)

- 1) Definition and interpretation of professional status
- 2) The role and responsibilities of a professional in society
- 3) The role and responsibilities of a professional to management
- 4) Professional conduct, ethical standards and codes
- 5) Safety and loss management - the professional’s duties
- 6) Environmental responsibilities

B. Ethics (20%)

- 1) The role of ethics in society
- 2) Classical and modern ethical theories and principles
- 3) Codes of ethics of professional engineers and geoscientists in Canada
- 4) Ethical standards and codes and their relationship to the conduct of a professional
- 5) Common ethical issues and dilemmas; making ethical decisions

C. Professional Practice (27%)

- 1) Professional accountability for work, workplace issues, responsibilities and standards of practice
- 2) Relations with other professionals and non-professionals; business practices
- 3) Statutory and non-statutory standards and codes of practice
- 4) Insurance and risk management and quality management; due diligence
- 5) Environmental responsibilities and sustainable development
- 6) Use of software, computers and internet-based tools; liability for software errors
- 7) Documentation authentication and control
- 8) Duty to inform; “whistleblowing”

D. Communication (1%)

- 1) Legal, ethical and practical aspects of communication
- 2) The Professional relationship
- 3) Communication skills

E. Law for professional practice (23%)

- 1) The Canadian legal system and international considerations, basics of business organizations
- 2) Contract Law - elements, principles, types, discharge, breach, interpretation etc.
- 3) Tort Law - Elements, application of principles, interpretation, liabilities of various kinds
- 4) Civil code in Quebec and common law in the rest of Canada
- 5) Business employment and labour law
- 6) Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
- 7) Intellectual Property - patents, trademarks, software issues, copyright
- 8) Expert Witness
- 9) Construction liens
- 10) International law
- 11) Environmental law
- 12) Workers compensation and occupational health & safety
- 13) Human rights & privacy legislation

F. Professional law (8%)

- 1) The Acts, Regulations & by-laws, Provincial and Territorial Acts
- 2) Codes of ethics; conflicts of interest
- 3) Admission to the professions
- 4) Illegal practice; enforcement against unlicensed practice & misuse of title
- 5) Professional Associations & Technical Societies

G. Regulation & Discipline processes (11%)

- 1) Discipline & enforcement procedures
- 2) Professional inspection; practice reviews of individuals
- 3) Response to complaints
- 4) Licensing corporations & practice review of firms
- 5) Response to unethical or incompetent practice; consequences of unethical practice
- 6) Canadian & international mobility
- 7) Continuing professional development (CPD)
- 8) Use of seals and stamps

The examination pass mark is 65%*.

Note that candidates are advised to answer all of the exam questions and they will not be penalized for wrong answers. The examination is graded as a "pass" or "fail" with a detailed mastery report, including the grade, available **only** to candidates who fail.

***The examination grade, as issued, is final.**

The pass mark may be slightly adjusted for individual sessions based on valid psychometric factors which are designed to ensure that over time, and among groups of candidates, the pass-fail decisions are made on a consistent basis.

Sample Questions

Each question is multiple-choice with four possible answers. Previous examination questions are not available, however, sample test questions are provided below:

1. According to most Provincial and Territorial Acts, which activity by a professional member would be considered UNETHICAL?

- A. Not charging a fee for presenting a speech
- B. Signing plans prepared by an unknown person without thoroughly reviewing those plans
- C. Reviewing the work of another member with that member's consent
- D. Providing professional services as a consultant

B. is correct. Most Provincial and Territorial Acts stipulate that before professionals sign plans that were not prepared by themselves or under their direct supervision, they must first thoroughly review those plans. Failing to do so means that the professional failed to comply with the Act and, therefore, was in violation of the Code of Ethics.

2. Which of the following is an example of fraudulent, contractual misrepresentation?

- A. A party is coerced into signing a contract by means of intimidation
- B. A party knowingly makes false statements to induce another party into a contract
- C. A party induces his son-in-law to sign an unfair contract
- D. A party unknowingly provides false information about a portion of a contract

B. is correct. Knowingly providing false information to induce a contract is considered fraudulent and misrepresentation.

