

# Professional Geoscientist

## Licensing Process



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#### Description of Occupation

Geoscientists help society meet its needs for natural resources. They also help protect the public from natural hazards, such as floods, volcano eruptions, earthquakes and landslides, by studying the earth and working with companies, communities, and governments to assess potential risks. Because their work involves the analysis of different Earth systems and geoscientific situations in their natural setting, geoscientists need to gather on-site data and make direct field observations. Work sites locations can be remote and physically challenging. Many geoscientists travel extensively – both to get to their sites of work and as part of on- site logistics. Travel can be local, regional, national or global depending on the nature of the geoscientist’s specialty and the reach of their employer’s interests.

**Geologists** are involved in the discovery or development of oil, natural gas, coal, metallic or non-metallic minerals, precious stones or other natural resources. This can involve reporting on, advising, evaluating, interpreting, geological surveying and sampling or examining any activities related to these discoveries or developments. They also develop resources for production, perform geohazard investigations and analyses and find and evaluate ground water supplies. In environmental roles, geologists analyze geological data to advise government agencies and construction companies on the suitability of locations for buildings, dams, highways, airfields and tunnels. They also work with engineers in oil and gas and mineral exploration and production and in environmental clean ups. In Alberta, most Geologists work in the oil and gas industry.

**Geophysicists** are involved in the discovery or development of oil, natural gas, coal, metallic or non-metallic minerals, precious stones or other natural resources or water that is aimed at investigating the sub-surface conditions of the earth. This can involve reporting on, advising, evaluating or the professional application of the principles of the geophysical sciences. In environmental roles, geophysicists use seismic, electrical and electromagnetic techniques and other techniques such as ground penetrating radar to evaluate ground water quality or assess hazards. They are also often responsible for gathering and processing data. In Alberta, Geophysicists often work in the oil and gas industry and can specialize in different areas.

**Environmental Geoscientists** practice in the area of Earth science applied to the natural environment, in particular the near-surface environment and the interaction between the geosphere and the hydrosphere.

#### Obtaining Licensure in Alberta

Professional Geoscientists (P.Geo.) must be licensed by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA) to practice in Alberta.

Internationally trained geoscientists can and should begin the application process before they arrive in Alberta. You should apply to APEGA as a Professional Member using the online application form. You must have four (4) or more years of geoscience work experience to apply to be a Professional Member. If you do not have four (4) or more years of experience, you must apply to be a Member-in-Training.

Links to the application forms and other resources are at the end of this document.

#### Licensing Requirements

Internationally trained geoscientists must meet the following licensing requirements:

### 1. **Academic Credentials**

An undergraduate degree in geosciences (earth sciences, geophysics or geology) is required. You will require:

- ICAP Course-by-Course report from WES for all your degrees obtained outside of Canada
- If you have obtained any undergraduate or post-graduate degrees from a Canadian University, you must arrange for your transcripts to be forwarded directly to APEGA.

### 2. **Academic Assessment Report**

If your post-secondary degrees are from a university outside of Canada, you must obtain an academic assessment of your academic records. APEGA uses World Education Services (WES) to obtain an academic credential evaluation report. WES provides this report to APEGA, which will be considered as part of your application.

After registering with APEGA and receiving an ID number, you will be directed to the WES website to continue the application process. Please follow the instructions provided by WES to receive a WES International Credential Advantage Package (ICAP) course-by-course report. WES will send the completed evaluation report to APEGA.

### 3. **Work Experience**

You will need four (4) years of experience working professionally as a geoscientist.

- Enter your work experience information in the Work Experience Record document.
- If your work experience is from outside of Canada, describe your familiarity with Canadian practices within your profession
- APEGA will contact supervisors and references for verification of experience, character and English language competency.
- It is important to inform current and past employers that they will be contacted by APEGA to verify work experience duties and length of employment details.

### 4. **Good Character and Reputation**

To apply for an APEGA license, you must show that you have a good character and reputation. Your application includes a declaration form with a series of questions to determine your character. Answering yes to a question may not disqualify you from applying. However, answering falsely may disqualify you.

Good character and reputation will also be confirmed by the references you provide. You must have a minimum of three references who:

- have had first-hand knowledge of your experience
- can confirm your work experience
- have supervised your work

To submit your references, list their names and business email addresses or full mailing addresses in the reference section of the work experience record when you apply. Personal email addresses (such as Gmail or Yahoo) are not accepted.

## 5. **Citizenship**

To become a Professional Geoscientist (P.Ge.), you must provide proof of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status. Email APEGA a copy of your citizenship document at [registration@apega.ca](mailto:registration@apega.ca) or upload it to your application before submitting it.

If you were born outside of Canada, APEGA will accept a copy of your:

- Permanent Resident card or form;
- citizenship card or form; or
- valid Canadian passport.

