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Continuing Professional Development



The Association of Professional
Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta

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DOCUMENT HISTORY

DATE	VERSION	REVISION DESCRIPTION
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July 2021	1.2	Administrative changes to support myAPEGA; minor clarifications
December 2021	1.3	Administrative changes to Section 3.4 due to CPD submission window requirements in myAPEGA

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Preface

An APEGA professional practice standard describes the level of performance required of *licensed professionals*. Part 8 of the *General Regulation* under Section 59 allows APEGA to publish standards that define the expectations and professional obligations of APEGA *permit holders* and *licensed professionals*.

The differences between a professional practice standard, a practice guideline, and a practice bulletin are as follows.

- An APEGA professional practice standard sets the minimum standard of practice *permit holders* and *licensed professionals* must meet. It is the standard against which a *permit holder's* or *licensed professional's* practice and conduct will be assessed by APEGA's statutory boards.
- A professional practice guideline provides professional practice advice and best practice recommendations to help *permit holders* and *licensed professionals* meet their professional obligations. APEGA statutory boards may assess a *permit holder's* or *licensed professional's* practice and conduct against practice guidelines.
- A professional practice bulletin provides clarity and guidance on a specific subject related to professional practice. Bulletins remain in force until a practice standard or guideline on the subject is developed, or until the practice bulletin is repealed.

Practice standards, guidelines, and bulletins should be read in conjunction with the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act*, the *General Regulation*, APEGA's bylaws, and any other applicable legislation, codes, or standards.

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1.0 Overview

This practice standard replaces the *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program* practice standard published by APEGA in April 2014. In the interests of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public, it is essential for professionals to engage in lifelong learning. Society's expectations have changed, and the public demands greater accountability from *licensed professionals*. Mandatory continuing professional development is common in many professions. In most provinces, engineering and geoscience regulatory organizations have moved towards mandatory requirements.

The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act grants APEGA Council the authority to establish a compulsory continuing education program for all *licensed professionals*. In 1997, Council established the Continuing Professional Development Program.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This practice standard establishes an annual process and a minimum benchmark of effort for a *licensed professional* to maintain or increase competence in their professional practice. As the minimum requirements may not be adequate to maintain or increase competence, *licensed professionals* are obligated to assess their needs and plan appropriately. Recognizing the diversity of APEGA *licensed professionals*, this standard provides flexibility to undertake activities that provide the greatest benefit.

This standard applies to all *licensed professionals*. It does not apply to students, examination candidates, or members-in-training.

For newly registered *licensed professionals*, the requirement to engage in professional development activities begins on the date of registration. Newly registered *licensed professionals* can earn *continuing professional development hours (CPD hours)* and enter activities starting on their registration date. They must submit their *CPD hours* one year after their registration date and annually thereafter.

Continuing professional development activities should take into consideration area of practice and duties, current level of knowledge and skills, short-term needs and objectives, and long-range plans.

Licensed professionals should select meaningful activities that will benefit their practice. Each activity should have a clear purpose and objective that will maintain, improve, or expand the skills or knowledge in a *licensed professional's* area of practice.

1.2 REFERENCES

The following APEGA documents support this standard. Refer to the latest versions available at apega.ca/practice-standards.

- *The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act, the General Regulation, and APEGA's bylaws*
- *Guideline for Ethical Practice*
- *Guideline for Professional Practice*
- *Concepts of Professionalism*
- *Good Standing Policy*
- *Code of Ethics*

1.3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this standard, the below terms and definitions apply. These terms are italicized throughout the text.

APEGA Licensed Professional (Licensed Professional)

A professional engineer, professional geoscientist, professional licensee (engineering), professional licensee (geoscience), licensee (engineering), or licensee (geoscience) entitled by the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act* to practise engineering or geoscience in Alberta.

Continuing Professional Development Hours

Continuing professional development hours (CPD hours) are the unit of measure for reporting continuing professional development activities.

Permit Holder

A partnership, association, or corporation that holds a Permit to Practice as defined in Section 48(1)(d) of the General Regulation under the Act. The Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) permit holders, as defined in Section 86(4) of the Act, are not included.

