



**A P E G S**

*Association of Professional Engineers  
& Geoscientists of Saskatchewan*

# COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT (CBA)

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## QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE TOWN HALL SESSIONS

Jan to March 2018

You will need to either hear the CBA presentation or read the [Competency Assessment Guide](#) in order for some of these questions to make sense. Prior to contacting APEGGS with further questions, read the CBA presentation and/or Competency Assessment Guide first. Both are found on the APEGGS website under Members, [Competency-Based Assessment](#).

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## 1 QUESTIONS ON THE COMPETENCIES AND FRAMEWORK

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### 1.1 HOW CAN WE FIND OUT THE FULL DETAILS ON THE CHANGES?

The full details of the changes are found on the APEGS website under Members, [Competency-Based Assessment](#). The document called *Competency Assessment Guide* in the Related Attachments on that webpage contains all the detail.

## 1.2 CAN YOU GO BACK TO YOUR ENTIRE WORK EXPERIENCE FOR EXAMPLES TO USE?

Yes, you can go back to your entire work experience history for examples to use for your competencies. In order for us to ensure you have four years of experience, in the Employment History section of the online system, you enter a chronological history of all of your work experience and you nominate Validators who have first-hand knowledge of that work. The Validators selected should cover as much of your experience as possible but a minimum of four years must be covered (five years for Academic Review Cases). See section 3.4.1 of the [Competency Assessment Guide](#) for complete details.

## 1.3 DO YOU NEED JUST THE 34 COMPETENCIES?

.. and do they need to be passed only once (not 34x3 times)?

Answer: Yes. Each competency is demonstrated once through one example per competency. For any examples that were passed as part of an interim submission, they are completed and do not need to be re-entered for the final submission.

## 1.4 WHAT IF MY WORK EXPERIENCE DOES NOT GIVE ME ALL OF THE COMPETENCIES?

The same thing would happen as it does now in the existing experience reporting system. If the minimum standard is not met, then further work experience would be required in the areas the applicant is missing. The advice we offer engineers-in-training in this situation is to discuss opportunities to obtain experience in all areas required even if it is outside their current job description. Opportunities may exist with your existing employer, through a secondment or volunteer activities.

What matters is that an applicant has demonstrated they are competent to practice before they are approved as a professional engineer. That may take less than four years for one person and more than four years for another person (however, four years is the minimum).

We are aware that if a person has demonstrated all competencies, then they should be ready for professional registration, however, the engineering regulators across Canada need more experience using competency-based assessment before we will start considering that the number of years of experience requirement be removed.

## 1.5 WHAT IF MY VALIDATOR RATES ME LOWER THAN I RATED MYSELF?

Section 4.2 of the [Competency Assessment Guide](#) provides the answer as follows:

### **If the Validator rates an applicant lower than the applicant rates themselves**

If a Validator rates an applicant lower than the applicant self-rates, we look at several things:

- If it is one competency and the category averages to an acceptable level, it is normally not considered to be a problem. Validators whose rating is below the applicant's will often comment on why, although it is not mandatory. Assessors tend to accept the Validator's rating, especially if

it is below that of the applicant, as it normally is accompanied by a concern articulated by the Assessors.

- We look at the Validator's overall additional feedback at the end to see if the Validator considers the person ready for registration or licence.
- We do not automatically fail the competency, as it may be that the applicant did an unacceptable job of reporting an acceptable example. If there is an overall Validator assessment that the applicant needs improvement or additional experience, Assessors will comment on this and the applicant will normally be given the opportunity to re-submit the competency in question if it is necessary.
- Upon assessment of the re-submission, either the competency is accepted or the applicant will have to use another example from other work experience or gain additional experience to satisfactorily complete a **Competency Category**.

Although we are ensuring that the applicant has an understanding of all of the competencies and can demonstrate an overall average minimum level achievement in each category, at the end of the day, we are looking at other factors including the peer recommendations to determine if the applicant is ready for professional registration.

## 1.6 DOES THE AVERAGE USE NORMAL ROUNDING?

Yes, we use normal rounding.

## 1.7 IF YOU HAVE AN AVERAGE RATING OF GREATER THAN 3, SHOULDN'T YOU JUST BE GRANTED P.ENG. STATUS?

The requirements to become P.Eng. includes five items and acceptable engineering work experience is only one of those:

1. Academic qualification
2. Acceptable engineering work experience
3. Pass the Professional Practice Exam
4. Three professional references
5. Good character

In the CBA system, you need an average rating of 3 in 5 of the 7 Competency Categories. For example, in Competency Category 1 (Technical Competence) you need an average rating of 3 across the 10 competencies within that category and you need a rating of at least 1 in all of the 10. If you achieve that, then you pass Competency Category 1.