APEGA will not accept work visas, unsigned immigration documents or driver's licenses.

## 6. **Payment**

Provide payment with your Application for Registration. Payment summary is at the end of this document.

- You can send a money order, certified cheque or enter a credit card number in the application.

## 7. **English Language**

If English is not your native language or your undergraduate courses were not in English, you must show your competency in written and spoken English before you register as a Professional Member.

You must meet one (1) of the following requirements:

- A TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 100 or more on the internet-based (iTOEF) test.
- A one-page handwritten letter, describing how you gained spoken and written English proficiency and how you use English to communicate in a geoscience academic or work environment. APEGA will evaluate the handwritten letter.

## 8. **Examinations**

You must write and pass the National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE). Technical Exams may also be required.

### a) **National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE)**

- The NPPE tests applicants on professionalism, law and ethics.
- The test is computer-based, two-and-a-half (2.5) hours long and includes 110 multiple-choice questions.
- The minimum passing mark is 65 per cent.
- Applicants must have an active application for APEGA and have at least two (2) years of geoscience work experience to be eligible to apply to write the NPPE.
- Applicants may apply to write the NPPE before they receive their APEGA application assessment.
- It is sometimes possible for applicants to write the NPPE outside of Canada, but this must be requested in the application to write the exam.

**b) Confirmatory Exam**

- Upon first review of the Application for Registration, APEGA may require applicants to write the Fundamentals of Geology Exam to confirm their level of education.

**Licensee**

Licensee is the designation APEGA gives to an individual who has met the all of the academic and experience requirements for licensure in geoscience but who is not yet a Canadian citizen.

A Licensee:

- can independently practice geoscience in Alberta;
- is subject to the same ethical and practice standards as a Professional Geoscientist; and
- must comply with the Continuing Professional Development requirements.

**Notes:**

- APEGA may advise applicants to take additional training, such as academic, technical or English language courses.
- APEGA does not accept reference questionnaires from generic email addresses such as Yahoo and Hotmail, as these email addresses do not provide authenticity of email messages. Email addresses must identify the employer or company.

**Payment**

The following fees must be submitted during the licensing process. Payment can be made online by a credit card or mail along a cheque or money order with your application. Fees are in Canadian dollars, except where indicated otherwise.

**Application Fees**

Professional Member	\$500 +GST
Licensee	\$500 +GST
Professional Licensee	\$500 +GST
Member-in-Training	\$175 +GST

**Other Fees**

National Professional Practice Examination	\$175 +GST
Fundamentals of Geology Examination	\$450 +GST
Annual Dues (Professional Members)	\$324 +GST
Annual Dues (Professional Licensee)	\$324 +GST
Annual Dues (Licensees)	\$486 +GST
Annual Dues (Member-in-Training)	\$160 +GST

### **Average Earnings**

APEGA conducts an annual salary survey (formally called the Value of Professional Services) which provides market data on current compensation and benefits for Professional Engineers and Geoscientists in Alberta. According to the 2015 salary survey, the annual base salary for a project geoscientist is approximately \$100,000.

The overall average earnings for geoscientists, according to the Alberta 2013 Wage and Salary survey, can be accessed at [www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo](http://www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo).

### **Employment Options**

You can also consider working in Alberta in a related occupation such as Wellsite Technologist, Logging Technician, Geological Technologist, Seismic Observer, Seismic Program Designer, Seismic Surveyor or Mapping Technologist.

For more information about additional employment options, go to the following website: [Alberta Learning Information Service \(ALIS\) Occupational Profiles](http://www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo)

### **Contact Information**

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA) Head Office  
1500 Scotia One  
10060 Jasper Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4A2  
Telephone: (780) 426-3990  
Toll-free telephone (within North America): 1-800-661-7020  
Fax: (780) 426-1877  
Email: [email@apega.ca](mailto:email@apega.ca)  
Website: [www.apega.ca](http://www.apega.ca)

## Resources

This information is an overview of the licensing process. For the most current information on Professional Geoscientist licensing visit the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta website at [www.apega.ca](http://www.apega.ca).

Application Forms and Information:

- [Application Process](#)
- [Application Form](#)
- [Application Checklist](#)

Academic Credentials:

- [Academic Requirements](#)
- [Academic Assessments](#)

Work Experience:

- [Work Experience Requirements](#)
- [References](#)

English Language:

- [English Language Competency](#)
- [TOEFL Test](#)

Examinations:

- [National Professional Practice Examination](#)
- [Fundamentals of Geology Examination](#)

Registration:

- [Professional Licensee](#)
- [Licensee](#)
- [Member-in-Training](#)

Salary:

- [APEGA Salary Survey](#)