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| <b>Policy Name:</b> | Communications Policy and Procedures |                      |              |
| <b>Policy No:</b>   | COM-01                               | <b>Version Date:</b> | 21 July 2026 |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS or Geoscientists Nova Scotia or Association) has a legislated mandate, under the *Geoscience Profession Act* of 2002, c. 7 s. 1 to regulate the practice of geoscience in Nova Scotia and to register professional geoscientists in accordance with the APGNS By-laws, policies, and procedures.

The Communication Policy and Procedures (policy) is an addendum to the current *Geoscience Profession Act* (2002) and APGNS By-laws and reflects the currently accepted procedures. Where accuracy is critical, please consult the *Geoscience Profession Act* and the By-laws, as amended.

APGNS recognizes the necessity for consistent messaging to geoscience stakeholders and the public with respect to geoscience practice. The Policy provides a framework to facilitate internal and external communications.

The goal of this policy is to ensure concise and effective flow of information within and external to APGNS in a changing social, economic, and technological environment. Communication has been identified as an Association priority, needed to promote licensure compliance and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The primary modes of communication may include, but are not limited to:

- e-newsletter;
- *GeoGazette* newsletter;
- Association website ([www.geoscientistsns.ca](http://www.geoscientistsns.ca));
- social media accounts (e.g. LinkedIn); and,
- emails to the membership from the President and Registrar.

Licensure awareness, compliance and enforcement are contingent upon the Association's ability to communicate effectively with Registrants, the public, government, and industry stakeholders. Registrants need to be informed of the current benefits of Membership, changes to professional geoscience standards, and legislative and policy changes regarding professional practice.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The Policy is intended to guide Association activities pertaining to communications. It is anticipated that this document will evolve under the direction of the APGNS Communications Committee and that it will be reviewed and updated as required. It is intended that the Committee will work cooperatively with the Registrar, Editorial Board (Executive Committee and any appointees), and Council, to seek input, support and feedback from Registrants. The Policy provides procedures for engaging Registrants, the public, government, and industry stakeholders, and non-compliant practitioners. Effective communications should enhance the profile of APGNS and promote professional geoscience practice in society.

## **3. COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **3.1. Scope / Jurisdiction**

The Communications Committee (Committee) is a standing committee of APGNS, whose members are approved annually by Council. The Committee's mandate is to ensure licensure and compliance awareness among the public, registered and future members. The composition, structure and operating procedures for the Committee will be in accordance with the most current version of the Communications Committee - Terms of Reference (TOR). The Committee will review the TOR annually and recommend revisions for consideration and approval by Council. Council may also direct changes to the TOR based on the needs of the Association.

The Newsletter Editor, Website Coordinator, and Social Media Coordinator, all under the guidance of the Registrar, will assist with identification and development of content as outlined herein. The Editorial Board will review content and approve or recommend changes as necessary.

### **3.2. Resources**

It is anticipated that Council as well as Boards, Committees, Task Groups, and members should be considered as potential sources of information to be distributed in a timely manner on an appropriate platform.

## **4. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

### **4.1. Licensure Awareness and Compliance**

Licensure awareness and compliance is central to the Association's mandate and goals. Awareness of the technical and ethical standards required for registration and professional practice is a critical and integral part of professional licensure.

#### **4.2. Value for the Members**

When effectively communicated, the benefits of professional geoscience practice will serve as an incentive for registration and encourage Registrant participation in Association business. Messaging to members should emphasize the following:

- Awareness of the professional's responsibilities in providing professional work products
- Awareness of leading practice for determining current professional practice standards
- Awareness of professional practice liability risks and leading practice for its minimalization

#### **4.3. Objectives and Guiding Principles of the Communications Policy**

The objectives of the Policy are to provide direction to the Committee to:

- inform registrants of the Association's efforts and accomplishments on their behalf;
- create awareness of the Association among government and public stakeholders;
- increase collaboration with similarly regulated organizations in Nova Scotia, as well as other Canadian geoscience profession regulators, and Geoscientists Canada; and,
- encourage licensure awareness and compliance; *i.e.* encourage the professional registration of all practicing geoscientists in Nova Scotia.

The guiding principles of the Policy are to:

- communicate early and as often as possible;
- identify the best agents, channels, or formats to communicate the information;
- combine written communications with verbal and face-to-face communications;
- be accessible and invite feedback from members, stakeholders and the public, *i.e.* encourage effective two-way communication; and,
- store and share all communications.

#### **4.4. Key Messages**

The key messages to the geoscience stakeholders and the public are:

1. Geoscientists Nova Scotia represents and supports its members through the following actions:
  - a. maintain open and respectful channels of communication;
  - b. inform members of key geoscience activities and opportunities;
  - c. liaise with government and other regulatory organizations to raise awareness of professional geoscience practice standards and guidelines;

- d. provide awareness of opportunities for continuing professional development and education; and,
  - e. provide awareness of group benefits and peer recognition.
2. ***“It’s the Law”.*** Compliance with the *Geoscience Profession Act* is not optional. An individual or corporate entity practicing geoscience or offering geoscience services in Nova Scotia is required to be registered with APGNS.
  3. Geoscientists Nova Scotia serves the public through professional geoscience registration, enforcement, and discipline, should the need arise, of its registrants, in keeping with other professional geoscience regulators across Canada.
  4. Geoscientists Nova Scotia contributes to the development and maintenance of foundational documents such as the National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE), the NPPE Blueprint and examination content.
  5. Geoscientists Nova Scotia operational activities are wholly funded by the membership and corporate support. No public taxpayer funding is required in its paramount duty and the paramount duty of every registrant to protect public well-being and the environment in professional geoscience activities.