If all we required was an average of 3 over the entire 34 competencies then an applicant could have great competence in only one category (such as Project and Financial Management) and unacceptably low competence in another category (such as Technical Competence), and would be able to pass, that's why

we break it into categories with minimum averages.

### **1.8 CAN YOU GO LESS THAN TWO YEARS TO DO AN INTERIM SUBMISSION?**

If you wish to go less than two years, you may contact APEGS staff to discuss it.

### **1.9 IS AN INTERIM “SUBMISSION” THE SAME AS THE 1 YEAR AND 2 YEAR REPORTS IN THE EXISTING SYSTEM?**

It is similar in that you are receiving an assessment and feedback from APEGS on a portion of your experience at about the two year mark. The difference is that with the CBA system, you need to get each competency approved only once, choosing examples from anywhere in your experience history. For the interim “submission”, you write up at least three competencies (including at least one from Category 1 – Technical Competence) then once the Validator(s) have completed their ratings, you notify the APEGS office that your interim submission is ready for review. Any competencies approved as part of the interim submission are considered completed and do not have to be re-done for the final submission. Any competencies that are not approved in the interim submission are either re-submitted shortly thereafter, or you wait until the time of your final submission to re-submit, depending on what the problem was with your submission. You will be given instructions with your feedback.

### **1.10 HOW DOES PRE-GRAD EXPERIENCE FACTOR IN?**

Up to 12 months of pre-grad experience is eligible to be counted as part of the four years of experience required for professional registration. The count on number of months of experience is done based on the information the applicant enters in the chronological Employment History section of the online CBA system.

### **1.11 DOES A MENTOR NEED TO SIGN OFF PRE-GRAD EXPERIENCE AS WELL?**

The Validator for pre-grad experience needs to be the professional engineer who supervised you (or you worked closely with) in order for any competency examples from pre-grad experience to be eligible for review.

Note that in the CBA system, we no longer require a P.Eng. mentor to sign off when the supervisor is not a P.Eng. (or equivalent). However, for pre-grad experience that does not have a P.Eng. supervisor (or equivalent) or you did not work closely with a P.Eng. then it is not eligible to use in the competency system.

## 2 VALIDATOR QUESTIONS (SUPERVISOR / MENTOR)

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### 2.1 HOW DOES IT WORK IF YOUR SUPERVISOR IS NOT A P.ENG.?

For each competency example, one Validator is required (and a person may serve as Validator for multiple examples). Normally the Validator is the P.Eng. supervisor. The supervisor still verifies as Validator even if that person is not a P.Eng. If the direct supervisor cannot sign as Validator for any reason, then the applicant can work with APEGS staff to determine the reasons and the best course of action. It is possible that it will turn out that another person who has first-hand knowledge of the work will sign as Validator, such as a colleague or client.

### 2.2 WHAT IF YOU HAVE A MENTOR INSTEAD OF A SUPERVISOR AND THEY ARE NOT AN APEGS MEMBER?

There will always be somebody who will be a witness to your work who will sign as Validator on any particular competency example. Also, there is no need for a mentor to sign an experience report like we do in the current experience reporting system when the supervisor is not a P.Eng.

For each competency example, one Validator is required (and a person may serve as Validator for multiple examples). Normally the Validator is the P.Eng. supervisor. The supervisor still signs as Validator even if that person is not a P.Eng. If the direct supervisor cannot sign as Validator for any reason, then the applicant can work with APEGS staff to determine the reasons and the best course of action. It is possible that it will turn out that another person who has first-hand knowledge of the work will sign as Validator, such as a colleague or client.

### 2.3 DO CO-WORKERS COUNT AS VALIDATORS?

It is possible that a co-worker can be a Validator, but only if required and you need pre-approval from the APEGS office. Normally the Validator is the P.Eng. supervisor. The supervisor still signs as Validator even if that person is not a P.Eng. If the direct supervisor cannot sign as Validator for any reason, then the applicant can work with APEGS staff to determine the reasons and the best course of action. It is possible that it will turn out that another person who has first-hand knowledge of the work will sign as Validator, such as a colleague or client.

