

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A GEOSCIENTIST-IN-TRAINING

Meet Angela Mae Mason, P.Geo.
Hydrogeologist



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Tell us something about yourself?

I am a hydrogeologist with Stantec Consulting Ltd., and have been working in consulting since 2008. In my free time I enjoy camping, spending time with friends and family, and playing the piano.

How did you first hear about the APGO?

I was not aware of the APGO as an undergraduate student. It was only when I was in my post-graduate college studies that I learned about the APGO and the importance of being a registered geoscientist. Entering the professional world reinforced my interest in the APGO, and my mentors and co-workers encouraged me to pursue membership in order to become a Professional Geoscientist (P.Ge.).

“The APGO helped me along the way by approving my course selections to ensure their requirements were met.”

How long have you been a member of APGO?

I first applied to become a Geoscientist-in-Training (GIT) in 2010, but was denied entry due to course deficiencies. I was not surprised that I did not meet the requirements but wanted to know exactly what was required in order to become a P.Ge.

After careful deliberation, I decided to return to university on a part-time basis while continuing to work. My employer at the time was supportive of my decision and gave me the flexibility to allow it to happen. I completed the courses I was deficient in, and ended up staying to complete a Master's Degree. The APGO helped me along the way by approving my course selections to ensure their requirements were met. Returning to school after working in the consulting industry for a few years, my perspective had expanded since being an undergraduate student. It ended up being a very rewarding experience.

I re-applied to APGO in 2013 and was accepted as a GIT. In 2014, I wrote the Professional Practice Exam (PPE) and became a P.Ge.

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What made you decide to pursue a career in geoscience?

I didn't always want to be a geoscientist. I knew very little about the geoscience industry until I was well into my undergraduate career. I spent my undergrad studying biological and environmental science, followed by a 1-year post-graduate certificate in Environmental Engineering, which helped me enter the industry as a co-op student. Between my post-graduate studies and co-op experience, I eventually realized that I wanted to pursue a career in hydrogeology.

What factors influenced your decision to become a geoscientist-in-training?

Once I decided I wanted to be a hydrogeologist, I knew that registration as a P.Geo. was an important step. Becoming registered as a GIT also holds value with employers, which is important in today's competitive job market. It was also fun to have those extra letters next to your name.

In your experience, how has being a GIT helped you in your journey to becoming a professional geoscientist?

Becoming a GIT was monumental. The APGO requires that all P.Geo. and GIT members meet a standard level of academic qualifications. They don't neglect you if you are deficient though. They are supportive of continuing education, and helped me on my journey toward becoming a GIT by confirming which course selections would meet APGO requirements. Once I met the requirements to become a GIT, becoming a P.Geo. was just another stepping stone away.

“I wish I had known more about the APGO as a student. I would have made sure to complete the course requirements prior to entering the professional world.”

Do you participate in APGO's events. Do you find them helpful? In what way?

I try to attend APGO events whenever possible. I enjoy the seminars and networking opportunities. I find APGO members very welcoming and I have had some interesting conversations with other members at APGO events. I'm looking forward to attending again in 2016.

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Knowing what you know now, what would you tell students who are considering a career in geoscience?

I wish I had known more about the APGO as a student. I would have made sure to complete the course requirements prior to entering the professional world. That being said, I think I got more out of the courses after gaining some related work experience.

If you are planning to go into geoscience, it is important to learn about fieldwork. Don't skip the field trips or field methods courses. Learn to embrace the great outdoors and appreciate the value of hard work.

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How does being a GIT benefit employers?

Becoming a GIT shows employers that you are serious about becoming a professional in the geoscience industry. It also shows that you have the academic background to become a P.Geo. once the experience requirements are met.

What can you share with other GITs who are currently not employed in the field? What do you think are the other avenues they can explore to ensure they keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date?

Don't give up. Be proactive. Stay on top of the job market and attend any and all networking events. Communicate that you are actively looking for job opportunities. As well, consider opportunities abroad. The geoscience industry is vast; there are many paths you can take. Get out there - connect and explore.

Other thoughts/insights that you want to add that you think are helpful for those who are considering to pursue a career as a professional geoscientist.

Being a professional geoscientist can be a very rewarding career. My job is not boring. I love working outdoors when doing fieldwork, and then seeing how that data fits into the big picture. I am constantly learning. **APGO**