



# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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Guidelines for  
Practising Members



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## Introduction

Professional Geoscientists registered as members with Professional Geoscientists Ontario are expected to maintain their competence and develop professionally. Section 5 of the Code of Ethics of Professional Geoscientists (Ontario Regulation 60/01) states that a member has a duty to act with “knowledge of developments in the area of professional geoscience relevant to the services being provided”.

## Value

Continuing professional development has many benefits associated with it. It helps to maintain a high level of professional competence by continually building an individual’s skills and knowledge. It helps to foster excellence in the profession and enhance professional image. It also provides a mechanism through which professionals are held accountable to remaining current in their practice, thereby improving credibility with the public.

## Background

The nature of professionalism is continuing to develop in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Changes are taking place in the nature of our jobs, the work we do, the responsibility we now carry to safeguard the public and to protect the natural environment, and the effect our work has on other professions in multi-disciplinary teams.

In recent decades the quickening pace of technological advances in the sciences has posed questions for professionals working in their own area of expertise. Is it good enough to base one’s career on an undergraduate degree, often followed by a post-graduate program? Is six or seven years of training, followed by on-the-job experience over at least 48 months, producing fully formed professionals in a world where well-known tasks are being transformed by new technologies?

In parallel, the work of geoscientists is being monitored and controlled by regulatory bodies and scrutinised by investors and stakeholders and may be the subject of legal proceedings or public hearings. Professional errors and omissions are being published under contractual interpretations of responsibility and duty of care. Professional bodies have examined the role they play in regulating and supporting their members, and it is in this context that the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was born. Mandatory CPD is common to many professions, particularly through self-regulating professional organisations.

Professional Geoscientists Ontario (PGO) has set a goal to help members improve their skills, enhance the currency of their knowledge and provide structure and support for professionals to engage in a program of lifelong learning. PGO has established the CPD program to achieve these aims. This document explains the CPD program to members, helps them to develop an individual program and takes them through the process of recording their CPD activities. The CPD program is structured to be consistent with CPD programs in other Canadian jurisdictions. Maintaining consistency provides for ease of inter-provincial and international mobility for PGO members. The program is designed to be equitable to all members, regardless of career stage or professional specialty.

## What is CPD?

Continuing professional development or CPD is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout a practitioner's working life.

PGO's specific continuing professional development categories are:

- Education
- Presentation
- Participation
- Contributions to knowledge

## The continuing professional development program at PGO

It is the responsibility of professional regulatory bodies to put the public's interests first, and as such, it is expected that professionals maintain continued competency. Ontario Regulation 324/16 Section 25.4 states: The member must comply with the continuing professional development requirements set out in the document entitled "PGO Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program Requirements", this document dated December 2019, and also available at [www.pgo.ca](http://www.pgo.ca). It is the PGO's role to ensure that members meet this requirement.

PGO's Practising and Limited members have a responsibility and an obligation, to both the public and the profession, to maintain and develop their abilities as practitioners by a commitment to continuing professional development. CPD helps to ensure the quality of professional products and services and is a valuable investment for both individuals and their employers.

## Who is expected to complete CPD hours?

All practising members and limited members are expected to complete CPD hours. PGO members work in all fields of the geosciences and in organisations that operate in different sectors of the economy. The CPD program is designed to be flexible and to accommodate the variety in members' activities. It is up to the individual member to determine the methods of professional development that meet their specific needs.

Geoscientists-in-Training are not required to complete CPD activities, however, they are actively encouraged to participate in as many professional development opportunities as possible, as part of their training to become practising members.

Members who are unemployed, on medical or parental leave, or are subject to legitimate circumstances preventing participation in the PGO's CPD program, can request an exemption for the year in question by completing the appropriate CPD section on the Members Portal on the PGO website.

For non-practicing and retired members, CPD accumulation is not mandatory. The members, who for any reason, change their designation to non-practicing, and are expecting to be back as practicing members are encouraged to maintain their CPD hours for the currency of knowledge and professional development. Retired members expecting to return back to practice in their

early years of retirement are also recommended to keep themselves acquainted with the changes in the profession.

All CPD hours are required to be reported by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following the year being reported on. New members are not required to report their CPD hours for the year in which they became a member of PGO.

## The CPD program

The purpose of the CPD program is to encourage members to keep up with technical and professional changes. As such, CPD hours should be considered **volunteer hours or hours that are completed outside of the normal scope of work**.

To be in compliance with this guideline, members are required to complete thirty (30) CPD hours annually, in a minimum of two (2) of four (4) categories. A maximum of 20 hours are allowed in any one category per reporting year. Excess hours can be carried forward for a maximum of two years. A minimum of 20 **Geoscience** hours are required per reporting year, up to 10 “other” hours may be used each year but are not required. If available, hours will roll forward automatically to the maximum of two years.