### 2.4 WHAT DOES THE "SAME DISCIPLINE OF PRACTICE" MEAN?

The [Competency Assessment Guide](#), section 3.4.1, it states that one Validator must be a direct supervisor and share the same discipline of practice for which you are applying. For example, I am an Environmental Engineer-In-Training, but my supervisor is a Mechanical Engineer. There is no one else in my work group who is an Environmental Engineer. Would I need to look outside my work group to find an Environmental Engineer to review my experience?

Answer: It is the area of competence of the supervisor that matters. If your supervisor is competent to take responsibility for the work you are doing then the requirement is met that your discipline of practice is shared by at least one supervisor.

Note that some provinces require you to declare the discipline of practice for which you are applying so the interpretation of this statement will be different depending on how the specific legislation, policies and guidelines for the province are written. The approach at APEGS is that discipline of bachelor degree is only one piece in determining the discipline in which an engineer is competent to practice.

## 2.5 DO YOU SPECIFY WHAT A VALIDATOR CAN SEE IN THE SYSTEM?

A Validator will assess only the specific competencies that the engineer-in-training has assigned them to validate. They will have access to comment and rate those examples but will also be able to view the other information in your submission in order to have context for the competencies they are asked to verify and to help them complete the overall feedback section. There may also be some Validators who are not given specific competencies to verify so they will provide input in the overall feedback section only. The overall feedback section includes questions on the applicant's readiness for licensure.

## 2.6 WILL THERE BE A TIME FRAME SET UP FOR VALIDATORS TO RESPOND?

No, there will not be a time frame set up for Validators to respond. This remains the same as the current experience reporting system. If an engineer-in-training is having trouble getting a response from a Validator then they should record the dates and methods they tried then contact the APEGS office to discuss the situation should it be necessary.

## 2.7 IF THE DESIGN OF AN ENGINEER-IN-TRAINING FAILS, WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE VALIDATOR?

A professional engineer is responsible for engineering work done under his or her supervision. This responsibility applies independent of what the experience reporting system looks like or if the engineer-in-training chose to include that work in an experience submission or not. Anybody, including people not registered as an engineer-in-training, can do engineering work under the supervision of a professional engineer who is registered in the jurisdiction where the project or property is located and it is the professional engineer who supervised the work that takes responsibility for it, as though it was their own work.

### 3 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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#### 3.1 CAN WE RECEIVE MORE DETAILED FEEDBACK FROM APEGS?

Yes, The Experience Review Committee strives to provide detailed feedback in any situation where experience was not approved, a re-submit was requested or experience was passed with a coaching letter. If that did not happen for you, then please contact APEGS staff and we will correct the situation. This practice will continue with the CBA system.

### 4 EFFECTIVE DATE / TRANSITION TO THE NEW SYSTEM QUESTIONS

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#### 4.1 IS THE CUT-OFF DATE “SUBMITTED” BY JANUARY 1, 2019?

If you are an existing engineer-in-training and have at least one experience report from the existing reporting system “submitted and completed in full” by January 1, 2019 then you will have the choice to continue in the existing experience reporting system or switch to the new online CBA system. The report does not need to be approved by January 1, 2019 in order to have the choice.

#### 4.2 DO MEMBERS-IN-TRAINING HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL 2019 TO USE THE NEW SYSTEM?

We anticipate that the online Competency Experience Reporting System will be available by the fall of 2018 for engineers-in-training to start entering their competency examples. Note however that assessment of competencies will begin after January 1, 2019.

#### 4.3 DO WE NEED TO INFORM APEGS THAT WE ARE SWITCHING PROGRAMS?

No, you do not need to inform APEGS that you are switching. We will know you have switched when we receive your completed CBA submission.

#### 4.4 IF YOU SWITCH TO CBA, WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR OLD REPORTS?

If you are in the situation where you have the choice to switch to the new system then your old experience reports will not be used for assessment. Note that old experience reports are retained in our records, they are not discarded.



## 5 ONLINE SYSTEM QUESTIONS

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### 5.1 IS THE ONLINE SYSTEM AVAILABLE TO SEE BEFORE WE VOTE?

Yes, a sample applicant that can be accessed and viewed by anyone and the link is posted to the APEGS website under Members, [Competency-Based Assessment](#). Also, there are screen shots of the online system in the [Competency Assessment Guide](#) posted to the APEGS website under Members, [Competency-Based Assessment](#). Note that the technical operation of the online system has been in operation in BC since 2015.