Practice Review Board

The *Practice Review Board (PRB)* is a statutory board established under Section 15 of the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions (EGP) Act*. Through its powers established in Section 16 of the *EGP Act*, the PRB holds paramount the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and has regard for the environment. The PRB ensures regulatory oversight to the professions by:

- developing and maintaining professional practice standards, guidelines, and bulletins to set the minimum requirements necessary to practice engineering and geoscience in Alberta
- conducting practice reviews of *licensed professionals* and *permit holders* to ensure adherence to APEGA standards, guidelines, bulletins, and the Code of Ethics
- evaluating and maintaining the standards of competence by effectively administering the Continuing Professional Development Program
- providing oversight and reporting on the health of the professions to APEGA Council

Responsible Member

A *Responsible Member* is an APEGA *licensed professional* who is responsible to provide oversight of the practice of engineering or geoscience for the *permit holder* and meets the specification in Part 7, Section 48(1)(c) of the *General Regulation*. A *Responsible Member* must be qualified by education and experience in the profession of engineering or geoscience in which the partnership, corporation, or other entity intends to engage, designated in writing by the *permit holder*, and registered with APEGA as a *Responsible Member*.

The *Responsible Member* must have a sufficiently close relationship with the *permit holder* to undertake the roles and responsibilities associated with acting as a *Responsible Member*. The role of *Responsible Member* may not be delegated to other *licensed professionals* who are not *Responsible Members*.

A *Responsible Member* can be:

- a full-time, permanent employee of the *permit holder*
- a member of the *permit holder*
- a sole practitioner
- an individual providing *professional services* to the *permit holder* through a contractual arrangement or as a part-time employee

The *permit holder's Responsible Members* direct, supervise, and control all or part of a *permit holder's* professional practice in accordance with the *permit holder's* Professional Practice Management Plan and all relevant legislation, regulations, and codes.

Technical Information

Technical information differentiates a professional work product from an output. *Technical information* is an all-encompassing term for any content or data derived from the practice of engineering or geoscience as defined by the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act*. *Technical information* includes advice, analyses, assessments, calculations, designs, evaluations, inputs (e.g., to planning or to modelling and simulation), interpretations, notes, opinions, recommendations, and process descriptions.

2.0 Professional and Ethical Obligations

2.1 PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Part 2 of the *General Regulation* requires *licensed professionals* to comply with the requirements of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program as it applies to that person's practice of engineering or geoscience. Section 19 requires *licensed professionals* to:

- maintain a written record of activities undertaken in accordance with the CPD Program
- produce the record under clause (a) on the request of the *Practice Review Board (PRB)*

A *licensed professional* must satisfy the *PRB* that they are complying with the requirements of the CPD Program. The *PRB* may:

- conduct a review of the *licensed professional's* practice in accordance with the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions (EGP) Act* and the *General Regulation*
- recommend to the Investigative Committee at any time during a review that the review be conducted by the Investigative Committee under Part 5 of the *EGP Act*

2.2 ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS

Licensed professionals and permit holders must ensure their professional practice conforms with the intent of the *EGP Act* and the *General Regulation*, as well as APEGA's bylaws, practice standards, and bulletins. In addition, they must comply with all other applicable statutes, regulations, bylaws, standards, and codes in their practice of the professions.

APEGA *licensed professionals and permit holders* must always comply with APEGA's Code of Ethics. Detailed descriptions of the five Rules of Conduct and their applicability can be found in APEGA's *Guideline for Ethical Practice*.

As an obligation of self-regulation, APEGA *licensed professionals and permit holders* must advise APEGA of any entities or individuals who fail to meet the requirements of any APEGA standard.

3.0 Requirements for Continuing Professional Development

To meet the requirements of the *Continuing Professional Development* practice standard, *licensed professionals* must:

- meet the minimum numerical and diversity requirements outlined in Section 3.1
- maintain a record of continuing professional development (CPD) activities
- report and submit *CPD hours* annually
- submit activity details and supporting documents upon request

3.1 NUMERICAL AND DIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

There is flexibility in the number of professional development categories, the period over which the minimums must be attained, and the carry-forward provisions. *Licensed professionals*:

- must maintain a total of at least 240 *CPD hours* over three years
- must include activities in at least three of the six categories annually
- cannot claim more than the maximum *CPD hours* allowed annually in each category

3.2 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES

Licensed professionals can earn CPD credit in the six categories below:

- Professional Practice
- Formal Activity
- Informal Activity
- Participation

- Presentations
- Contributions to Knowledge

3.2.1 Professional Practice

Active professional practice is when a *licensed professional* is practising engineering or geoscience according to the legal definitions in the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act* or “influencing” the practice of the professions. “Influencing” means having some effect on how the professions are practised.

