

Chartership Guidance note for Geologists in the Site Investigation Industry

During some recent mentoring activities it became apparent that there is concern amongst a number of geologists working within the site investigation industry as to whether they can apply for CGeol or not. This concern focuses primarily on attaining the requirements of Competencies i and ii if, in their view, they are merely carrying out investigations designed and used by others.

As a reminder, applicants are required to prove their competence against seven criteria (see <http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/~link.aspx?id=CA074320D21E46C588DABED4BF67BD06&z=z> for full details) and these can be summarised as follows.

- i. Understanding of the complexities of geology and of geological processes in space and time in relation to your speciality. Applicants are required to demonstrate recognition and determination of geological processes, diagnosis of geological conditions, fundamentals of the Earth's history, understanding of geological problems and their interpretation, creation and interpretation of geological maps and cross sections, compilation and testing of ground models.
- ii. Critical evaluation of geoscience information to generate predictive models. Applicants are required to demonstrate competence in the acquisition, observation and description of geological data, appreciation of the limitations of and conditions under which the data were collected or how they arrived in their present state, and an assessment of certainty/uncertainty.

These first two are perceived as one of the biggest hurdles for engineering geologists working in site investigation. My advice to mentees in their addressing these competencies has been as follows. If they are merely going to site and carrying out the specified drilling, logging, testing and factual reporting without cognisance of these two criteria, then their suitability to apply for CGeol is probably doubtful.

If however, their field and reporting activities are carried out in the context of forming and evolving a ground model, an understanding of the reasons for the scope and range of investigation work, a critical appreciation of limitations in data collection methods and reporting of these matters, then they should probably be encouraged to proceed with assembling their application documents. It is important to recognise that the demonstration of achievement of competencies 1 and 2 may well require some extra-contractual work; this could take the form of the applicant writing their own investigation design, ground model reviews and ground conditions reports. This is not a minor undertaking but an application with such personally prepared reports attached should favourably demonstrate:

- a commitment to professional development;
- the willingness to prepare material outside the work environment; and
- reports that are personally prepared, not fitting a company proforma and subjected to peer review and editing.

Mentees that have received this advice have been encouraged and are proceeding with moving towards applying for chartered status.

Geologists working in the investigation industry are strongly encouraged to include the Training Guide for Engineering Geologists in their career and training planning (see <http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/~~/media/shared/documents/Fellowship/GS%20Training%20Guide%20for%20Engineering%20Geologists.ashx>).

In addressing the remaining competencies, summarised below, there has been a general acknowledgement among mentees that they should not have undue problems in demonstrating their achievement of the requisite levels.

- iii. Effective communication.
- iv. Competence in the management of Health and Safety and Environmental issues.
- v. Clear understanding of the meaning and needs of professionalism.
- vi. Commitment to Continuing Professional Development.
- vii. Competence in your area of expertise.

In conclusion I have found that all professionally engaged engineering geologists working in the site investigation industry should be able to demonstrate their achievement of the seven competencies and therefore should be encouraged to be working towards Chartership.