3. Contractual disputes of a technical nature may be most expeditiously and effectively solved through:

- A. A lawsuit
- B. Court appeals
- C. Contract renegotiations
- D. Arbitration

D. is correct. Arbitration provides an effective, expeditious resolution to technical disputes.

4. Which type of original work below is automatically protected by copyright upon creation?

- A. Paintings
- B. Inventions
- C. Clothing designs
- D. Signatures

A. is correct. Of the works listed above, only a painting is protected by copyright law.

5. In order for compensation to be awarded to a plaintiff in a tort liability case, the defendant must have:

- A. Caused injury to the plaintiff
- B. Been willfully negligent
- C. Signed a contract of performance
- D. Performed under supervision

A. is correct. Injury is one of three criteria that must be met for compensation to be awarded in a tort liability case.

6. Which of the following is the most common job activity of top-level managers?

- A. Writing and reading corporate financial reports
- B. Developing and testing new products
- C. Designing and implementing production systems
- D. Directing and interacting with people

D. is correct. Most top-level managers spend most of their time interacting with other people.

7. The professional's standard of care and skill establishes the point at which a professional:

- A. May or may not charge a fee for services
- B. Has the duty to apply "reasonable care"
- C. May be judged negligent in the performance of services
- D. Has met the minimum requirements for registration

C. is correct. The standard of care is used to judge whether or not a professional has been negligent in the performance of services.

8. To effectively reduce liability exposure, the professional engineer, geologist or geophysicist should

- A. Pursue continuing educational opportunities
- B. Work under the supervision of a senior engineer, geologist or geophysicist
- C. Maintain professional standards in practice
- D. Provide clients with frequent progress reports

C. is correct. Maintaining professional standards of practice is the most effective way of reducing liability exposure.

Failing the Exam

The pass mark on the NPPE is 65%. The exam mark is final as issued.

To date, approximately 98% of APGNS candidates have passed the exam. APGNS candidates will be permitted to write the NPPE a maximum number of four successive times (subject to exemption by the Registrar), before privileges are revoked.

If the applicant is not successful on the fourth attempt, the applicant will not be permitted to write the NPPE (privileges will be revoked), for one calendar year.

If the applicant is not successful on the fifth or subsequent attempts, privileges will again be withdrawn for one calendar year in each case.

If the applicant is not successful on the fifth attempt, the application for registration will be subject to review by the APGNS Admissions Board. As a result of, or in preparation for the review, the Admissions Board may, at its sole discretion, require additional information, or specify remedial action, or dismiss the application.

Questions?

If you have questions or require assistance, please contact the APGNS Registrar, David C. Carter, P.Geo., at registrar@geoscientistsns.ca or by phone (902) 420-9928.

The application to write the NPPE is attached.

Application to Write the National Professional Practice Exam

Name: (Please print) _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Prov/State: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Daytime Telephone: (_____) _____

Date of Birth: _____

Have you applied for membership in APGNS? ____ Yes ____ No Member # _____

I would like to write the NPPE on: (date) _____

I would like to write the NPPE at: (location) _____

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Information:

Please see the APGNS website at www.geoscientistsns.ca for more information regarding study materials, scope and syllabus of the exam and sample questions.

Geoscientists Nova Scotia highly recommends enrolling in the one day preparation workshop offered by Engineers Nova Scotia (see the website at <https://www.engineersnovascotia.ca>).

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Written within USA	\$375.00
Written Overseas	\$450.00

If applicants wish to the exam write outside of Nova Scotia, additional fees are applied.

Fees are payable in Canadian Funds, payable to 'Geoscientists Nova Scotia'.

Payment for writing in NS may also be made using the secure e-payment option on the Association website (www.geoscientistsns.ca). Others should contact the Registrar.

Please submit the **application form, along with proof of payment** to:

The Registrar, APGNS, P.O. Box 91, Main Station., Enfield, N.S., B2T 1C6

ATTENTION:

Applications will **NOT** be accepted after the Registration Deadline Date. Candidates who **request a deferral to the next exam session, after the Deadline Date, or cancel, after the Deadline Date, or fail to write the exam, or do not pass the exam** will **NOT** have their fees refunded nor will a credit be carried over to the next exam session.

The fee to request a deferral to the next exam session submitted after the Registration Deadline Date is \$50.00 plus HST = \$57.50.

Eligibility to write:

All new applicants for registration as a member of the Association are required to successfully complete the NPPE, within one year of their acceptance, and prior to professional registration. A registered Member-in-Training (MIT), with at least two years of acceptable geoscience work experience may, with approval of the Registrar, be eligible to apply to write the NPPE.

Time Limitations for Writing Exams:

You may choose the examination session at which you wish to write the examination. If you do not attempt to write the exam within a one-year period (5 exam sessions) following notification of your application assessment, your application will be terminated.

It is advised that you consult the Office of the Registrar for Engineers Nova Scotia with respect to the schedule and requirements for the exam workshop.