



Continuing Professional Development Guidelines

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1. Introduction

1.1 Geoscientists Nova Scotia

The Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia (APGNS or Geoscientists Nova Scotia) has a mandate under the Geoscience Profession Act (2002) to regulate the practice of geoscience in Nova Scotia and register professional geoscientists in accordance with its by-laws, policies and procedures. To practice geoscience in Nova Scotia a person must be registered as a professional geoscientist in good standing with Geoscientists Nova Scotia, the licensing body for professional geoscientists and members-in-training (MITs) who practice or work on projects in the province.

This guideline is an addendum to the Geoscience Profession Act and the APGNS by-laws and reflects the currently accepted procedures. Where accuracy is critical, please consult the Geoscience Profession Act and the By-laws.

1.2 Continuing Professional Development

The practice of professional geoscience is diverse, and the scope of practice varies widely between disciplines and sub-disciplines. Factors affecting professional geoscience practice are constantly changing, and professional geoscientists must respond to these changes. The changes may have impacts on the profession such as changes to regulations, codes, and standards, or they may have impacts to the public interest and how geoscientists practice their profession, such as environmental protection, indigenous issues, climate change, and community and stakeholder concerns. New techniques and technologies are rapidly evolving, and professionals must stay current with these changes.

The maintenance and demonstration of competency through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a requirement for independently practicing professionals. While most independently practicing professionals either practice or manage the practice of geoscience, some do not practice directly, but use their professional and technical knowledge and experience in management positions or as board members. In either case, registered geoscientists are expected to exercise knowledge and a specific skillset acquired through 'member-directed learning' to enable continued education and experience gained during their careers. The status and confidence afforded to Registrants as they apply their knowledge and skillsets is an extension of professional practice; maintenance and growth of this knowledge and their skillsets are just as important for Registrants who are leaders, managers, or board members as it is for those working in technical positions.

This is inherent to all self-regulating professions.

The CPD program establishes a minimum benchmark for professional development. It is the responsibility of the professional geoscientist to assess his or her professional development needs, using this guide as a reference in determining the minimum requirement.

This guide provides flexibility for geoscientists to undertake activities that provide the greatest benefit

to them in their professional practice. It is also intended to recognize that professional geoscience practice may evolve over time and in response to several factors or requirements.

The Act, APGNS By-Laws, and the Code of Ethics require that professional geoscientists practice only in areas in which they are competent. A professional geoscientist is also called on to maintain and enhance their own competence, to contribute to the advancement of knowledge of the profession, and to encourage other geoscientists and employees to improve their knowledge and skills.

2. Continuing Professional Development Program Requirements

To assist Registrants in meeting the obligations of the geoscience profession to maintain their competencies and keep their knowledge and skills current, APGNS's CPD requirements are aligned with the four other Atlantic Canadian regulators of engineering and geoscience¹ who conform to common principles in their CPD Programs.²

Regardless of the reporting method required, each jurisdiction will require:

- Record of activities - Registrants shall maintain a record of each activity within the four (4) professional development categories detailed in Section 2.5 of this document.
- Current employment - Registrants shall identify or update their current job title and employer.

2.1 Level of Effort Required

The CPD program requires a specified minimum level of participation, expressed as a professional development hour (PDH). A PDH is defined as any hour spent on professional development. Registrants may report activities in up to four (4) categories, as listed in Section 2.5, with the Ethical Practice Learning and Regulatory Learning categories having annual mandatory minimum requirements.

To meet the program requirements:

- Registrants must complete at least 30 PDHs per year, across four categories:
 - Ethical Practice Learning (minimum of 2 PDHs).
 - Regulatory Learning (minimum of 1 PDH).
 - Technical Learning.
 - Communication and Leadership.

The same activity cannot be claimed in multiple categories.

¹ Engineers Nova Scotia; The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick; Engineers PEI; and Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Newfoundland and Labrador.