To claim professional practice hours, *licensed professionals* must describe how their position involves professional practice and their area of practice.

Fifteen hours of professional practice equals one *CPD hour*. A maximum of 50 *CPD hours* per year may be claimed in this category.

3.2.2 Formal Activity

Formal activities are often for academic credit and may include an evaluation process. When there is no evaluation, credit may be claimed in this category for activities that are more than four hours long. If there is an evaluation component, credit may be claimed for activities four hours long or less. Formal activities include:

- professional development programs, courses, and seminars
- courses offered by universities, technical institutes, colleges, suppliers, employers, or technical societies
- courses offered in traditional classroom settings, by correspondence, by video, or online

One hour of course attendance equals one *CPD hour*. A maximum of 30 *CPD hours* per year may be claimed in this category.

3.2.3 Informal Activity

Informal activities are usually shorter in duration and do not involve any evaluation, but nevertheless expand knowledge, skills, and judgment. They include:

- self-directed study
- attendance at conferences and industry trade shows
- attendance at seminars, technical presentations, talks, and workshops (if four hours or less)
- attendance at meetings of technical, professional, or managerial associations or societies
- structured discussion of *technical information* or professional issues with one’s peers

One hour of informal activity equals one *CPD hour*. A maximum of 30 *CPD hours* per year may be claimed in this category.

3.2.4 Participation

Activities that promote peer interaction and provide exposure to new ideas and technologies enhance the profession and serve the public interest. These activities include:

- mentoring a member-in-training, less-experienced *licensed professional*, or technologist who is not under your direct supervision. Mentoring an individual who directly reports to you falls under the Professional Practice category
- service on public bodies that draw on professional expertise (i.e., planning boards, development appeal boards, investigative commissions, review panels, or community-building committees)
- service on standing or ad-hoc committees of a technical or professional nature, or managerial associations and societies
- activities contributing to the community that require professional and ethical behaviour but not necessarily the application of *technical information* or knowledge, including actively serving charitable, community, religious, or service organizations; coaching league sports teams; and being publicly elected to serve on municipal, provincial, or federal levels or school boards

To claim participation hours, a description of the activity and names of participants must be provided.

One hour of participation activity equals one *CPD hour*. A maximum of 20 *CPD hours* per year may be claimed in this category with no more than 10 of those *CPD hours* coming from the last bullet above (community service).

3.2.5 Presentations

Eligible presentations contain *technical information* or are professional in nature. They are at the discretion of the *licensed professional* and not part of normal job functions. Presentations might occur:

- at a conference, meeting, course, workshop, or seminar
- within a company or at an event sponsored by a technical or professional organization

Multiple deliveries of the same presentation count for only one presentation.

One hour of preparation and delivery earns one *CPD hour*. A maximum of 20 *CPD hours* per year may be claimed in this category.

3.2.6 Contributions to Knowledge

Activities that expand or develop the technical knowledge base in the engineering and geoscience professions are recognized. Contributions may include:

- developing published codes and standards through a technical, professional, or managerial association or society. Confidential codes of practice and standards created for a specific company or employer are to be claimed under Professional Practice (one hour of committee work equals one *CPD hour*)
- registering patents (credit can be claimed only one time per patent at the filing date of the patent, and each patent registered equals 15 *CPD hours*)

- publishing papers in a peer-reviewed technical journal (each paper published equals 15 *CPD hours*)
- completing a thesis at the master’s or PhD level, on a one-time basis, upon successful defense and approval (each thesis equals 30 *CPD hours*)
- publishing a book (each book equals 60 *CPD hours*, claimed over two years)
- publishing articles in non-reviewed journals (each article equals 10 *CPD hours* to a maximum of 10 *CPD hours* per year)
- reviewing articles for publication (one hour of review equals one *CPD hour* to a maximum of 10 *CPD hours* per year)
- editing papers for publication (one hour of editing equals one *CPD hour*)

A maximum of 30 *CPD hours* per year may be claimed in the Contributions to Knowledge category, bearing in mind the limits indicated above.