## Categories

- **Education**
  - Further your education by enhancing your technical knowledge, and keeping up to date with advancements in the industry.
  - Formal - it can include structured courses or programs (formally evaluated or certified) provided by universities or colleges, professional/technical bodies and industry, employer training programs, etc.
  - Informal - unstructured courses or programs including self-directed study (e.g. geoscientific periodicals/journals, text books, books on business management, business periodicals/journals etc.), attendance at conferences, workshops, technical talks or lectures (lunch and learn; technical discussion groups), seminars, being mentored by another professional geoscientist, discussion forums, field trips, etc.
  - The above examples may be of a geoscientific nature, or may be of an “other” nature, such as work on a masters of business administration, course on business accounting or leadership training.
  - Should not be part of your regular scope of work or directly related to paid hours, although there are a few exceptions, such as conference attendance, where even though you are paid to go by your employer, it is not part of your regular scope of work.
  
- **Presentation**
  - Technical and professional presentations outside of your normal scope of practice and either internal or external to your workplace at conferences, meetings, seminars, field trips, etc.
  - These examples may be of a geoscientific nature, such as making a geoscientific presentation at a convention, conference or discussion group; or may be of an

“other” nature, such as a workplace safety presentation, or a presentation on mentoring or business management, etc.

- Please note that preparation time may be included in the hours, not just the time required to deliver the presentation.
- **Participation**
  - Involvement in professional/scientific bodies (work on councils/boards, volunteer work (e.g. assisting with conventions/conferences), etc.)
  - Mentoring early career, internationally trained or less senior geoscientists
  - Service in public/community groups (coaching, volunteer service, etc.)
  - Membership in learned societies, professional associations (1 hour allowed per membership) (PGO and other P.Geo. associations, CIM, TGDG, PDAC, etc.).
- **Contributions to knowledge**
  - Activities that expand or develop technical knowledge within the professional community
  - Examples include:
    - published maps and scientific papers,
    - codes and standards,
    - publishing and editing manuals,
    - development of new field equipment, techniques, technologies or methodologies, etc. (either internal or external).
  - The examples above may be of a geoscientific nature, or may be of an “other” nature, such as a workplace safety manual, or a mentoring or business management manual, etc.

## Reporting and documentation

### Reporting method

Each practising member is required to maintain a suitable record of their personal CPD program, either with a diary or through a computer/mobile device. They should note specific dates and hours of the activity and any details pertaining to the activity, such as title of presentation, association name, etc.

CPD hours are entered online through the Members Portal of the PGO website, under the “Continuing Professional Development” menu item. This page will bring the member to a CPD summary page, where they will have the option to “Enter/Edit (year) CPD Hours”. This link will open the CPD reporting page where you are asked to fill the details of the activity you are entering.

The CPD hours are utilised in the order they are entered, not by date. All hours will be utilised in such a manner as to optimise CPD hour distribution in accordance with the PGO’s CPD program. In order to maximize the availability of geoscience hours for future years, “other” hours, if recorded, will be used to the maximum allowable of 10 CPD hours per year.

## Reporting CPD in another jurisdiction

If you report CPD hours in another jurisdiction recognized by the PGO, the CPD online module has a feature called “Filed in Another Jurisdiction” that allows you to choose this option. Please note that PGO might contact the specified jurisdiction to confirm the CPD hours reported. PGO may require additional documentation from you if the jurisdiction indicated is not currently recognized by the PGO.

## Documentation

Members are encouraged to document their activities in relation to their CPD hours to make reporting easier at the end of the year. Records should be kept detailing the event; the date and the duration of the event, the title of the event and a description of the event. Members will be asked to enter this information when they fill in the CPD hours utilising the CPD Online Module in the Members Portal.

## Carry over of hours

CPD hours accumulated in excess of the annual maximums in any category may be carried forward in the same category for up to two years.

## Part-time Employment or Unemployment

If you do not practice full time, you might not be able to meet the requirements of the CPD program as readily as those who are practicing full time. In this case, the PGO encourages you to set aside some of your potentially extra time to sharpen your skills. This extra time may also assist in re-obtaining full-time employment.

## Members on Dues Relief

If you are a member who is unemployed, ill or disabled, on parental/maternity leave, or enrolled in certain full-time educational programs, you may have applied for, and been granted dues relief by the Registrar. Unless you have changed your designation to non-practicing, you still have an obligation to comply with the CPD program.

## Health/Disability,

If you have not been earning an income from employment because of health/disability reasons and are not practicing, you may ask for a change in designation to non-practicing and be exempted from the requirements of the CPD program.

## Members in Full-time Educational Programs

You may ask for change of designation to non-practicing membership and be exempted from the requirements of the CPD program. PGO does, however, encourage such registrants to keep

accruing the CPD hours as time permits. If you wish to maintain your practicing membership while in the educational program, then CPD requirements are still mandatory.

## Members in Management Positions

If your work does not fall within the legal definitions of geoscience and if you do not have technical influence over the professions, you can change your designation to non-practicing and get exempted from the CPD requirement. If your work does fall within the definition or if you technically influence staff, you are considered to be engaged in professional practice and cannot ask for non-practicing designation. However, PGO encourages such registrants to participate in a number of non-technical professional development activities that can qualify for the required yearly minimum average of 30 CPD hours.