² Registrants are required to conform to the reporting methods for each jurisdiction in which they are licensed. It is the intent of the regulators to align their reporting systems so that Registrants will only need to report to their home jurisdiction if they are registered with multiple Atlantic regulators.

2.2 Deferrals and Carryover

Registrants who do not meet the 30 PDH requirement in a given year may defer a maximum of five (5) PDHs by making a declaration when reporting annual CPD activities. Deferrals are not permitted in the Ethical Practice Learning and Regulatory Learning categories, as Registrants should refresh their ethical and regulatory knowledge annually.

Registrants must agree to reconcile their deferred PDHs the following year, while also completing the 30 PDHs required for that year. For example, if a Registrant has only accumulated 25 PDHs and therefore is short five PDHs in the current year, they must make up the deficiency in the following year by accruing and reporting at least 35 PDHs.

Deferrals will not be granted for consecutive years.

PDH credits accumulated in the Technical Learning and Communication and Leadership categories in excess of those claimed in that area may be carried forward for a maximum of one year from the date of original completion. Carryover is not permitted in Ethical Practice or Regulatory Learning categories, as Registrants must refresh their knowledge in these areas annually. A total of 10 PDH may be carried over.

Registrants must reconcile their carryover of PDHs the following year, to only meet the minimum 30 PDHs required for that year. For example, a Registrant accumulates 40 PDH and reports 30 PDH in Year 1 and reports a carryover of 10 PDH to the following year. In Year 2, the Registrant must accumulate 20 PDH and apply the carryover of 10 PDH to meet the 30 PDH requirement. If 25 PDH are accumulated in Year 2, then 5 PDH of the carryover amount can be applied to meet the requirement, and the remaining 5 PDH are voided for that year.

Carryover will not be allowed for consecutive years.

Registrants granted exemptions from professional development reporting will retain any available carryover accumulated prior to the start of their exemption period.

2.3 Exemptions

Members-in-Training (MIT): MITs are not required to submit professional development reports but are encouraged to participate in the program so that they understand the requirements and establish good professional development reporting practice which will be mandatory upon professional licensure.

Registrants: Upon request to the Registrar, exemptions may be granted for:

- **On leave:** If a Registrant is on parental leave, not practicing due to a medical issue, or on leave as a family/compassionate caregiver for more than six (6) months in a calendar year, they may apply for an exemption from CPD activities during the annual license renewal process.
- **Retired:** Members registered as “retired”, or a “Life/Honorary Life” member who has declared as not practicing or retired from practice. Life/Honorary Life members must submit CPD reports if they are practicing.
- **Not Practicing:** If a Registrant is not practicing for more than six (6) months in a calendar year,

they may apply for an exemption from CPD activities during the annual license renewal process.

- **Special:** Unique or special cases will be given consideration.

In discussion with the Registrar, new Registrants may pro-rate their annual CPD reporting requirements in the year in which they first become registered.

APGNS will advise Registrants of the acceptability of their application prior to the individual exercising an exemption.

Except for “Retired”, exemptions may be granted for a second consecutive year in exceptional circumstances. Registrants absent from work for more than 12 consecutive months may resign their registration with APGNS in good standing and request reinstatement on return to work.

Registrants who take a temporary break from their practice will be encouraged to continue their professional development program during that time.

Registrants granted relief under this policy remain bound by the *Geoscience Profession Act*, applicable regulations, the APGNS By-laws, and Code of Ethics. Upon expiration of the exemption period, Registrants must resume CPD activities in accordance with program requirements.

2.4 Learning Methods

While continuing education is important for reinforcing knowledge in key technical, leadership, ethical and regulatory areas that support the protection of the public and the environment, dictating how Registrants educate themselves is not necessary.

Formal courses, self-directed learning, seminars, podcasts, workshops, presentations, participation on technical committees, mentorship and paper publication are some of the methods that can be employed. Registrants are encouraged to use multiple learning methods – both in-person and online - and must be familiar with the types and record- keeping requirements for each method.