## 6 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

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### 6.1 HOW DOES THE CHANGE TO CBA AFFECT INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES?

All applicants are assessed in the same way so CBA applies to international graduates as well. For those international graduates who have more than five years of experience and have been given the opportunity to submit work experience in lieu of writing confirmatory exams, they will submit their experience as usual. These applicants are called “Academic Review cases” and details are found in section 8 of the [Competency Assessment Guide](#) found on the APEGS website under Member, [Competency-Based Assessment](#).

### 6.2 WHAT IF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION WILL NOT VALIDATE COMPETENCIES?

For example, an Association in the UK trying to validate a Chartered Engineer’s competencies based on APEGS’s criteria.

Prior to answering how this works, it should be noted that there will be no change to how international recognition is handled compared to the current situation.

In answer to the question:

- Only individuals are asked to validate competencies, not organizations.
- It is within the purview of any organization to accept or not accept the practices of other engineering licensing bodies around the world.
- Other Associations outside Canada will not be using APEGS criteria to evaluate competencies, they will be using their own criteria. In the same way, each province and territory in Canada uses their own criteria, however, there are some Associations who will be using the same competency assessment system as APEGS. Note, however, that the regulators in Canada use the same general guideline on the components of acceptable engineering work experience.
- The situation where an Association elsewhere in the world is asked to validate competencies based on APEGS criteria simply does not happen. For countries where APEGS has endorsed a professional level Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA), each Association processes their applicants according to their full process and the other Association will accept the overall assessment, not individual pieces of it.

## 7 GENERAL QUESTIONS

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### 7.1 IF CBA IS NOT PASSED, IS THE SYSTEM STILL AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS?

No, the online CBA system would not be available to APEGS members if the proposal is not passed at the Annual Meeting. We would continue using the paper-based system and would work to address the reasons why the members did not pass the CBA system. However, we are informing members and doing extensive consultation ahead of time through the Town Halls, *The Professional Edge* and direct emails from the APEGS office to prevent any concerns from going unheard.

### 7.2 WHEN CAN I WRITE THE PPE?

For those applicants submitting experience in the CBA system, you are eligible to write the PPE upon completion of your interim submission (it does not need to be approved yet, just completed in full and notify APEGS that it is ready for review).

For those applicants who have the choice to submit in either the old system or in the new CBA system, and they choose to continue in the old system, the rule remains the same – you are eligible to write the PPE when you have at least one post-bachelors experience report submitted in full (it does not need to be approved yet).

### 7.3 DO I STILL NEED TO WRITE THE PPE UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM?

Yes. The experience reporting changes do not affect the PPE which is a separate requirement.

### 7.4 WILL THE NEW CPD REQUIREMENTS BE IN THE CBA PROGRAM?

The new CPD requirements are a separate requirement from the CBA experience reporting system. However, Competency Category 7 is called “Personal Continuing Professional Development” in which there are three competencies where you demonstrate your understanding of the requirements for CPD and the importance of it.

### 7.5 WILL THE SWITCH TO CBA HELP WITH MOBILITY?

Engineers and geoscientists in Canada already enjoy the privilege of full mobility through the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). The change in the experience reporting system will have no impact on that.

### 7.6 ARE ALL PROVINCES IMPLEMENTING THE CBA PROGRAM IN 2019?

CBA is being adopted by those Association who choose to do so. The ones who are not adopting it have various reasons for not doing so. Often the reasons are operational considerations and not based on concerns with the concept or the content of CBA. Around the country, here is the status:

- Engineers & Geoscientists BC have it fully implemented.
- APEGA (Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of Alberta) are in the process of implementing it and anticipate it will be ready by mid-2018.

- The Yukon and Northwest Territories and Nunavut use the registration services and policies of Alberta so they mirror the changes there.
- The following Associations are considering adopting CBA and are in various stages of change:
  - Engineers & Geoscientists of New Brunswick
  - Engineers Nova Scotia
- The following Associations are evaluating the possibility of adopting CBA:
  - Ordre des Ingenieurs de Quebec (OIQ)
  - Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of Newfoundland and Labrador (PEG-NL)

## 8 IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS

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Further questions can be directed to Tina Maki, P.Eng., Director of Special Projects. Call the APEGS office at (306) 525-9547, toll free 1-800-500-9547 or email [tmaki@apegs.ca](mailto:tmaki@apegs.ca).