## 5. WEBSITE

The Website Coordinator and the Registrar will have administrator privileges and access to the website. They are tasked with updating the website with content that is current and applicable. Forms, schedules, policies and procedures, member lists, etc. will be updated regularly.

The Committee will remain current with the potential for upgrades (value for the members) to services and functionality that can be offered through the website (e.g., payment, search data management). A review and revision of the website structure may be required every two or three years to consider new platforms, security improvements, and functional updates. The results of the review may have budget implications; therefore, any update that will require expenditures in excess of the ongoing or annual operating expenses shall be directed to Council for approval or consideration in future budgets.

Access to member, stakeholder, and public information will be maintained and streamlined as much as possible. For example, access to information on the *Geoscience Profession Act*, By-laws, as well as Association Policies and Procedures, Professional Practice Guidelines and Standards of Practice, and the Association’s strategic planning will be a priority. Biographies and/or profiles of new members, promotion of Association affinity programs, etc., may also be considered. Development of a “member-only” section with an online application and status updates is an on-going goal for website development.

## 6. GEOGAZETTE NEWSLETTER

The **GeoGazette** is the official publication of Geoscientists Nova Scotia, and is to be published at least once per year.

Submissions that will be accepted for publication, include:

- **Topical Articles**; normally 1000 to 2000 words in length; for example, a discussion of the interaction of professional geoscience practice and Canadian society; or to present new research results on a topic of interest to the geoscience community;
- **Conference or meeting reports**; normally 1000 to 2000 words in length; provide a review of a geoscience meeting and its implications to the Association and the geoscience community; or
- **Regular Features**; normally less than 1000 words in length; for example, book reviews and commentary; activity reports from the Universities or Council; message from the President, Registrar, Executive Director, Geoscience Canada Director or Representative; editorials; “geotravels” articles; letters to the editor as well as comment or reply.

Topical Articles (as above) will be considered for acceptance and publication based on the following criteria:

- The subject matter must
  - fall within the broad scope of geoscience and geoscience practice, as defined by the **Geoscience Profession Act**; and,
  - be of interest to the APGNS Registrants; as approved by the Editorial Board.
- Articles must be
  - technically sound and readily understood by a non-specialist with a geoscience background;
  - well-illustrated, with good use made of simple line drawings, maps, and/or photographs to express concepts clearly; and,
  - normally 1000 to 2000 words in length.
- Any controversial matters are treated rationally and logically, without bias or personal attacks.

Examples of subject material that should be reviewed and approved by the Editorial Board include, but are not limited to:

- news releases to the public of any kind;

- reports on APGNS Council activities or other APGNS business, including policy statements on legislation, regulations, by-laws, professional guidelines or standards of practice;
- advertisements, including member and third-party generated content;
- job postings;
- member news, biographies; and,
- articles and editorials.

Examples of subject material on which the Newsletter Editor will have direct copy authority include:

- member events (social functions, professional development opportunities); and,
- member photos, and news of associated organizations.

Each issue will show the Volume and Issue number, and follow a general template, as may edited from time to time.

As per Association policy, invoices for goods or services applicable to the Association will be directed to the APGNS office. Invoices must be authorized by the Executive Director and payments will be made by the Treasurer as per Association policy. Similarly, payments directed to the Association must be directed to the APGNS office, or to the attention of the Treasurer.

The newsletter must include, on the inside cover, first page, or on the publication credits page, a standard legal indemnity disclaimer.

## **7. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Geoscientists Nova Scotia social media platforms may include LinkedIn, and other platforms as approved by Council. The Committee will designate a representative to work with the Registrar to maintain editorial review and update content. This policy is designed to be adaptable, applying to all current and potential future new social media platforms without requiring revision as new platforms emerge.

The Social Media Coordinator and Registrar will have direct copy authority over the following types of posts:

- Notification of Association meetings or business;
- Items from the Newsletter or Website;
- Member events (social functions, professional development opportunities); and,
- Other information as directed by Council.

Subject material that should be reviewed and approved by the Editorial Board may include, but are not limited to:

- news releases to the public of any kind;
- reports on APGNS Council activities or other APGNS business, including policy statements on legislation, regulations, by-laws, professional guidelines or standards of practice;
- advertisements, including member and third party generated; and,
- job postings.

## **8. ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER**

The electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) is a flexible communications asset that is published and sent by email to registrants. It is the intention of the Association to issue electronic newsletters regularly throughout each operational year, with the goal being that e-newsletters are issued quarterly (4 times per year).

Developed and distributed using an online communications platform (e.g. MailChimp), the e-newsletter is a web-based tool that is easily customized to reflect the Association's brand and present content that is important and relevant to its members. The newsletter is a cost-effective asset that delivers information in a timely manner.

The Registrar maintains a content calendar for planning purposes, to which APGNS Executive and Council members can contribute. The Registrar drafts the e-newsletter content and provides a draft for review to the President.

Examples of subject material:

- Events related to the geoscience community; and,
- Updates about Association operations, member news, updates to forms and technology platforms, registration processes, financial transactions and reporting, professional practice development, career and volunteer opportunities, Council contact information, and information received from Geoscience Canada.

The e-newsletter will contain the information required for members to contact the Association Council, Registrar, Treasurer, Council appointees, and others as applicable to the message. Facilitation of two-way communication for members with the Association is a priority established within the 2026-2028 Strategic Plan.

**Approved by APGNS Council: 4 August 2026**

**Review & Approval History**

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**July 2028**