2.5 Professional Development Categories

PDHs may be obtained in four (4) categories:

- Ethical Practice Learning.
- Regulatory Learning.
- Technical Learning.
- Communication and Leadership.

Registrants should use their judgment in selecting professional development activities that relate to their individual scope of practice to maintain competency and meet their obligations as professional geoscientists, and that contribute to their regulatory compliance and continued competency in their pursuit of public protection.

For example, Registrants in strictly technical roles may choose primarily technical learning to maintain

competency, combined with enough ethical practice and regulatory learning to meet the mandatory minimums and to stay knowledgeable about their responsibilities. They may also choose communication and leadership learning that fulfills job duties. In contrast, Registrants in management roles may benefit more from focusing on communication and leadership learning combined with the mandatory categories to meet their CPD requirements.

It should be noted that some activities can potentially be classified under multiple categories (e.g., a course on a code or standard could be counted as regulatory or technical). For reporting purposes, all hours for that activity must be reported in one category and not spread across multiple ones.

Activity descriptions must detail a specific activity and contain sufficient information to assess the acceptability of the activity to your professional development - activities cannot be general statements.

Example: Capturing all informal technical learnings in a single general statement for the full year and claiming all your technical PDHs on that general statement is not acceptable. Table 1 provides some typical examples of acceptable and unacceptable activity reporting.

Table 1: Reporting Activity Descriptions

Acceptable Activity Description	Unacceptable Activity Description
Completed webinar offered by Connections East – Dyno Nobel Presentation on Blasting Risk. 2 PDH	Connections East webinar.
Completed course and workshop offered by my employer: Geochemical Data collection and management using Q-GIS. 3 PDH	GIS self-directed course.
Completed PEGNL Learning Module 2 “Ethics and Conflict of Interest in Geoscience”. 3 PDH	I always operate in an ethical and respectful manner.
Completed Red Cross Wilderness First aid course. 5 PDH	Safety Training.
Reviewed employer standards A, B, C, and <list of journal articles> in preparation for xyz project. 3 PDH	Research for new project.
Made a presentation to NS Barristers Society on Critical Mineral Exploration. 1 PDH	Public Presentation.
Reviewed standard operating procedures and updated legislation and reviewed <list of journal articles> in preparation for XYZ project	Research for new project

Acceptable Activity Description	Unacceptable Activity Description
Served on the Board of the All-Town Hockey Association.	Coached minor hockey (Note: General volunteer work is not an accepted activity; it must involve senior leadership level input.)

2.5.1 Ethical Practice Learning – 2 PDHs per year (Mandatory Minimum)

All Registrants are required to complete and claim a minimum of two (2) ethical practice PDHs per year.

Consideration of ethical issues is an essential element of geoscience practice. Most complaints received by geoscience and engineering regulators relate to professional misconduct (largely ethical issues) as opposed to professional incompetence. The protection of the public is best served by Registrants who are well versed in ethical practice.

In addition to ethics training, professional deportment in the following areas is leading ethical practice:

- Diversity: considering the viewpoints of people with diverse backgrounds;
- Sustainable Development: minimizing potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of your work; and,
- Respectful Workplace: ensuring a safe and respectful work environment.

Acceptable activities to satisfy this requirement include, but are not limited to:

- On-line or in-person ethics courses;
- Employer-provided programs covering ethics, diversity, sustainable development, respectful workplace, or related topics;
- Teaching a class in ethical practice (or the noted components);
- Online ethics, diversity, respectful workplace and/or sustainable development module(s); and,
- Attendance at ethics, diversity, respectful workplace and/or sustainable development conferences, workshops or continuing education offering

Activities which **would not** be acceptable include:

- Claiming you acted ethically as part of your daily practice - this is an expectation.
- Claiming general ethical discussions throughout the year, activities must be specific and include actual topics discussed.

