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The development of Canada's Competency Profile for Professional Geoscientists at Entry to Practice

Bonham, O.¹, Broster, B.², Cane, D.³, Johnson, K.⁴, and McLachlan, K.⁵

¹Geoscientists Canada, Burnaby, BC, Canada.

²Department of Geology, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada

³Catalysis Consulting, Kamloops, BC, Canada

⁴Consultant, Toronto, ON, Canada

⁵Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan, Regina, SK, Canada

In September 2012, Geoscientists Canada received funding from the Government of Canada's Foreign Credentials Recognition Program for a 30 month project to conduct four interrelated initiatives on behalf of its members - the provincial/territorial professional bodies that regulate geoscience practice and professional licensing in Canada. The central and largest initiative involved the development of a competency profile to assist in assessment for licensing for the geoscience profession. The project concluded in March 2015.

Competencies are defined by the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials as "a set of knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through formal or non-formal education, work experience or other means, required to perform an occupation at the point of entry to a profession".

A key rationale for development of a competency profile is the move by professions both in Canada and around the world, away from traditional credentials-based assessments to that based on a combination of academic outcomes and practice skills. While the work was funded primarily to aid in consideration of foreign applications, it has been undertaken with equal consideration of both Canadian-trained and internationally-trained geoscientists. Work on the resulting profile was completed in 2014 with the release of the Geoscientist Canada document, "Competency Profile for the Professional Geoscientists at Entry to Practice" [1].

The paper will describe the approach taken to develop the profile, including: 1) input from Subject Matter Experts (practising geoscientists representing a diverse sampling of the profession), 2) extensive national consultation and refinement, and 3) a validation procedure, including a survey of practising Canadian geoscientists. We will also give a summary of the profile's structure and its key components. This talk builds on previous interim presentations on this project as the work progressed, including that by several of the authors listed above.

Future work will identify specific indicators of proficiency related to each competency that an individual is expected to demonstrate in order to be licensed as a Professional Geoscientist (P.Geo.) in Canada and suggest appropriate methodologies to assess such competencies. Further work will also involve mapping the new competency profile to the existing reference standard "Geoscience Knowledge and Experience Requirements for Professional Registration in Canada" (Geoscientists Canada 2008)[2].

References:

[1] <http://geoscientistscanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Competency-Profile-for-Professional-Geoscientistsat-Entry-to-Practice-Combined-Doc.pdf>

[2] <http://geoscientistscanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/GC-Knowledge-Regu.BKLT-.REV-.EN-.web-.final-.pdf>