## Role of the Employer

PGO encourages employers to support the continuing professional development efforts of their member employees. Discuss your professional development objectives with your employer or mentor. Through discussion and mutual agreement, you and your employer can decide on professional development activities and the type and level of employer support.

Among other things, employer support can include:

- consultation during the development of your program;
- provision of learning opportunities;
- assistance in developing job expectations and responsibilities;
- periodic review of your performance and progress;
- assistance in documenting activities and effort through company performance and management systems;
- financial support of activities;
- release of time to participate in activities.

Ultimately, however, the responsibility for continuing professional development and maintaining competency rests with the registrant.

## Consequences of Non-Compliance

Continuous professional Development is one of the conditions of being a Practicing or Limited member of PGO. If you do not submit your Continuing Professional Development CPD hours in a timely manner as required, or there are questions about your CPD activities, the CPD audit committee/Registrar may request for you to submit a detailed record of these activities. The CPD audit committee/Registrar may also conduct a review of your submission if any irregularities are noted and determine if any consequences of non-compliance are warranted. Specific circumstances will be considered and a complaint might be filed with the PGO Complaints and Discipline Committee. Consequences of not meeting requirements could ultimately result in revocation or suspension of your registration.

## Compliance and auditing

### CPD Audit Panel

As part of the responsibility and privilege of professional self-regulation, PGO has a duty of governance and accountability to audit members for compliance with respect to CPD requirements. An audit panel of the PGO's CPD Committee, composed of at least three practising members, will undertake the task of auditing the members' reported CPD hours. Every year approximately 20% of the total number of practicing members will be audited.

Auditing of individual member's reported CPD hours will be undertaken by random selection. Should an audit be initiated, members may be contacted and requested to submit any records or documentation that they have for that activity. The purpose of such an audit will be to confirm that the selected members have complied with the requirements of PGO's CPD program.

### Confidentiality

All members' CPD declarations, and any other material submitted to PGO as part of a member's individual CPD program, will be confidential. Material submitted as part of the auditing process will only be available to the CPD Audit Panel. Once the audit has been completed and concluded to the satisfaction of the CPD audit panel, the material will be returned to the member.

All CPD committee members and all members of the CPD audit panel are subject to the confidentiality provisions of the *Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000*.

All member information acquired by PGO as part of the CPD program, is subject to the confidentiality provisions of the *Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000*, and also, where it may apply, to the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* ('PIPEDA').

## References

- APGO CPD Guide – Version – 13 December 2004
- CPD Audit – Summary of Findings – 2011 – 2018
- CPD Audit – Observations 2018
- Association of Professional Engineers, Geoscientists and Geophysicists of Alberta, September 2004. Continuing Professional Development Program [www.apega.com](http://www.apega.com)
- Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Newfoundland, 1998. Professional Development Newsletter (5/XI/1998): [www.apegn.nf.ca/pdp.htm](http://www.apegn.nf.ca/pdp.htm).
- Irish Association for Economic Geology, 1997. Continuing Professional Development: Guidance Notes for Professional Members. Dublin.
- Institution of Civil Engineers, 1998. Continuing Professional Development: A guide for all members. London. Also [www.ice.org.uk](http://www.ice.org.uk).
- Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, circa 1998. Continuing Professional Development for You. London.
- Rhoden, H.N., 1999. CPD, Program Record and Annual Activity Record for 1998. Reno, Nevada.

## Appendix 1

**Conferences:** (Participation) Maximum 7 hours (in attendance) a day with short breakdown of all the activities. Although one date per activity is accepted for a conference in the system. Registrant must mention in the remarks the actual dates covered. e.g. PDAC Conference (March 3, 4 and 5) etc. All abbreviations must be defined at least once in the remarks.

**Seminars, Symposium, Workshop, Lecture, Tutorial:** (Education, Presentation, Participation) Actual duration of attendance of such events and a brief description of the topic covered with timeline. All abbreviations must be defined at least once in the remarks.

If PGO Registrant was presenting at such events then presentation preparation time should be mentioned separately with short details. All these activities should be outside the normal scope of work of a PGO Registrant. Preparation time should be reasonable as per the industry standards per contribution piece per year.

**Technical Courses:** (Education, Presentation, Contribution to Knowledge) Actual duration of the course attended and the title of the course is mandatory. Topics covered are optional but encouraged. If PGO Registrant has taught the technical course then preparation time should be mentioned separately with short details. All these activities should be outside the normal scope of work of a PGO Registrant. Preparation time should be reasonable as per the industry standards per contribution piece per year.

**Presentations:** (Presentation, Participation) Technical and professional presentations which are outside the normal scope of work should be entered. Preparation time should be reasonable as per the industry standards per contribution piece per year. For example, 20 to 30 minutes presentation should not take more than two hours.

**Mentoring:** (Participation) Spending time outside of your normal scope of work with early career, internationally trained or less senior geoscientists to help them improve their skills can be entered as participation hours. Preparation time should be reasonable as per the industry standards per mentor per year.