3.2.7 Summary Table

Category	Hours	Maximum Per Year
Professional Practice	15 hours = 1 <i>CPD hour</i>	50 <i>CPD hours</i>
Formal Activity	1 hour = 1 <i>CPD hour</i>	30 <i>CPD hours</i>
Informal Activity	1 hour = 1 <i>CPD hour</i>	30 <i>CPD hours</i>
Participation	1 hour = 1 <i>CPD hour</i> (maximum 10 <i>CPD hours</i> per year for community service)	20 <i>CPD hours</i>
Presentations	1 hour = 1 <i>CPD hour</i>	20 <i>CPD hours</i>

Category	Hours	Maximum Per Year
Contributions to Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop published codes and standards: 1 hour = 1 <i>CPD hour</i> • register patents: 1 patent = 15 <i>CPD hours</i> • publish paper in peer-reviewed technical journal: 1 paper = 15 <i>CPD hours</i> • complete thesis: successfully defended and approved = 30 <i>CPD hours</i> per year • publish book: 60 <i>CPD hours</i>, claimed over two years • publish article in non-reviewed journal: 1 article = 10 <i>CPD hours</i> (maximum 10 <i>CPD hours</i> per year) • review articles for publication: 1 hour of review = 1 <i>CPD hour</i> (maximum 10 <i>CPD hours</i> per year) • edit papers of publication: 1 hour of editing = 1 <i>CPD hour</i> 	30 <i>CPD hours</i>

3.2.8 Carry-Over of Continuing Professional Development Hours

Any *CPD hours* earned but not claimed, in any category, can be carried forward for a maximum of two years from the date of activity completion and claimed on a subsequent annual submission.

Carry-overs will be tracked in the online CPD reporting system. All activities are recorded as earned hours. If only a portion of those earned hours are claimed, the excess hours are put into carry-over and are available for future reporting periods.

Supporting documents must be retained for claimed carry-over hours from prior years.

Carry-overs may enable *licensed professionals* to continue to meet CPD requirements in the event of unemployment, for example.

3.3 RECORDING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Licensed professionals must maintain a detailed record of CPD activities. The unit of measure for reporting these activities is a *CPD hour*. Each activity is to be recorded in whole *CPD hour* units. Partial hours need to be rounded to the nearest whole hour for reporting in the online CPD reporting system. This system allows *licensed professionals* to record all CPD activities and upload and store supporting documents throughout the reporting period. Each activity category has additional data fields that must be completed to record an activity. *Licensed professionals* are encouraged to provide sufficient detail to support the reported activity's eligibility to be claimed in a particular category in case APEGA reviews the CPD.

3.4 ANNUAL CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUBMISSION

All *licensed professionals* must submit their *CPD hours* annually during their submission window, which opens at the end of the reporting period. The membership portal will identify when a *licensed professional's* annual submission window will be open to submit claimed *CPD hours* for the reporting period. Any hours recorded but not claimed will be available as carry-over for future *CPD* reporting (see Section 3.2.8).

If a *licensed professional* does not submit claimed hours before the submission window closes, the system will automatically submit recorded hours on their behalf. After the submission window is closed for a reporting period, no edits can be made in the portal by the *licensed professional*.

3.5 VERIFYING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

APEGA's Practice Review Board (PRB) administers the *Continuing Professional Development* practice standard. It may review a *licensed professional's* professional development activities in detail. In that regard, *licensed professionals* must retain supporting documents to verify all CPD activities. Supporting documents provide evidence of the activity, such as the name, date(s), and time(s) of the activity, along with the names of the participants and activity provider if applicable. Examples of supporting documents include job descriptions, registration details, course certificates, the presentation syllabus, article abstracts, calendar entries, meeting agendas, and emails.

In the event of a review, the previous three years of submissions will be evaluated. If carry-over hours were claimed, activities for the previous five years may be evaluated. If a *licensed professional* does not provide supporting documentation during submission, they will be requested to upload it. Failure to produce the complete record of activities within 30 days of the request can result in the cancellation of a *licensed professional's* membership.

Licensed professionals will be advised as to the outcome of the review and whether their activities comply with the requirements of this practice standard, some modification is necessary, or the PRB requires that a review of the *licensed professional's* practice be conducted.