2.5.2 Regulatory Learning – 1 PDH per year (Mandatory Minimum)

All Registrants are required to complete and claim a minimum of 1 regulatory PDH per year, relevant to their practice. Registrants must be knowledgeable regarding applicable regulatory requirements, including the Acts, regulations, by-laws, codes, standards, practice standards and guidelines, and

requirements of other relevant legislation.

Acceptable activities to satisfy this requirement include, but are not limited to:

- Courses developed by or for geoscience and/or engineering regulators;
- Making or reviewing changes in regulations, codes, practice standards, and guidelines;
- Attending seminars on changes in regulations, national or provincial codes and standards, or practice standards and guidelines; and,
- Serving on boards or committees of organizations having a regulatory focus (e.g., APGNS, other professional regulators, Geoscientists Canada, federal regulatory boards).

2.5.3 Technical Learning

Technical learning is the core learning necessary to maintain technical competency and keep pace with the changes impacting the practice of geoscience.

Acceptable topic areas to satisfy this requirement include, but are not limited to:

- Safety standards and procedures;
- Technical regulations, codes, and standards;
- Technical risk management and safety;
- Professional practice guideline reviews specific to area(s) of practice;
- Sustainability and climate change;
- New or emerging technologies;
- Cyber Security;
- Updated, new or emerging applications, processes, methods, tools, and equipment related to the practice of geoscience; and,
- Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) learnings.

Learning opportunities covering these areas include:

- Formal technical education (e.g., certification programs);
- Technical sales seminars, product demonstrations;
- Technical courses provided by employers;
- Courses provided by technical societies;
- Reading technical journals;
- Authoring, co-writing or peer reviewing a technical paper;
- Research as part of a post-graduate university program;
- First time development and delivery of technical training or presentations;
- Attending talks and seminars on technical topics;
- First aid, WHMIS or Health & Safety training;
- Attending/viewing professional development offerings at conferences delivered by technical

societies/associations relevant to area(s) of practice (e.g., Geological Society of Canada, Geological Association of Canada, Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM), Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC));

- Attending short seminars, webinars, podcasts, presentations related to your field of practice;
- Volunteering with technical or professional organizations/associations; and,
- Volunteering on a Geoscientists Nova Scotia practice-related committee.

Activities which **would not** be deemed acceptable:

- Multiple deliveries of the same technical presentation.
- Presenting options to clients.
- “Kick off” meetings that are part of your job.

2.5.4 Communication and Leadership

Communication and Leadership learning is related to advancing a Registrant’s professional abilities, including management and non-technical knowledge and skills, and can include learning or improving management skills in project, team, financial, conflict, business, or time management; oral and written communication skills; and stakeholder engagement and consultation.

Acceptable activities to satisfy this requirement include, but are not limited to:

- Formal business, governance, and leadership training programs, including Master of Business Administration or other certification program;
- Short seminars, webinars, and presentations teaching business, communications, and leadership skills;
- Presenting on business, governance, communications, and leadership topics;
- Volunteer service in “Not-for-profit” governance, including APGNS Council, and committees; and,
- Mentoring to assist in career development.

Activities which **would not** be deemed acceptable:

- Volunteer service such as coaching sports, singing in choirs or collecting for charities;
- Presenting options to clients;
- Briefing leadership teams or internal committees; and,
- Mentoring individuals within the same organization (e.g., direct reports).

3. Record Keeping and Reporting

Registrants are required to maintain a complete record of their CPD participation throughout the year. Records should contain documentation which can be used to verify participation in reported CPD activities. This could include registration forms, course syllabi, detailed lists of self-study materials, specific dates and other information about seminars, workshops, trade shows, presentations or other

documents as may be required for audit verification as shown in Table 2 below.

All CPD Reporting documentation must be retained by the Registrant for a minimum of three (3) years.

Registrants shall report CPD activities during the annual license renewal process on the approved form to the Registrar (see Appendix A) by January 31 of the year following the year being reported. Failure to comply with annual CPD reporting requirements will result in Registrant status being changed to “not in good standing” and the Registrant may be subject to an audit of CPD activities.

Table 2: Verification Documentation Examples

Learning Method	Examples of Acceptable Documentation
Structured Course	• A completion certificate from the institution with the Registrant’s name. • Other documentation with the Registrant’s name (e.g., course receipts, proof of enrolment, etc.).
Employer’s Course	• A completion certificate with the Registrant’s name and/or a letter of completion from their employer.
Structured Technical or Professional Discussion	• Meeting agenda showing topics discussed. • Confirmation via email or similar from a fellow participant or supervisor of attendance by a Registrant.
Technical Meeting/ Professional or Management Association	• Email from meeting organizer including the Registrant’s name on the distribution list and describing the content of the meeting. • Confirmation via email or similar from a fellow participant or supervisor of attendance by Registrant.
Conference/ Workshops/ Seminars	• Event program and confirmation of registration or receipts, and/or flight records. • Confirmation via email or similar from a fellow participant. or supervisor of attendance by Registrant
Self-Directed Study	• Identify publications for articles associated with Registrant’s professional technical association. • Outline for the self-study course.
Mentorship	• Company record of attendance at a mentoring seminar. • Name and job title of person(s) being mentored with: (1) email with names of both the mentor and mentee; (2) contact information for the person being mentored; or (3) evaluation information with sign-off by mentor/mentee).

Learning Method	Examples of Acceptable Documentation
	Confirmation via email or similar from supervisor of mentoring specific person(s) by Registrant.
Technical Committee Participation	- Meeting minutes showing participation/meeting agenda. - Confirmation via email or similar from a fellow participant or supervisor of attendance by a Registrant.
Volunteer / Business Board of Directors	- Meeting minutes/agenda with Registrant name evident or formal board listing. - Evidence of significant management/board level work, or of technical work, for volunteer organization. - Travel expense documentation, if travel is required for a board meeting. - Confirmation via email or similar from a fellow participant or chair of contribution/attendance by Registrant.
Presentations	- Schedule of events with Registrant's name as a presenter (e.g., email, letter, poster, etc.). - Copy of presentation with Registrant's name. - Confirmation of presentation by Registrant via email or similar from a fellow participant or supervisor.
Publications	- Report cover page and executive summary with Registrant's name. - Abstract from formal paper with Registrant's name. - Patent application with Registrant's name. - Re-creation/revision of an industry standard/guideline, minutes of committee meetings of or name associated with the standard for the time period being claimed.

The Registrant should maintain and update as required a written description of their individual scope of professional practice.

CPD program records, and any supporting information, may be subject to review by APGNS to evaluate the skills and knowledge required to support the scope of professional practice.

Reports generated by the CPD program shall not be used or interpreted as an endorsement of practice by APGNS.

4. Role of the Employer

Employers have a role to play in the professional development of their employees, and Registrants have

an obligation to ensure that geoscientists in their employ maintain and improve their skills. Employers of geoscientists are encouraged to support their CPD efforts.

Businesses with an APGNS Certificate of Authorization do not have to report CPD for the business. This is only a requirement of individual Registrants.

Registrants are encouraged to discuss their program plans with their employers and/or mentors. Through discussion and mutual agreement, the employer and geoscientist can decide on appropriate CPD undertakings and the type and level of employer support that is appropriate. Employer support will result in an employee with an ongoing interest in life-long learning which, in turn, provides increased value and commitment to the employer.

Among other things, employer support can include:

- Consultation with the employee during the development of the employee's CPD program;
- Provision of learning opportunities;
- Assistance in developing job expectations and responsibilities;
- Periodic review of employee performance and progress;
- Assistance in documenting CPD activities and level of effort through company performance-management systems;
- Financial support of CPD activities;
- Allowing time to participate in CPD activities;
- Encouraging the professional development of employees; and,
- Encouraging employee's life-long learning.