4.0 Continuing Professional Development Exceptions

4.1 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

If a *licensed professional* is unable to meet the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements after using all carry-over hours and wishes to retain their right to practise, they may to apply to have their CPD requirements reduced by submitting a special consideration form to the *Practice Review Board (PRB)*. This may occur due to circumstances such as underemployment, unemployment, part-time employment, semi-retirement, maternity or parental leave, enrolment in a full-time educational program, health, or disability. The special consideration form is available on www.apega.ca. Individual circumstances will influence the modified CPD requirements.

If granted reduced *CPD hours*, *licensed professionals* will generally be expected to accumulate at least 30 *CPD hours* in at least one category for the reporting period. If the special consideration overlaps two reporting periods, it will apply to both reporting periods. For each reporting period to which special consideration is applied, the three-year total of *CPD hours* required is reduced by 50 *CPD hours*. Upon return to full-time professional practice, *licensed professionals* must comply with the full requirements of this standard.

4.2 NON-PRACTISING DECLARATION

A *licensed professional* who has submitted a non-practising declaration stating they are not actively engaged in the practice of engineering or geoscience (i.e., non-practising), is exempt from the CPD requirements. The *licensed professional* cannot practice in Alberta while the declaration (exemption) is in effect but may continue to use their professional designation since they are still a registrant and remain bound by the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions (EGP) Act*, the *General Regulation*, the Code of Ethics, and APEGA's bylaws. A non-practising *licensed professional* may not act as a *Responsible Member* for an APEGA Permit to Practice.

If work falls within the legal definition of engineering or geoscience in the *EGP Act*, or if there is influence over the professions, *licensed professionals* are considered to be engaged in the practice and cannot be exempted by declaring non-practising status. This also applies to *licensed professionals* in management positions. The non-practising declaration is completed through the online CPD reporting system. To maintain the exemption, the online portal will ask for confirmation of non-practising status annually. Non-practising declarations are subject to verification.

Non-practising *licensed professionals* who intend to resume practising must submit an application for permission to resume practice. Non-practising *licensed professionals* cannot resume practice until the *PRB* has approved the request. On considering the application, the *PRB* may require *licensed professionals* to comply with certain conditions it might set prior to allowing a resumption of practice. When *licensed professionals* have received the *PRB's* permission to resume active practice, they must engage in professional development activities beginning on their resumption date.

4.3 WORKING OUT OF PROVINCE

Licensed professionals working and residing outside Alberta may still earn and claim *CPD hours* in any category. Unless a non-practising declaration (Section 4.2) is in place, *licensed professionals* must meet the CPD

requirements. Alternatively, *licensed professionals* working out of province may file a non-practising declaration online and be exempted from the CPD requirements while still maintaining professional membership with APEGA.

5.0 Role of the Employer

APEGA encourages employers to support the continuing professional development (CPD) efforts of their *licensed professional* employees. *Licensed professionals* should discuss their professional development objectives with their employer or mentor. Through discussion and mutual agreement, *licensed professionals* and employers can decide on professional development activities and the type and level of employer support.

Among other things, employer support can include:

- consultation during selection of CPD activities
- provision of learning opportunities
- assistance in developing job expectations and responsibilities
- periodic review of performance and progress
- assistance in documenting activities and levels of effort through company performance-management systems
- financial support of activities
- release time to participate in activities

Ultimately, however, the responsibility for CPD and maintaining competency rests with the *licensed professional*.

6.0 Consequences of Non-Compliance

To be in good standing with APEGA, *licensed professionals* must be compliant with APEGA's continuing professional development (CPD) requirements as per APEGA's Good Standing Policy. Non-compliance with the CPD requirements may result in a change to good-standing status.

The *Practice Review Board (PRB)* may conduct a review of a *licensed professional's* CPD. Failure to provide a complete record of CPD, including supporting documents, will result in cancellation of registration after 30 days' notice, in accordance with the *General Regulation* under the *Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act*.

Similarly, the *General Regulation* provides that if the *PRB* is not satisfied that a *licensed professional* is complying with CPD requirements, it may conduct a review of the *licensed professional's* practice and determine the consequences of non-compliance depending on the specific circumstances involved.