Although the employer has a role to play, the primary responsibility for CPD, and for maintaining competence, rests with the professional Registrant.

5. Program Monitoring

The APGNS CPD program report of activities will be assessed based on the practical application of those activities to professional development and professional practice. It is the responsibility and professional obligation of the Registrant to submit accurate and complete CPD program reports.

All CPD reporting will be reviewed for general compliance such as completed, signed and dated forms, and total PDHs claimed.

More comprehensive review of an individual Registrants' CPD reporting can be undertaken based on this general compliance review or:

- By random selection as part of an annual audit;
- Upon resumption of geoscience practice following exemption or reinstatement;
- In response to a specific complaint; or,
- As part of a discipline-related investigation.

When a comprehensive review is initiated, the selected Registrant may be required to submit proof that verifies their reported CPD activities. The Registrar, APGNS peers and/or other experts may participate in the audit review process.

The Registrant must be able to satisfactorily demonstrate that the scope of their professional practice is within the range of their professional competence when requested. This demonstration or confirmation of professional competence may, in part, be based on the documentation that has been filed under the APGNS CPD program. Table 2 lists examples of the types of verification documentation that may be required. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and additional documentation may be requested. Registrants may be asked to discuss their choice of activities and how these activities contributed to continuing competency in their area(s) of practice.

A review of the CPD program reports may determine that a Registrant's CPD activities do not meet the requirements of the CPD program, or they may not be practicing in a manner consistent with principles embodied in the CPD program and the Code of Ethics. In that situation, the Registrar will issue a written request for additional supporting information, or direct that improvements in the CPD activities and/or the CPD reporting be made. The Registrar will allow and indicate a reasonable amount of time for the Registrant to respond. Failure to cooperate with audit requirements could result in disciplinary action up to and including license suspension.

6. Confidentiality

Submitted CPD program records retained by APGNS are considered **PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL** in keeping with the requirements of the *Geoscience Profession Act*, and APGNS By-Laws and policies.

If a Registrant's program involves proprietary information, upon request, further arrangements can be made to ensure confidentiality.

7. Further Information

For more information, please visit our website at www.geoscientistsns.ca or contact us by email at registrar@geoscientistsns.ca.

Appendix A

Example: Continuing Professional Development Program Report

Registrant Name: Jane Smith, P.Geol. **APGNS Member #:** 1234 **Year:** 2026

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____ **Submitted:** _____

APGNS Acknowledged Receipt Date: _____

Category	Activity Date	Description	PDH
Ethical Practice	April 2, 2026	Completed online ethics training module provided by NS Ethics Workplace Training, as required by my employer.	2.0
	May 18, 2026	*2 PDHs mandatory Total: 2.0	
Regulatory Learning	Oct 25, 2026	Reviewed APGNS's new CPD Policy and guidelines document.	1.0
		*1 PDH mandatory Total: 1.0	
Technical Learning	Feb. 6-7, 2026	AGS Colloquium 2026 conference in Truro (days); all sessions over two days.	12.0
	May 14, 2026	Completed employer's safety course in preparation for seasonal field work.	6.0
	June 5-6, 2026	NS Mining Society annual meeting conference 2026 at Oak Island; all sessions	12.0
	Sept 17, 2026	Participated in employer's Technical Review Committee meeting re new air quality standards in NS. Total: 32.0	2.0
Communication and Leadership	March 4, 2026	Mining Communications course provided online through Geologize.com	2.0
	Jan – Sep. '26	Volunteer member of APGNS Council Total: 29.0	27.0
Total Earned			64.0
Total Claimed		Total required 30.0	30.0
Total Deferred		Maximum of 5 PDH may be deferred to 2027 for a claimed short fall (less than 30.0 PDH)	0.0
Total Carryover		Maximum 10 PDH may be carried over	10.0

