

The Internship Program and the Online Reporting of Experience

Jason Ong
Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC)
#200 – 4010 Regent Street
Burnaby, BC V5C 6N2
jong@apeg.bc.ca

Summary

APEGBC views its internship programs for both Geoscientists-in-Training (GIT) and Engineers-in-Training (EIT) to be a valuable stage for all applicants aiming towards professional registration. One of the benefits of the internship programs is the option for members to utilize the *EIT/GIT Online Experience Reporting System*. This is an online system that allows EIT/GIT's to log their accumulated experience online to receive a preliminary credit assignment and feedback from reviewers in their discipline. This presentation will share our findings on the true benefits, concerns/issues, and our plan moving forward regarding the online reporting of experience.

Introduction

The EIT/GIT Program (the Program) plays a decisive role in enabling graduates to become part of the engineering and geoscience professions in British Columbia.

One of the main requirements for the success of this developmental program is its committed implementation by the employer. It is naturally expected that employers will provide an environment that allows trainees to receive the appropriate guidance, education and work experience to enable them to fulfill the requirements for registration as professionals. This includes gaining an understanding of what the practice of professional engineering and geoscience means with respect to the application of engineering and geoscience principles and with respect to the safe-guarding of life, health, property, economic interests, the public welfare or the environment. APEGBC encourages employers to provide trainees with in-house training, while motivating them to achieve levels of excellence and empowering them with challenging assignments that will encourage them to assume increasing levels of responsibility.

To support trainees in making informed choices as they gain their experience for registration, APEGBC provides:

The EIT/GIT Online Reporting and Review System that provides experience credits and commentary for every six to twelve month work period

Program Objective

APEGBC aims to bridge the gap from university studies to professional registration by monitoring the progress of the trainees, identifying areas for correction and providing timely feedback to the trainees at regular intervals during the program.

The objective of the Program is to support students and graduates as they gain varying experience that will in turn empower them to possess their own professional judgement. It will help the individual trainee understand his or her relationship with the employer/client, the association/ordre, and society. The trainee can contribute to all three of these in different ways and, doing so, the trainee becomes the driving force behind his or her own success.

It is important that an EIT be under the supervision of a P.Eng. and that a GIT be supervised by a P.Geo. Ideally, the supervising P.Eng. or P.Geo. will be employed in the same company as the trainee. If this is not possible, the trainee is encouraged to contact APEGBC's Registration Department for guidance in identifying potential options for professional guidance and supervision. Periods of employment without professional supervision will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

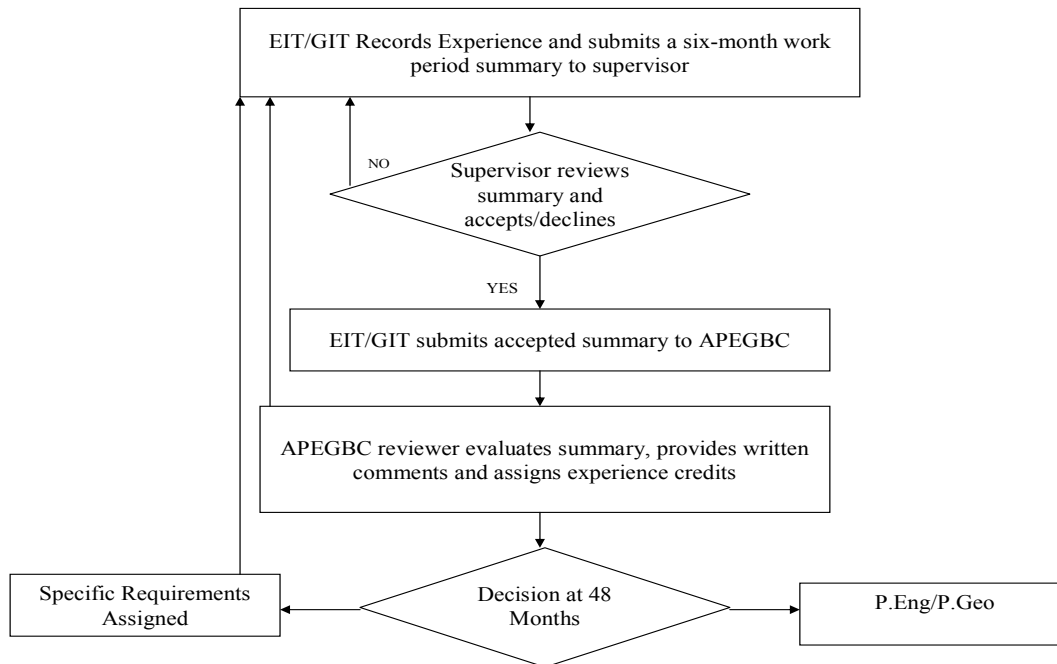
Online Reporting and the Review of Work Experience

An online experience reporting system is available to EITs/GITs to improve feedback on experience prior to their applying for P.Eng/P.Geo. registration. Through this system, trainees and senior student members of APEGBC (MAPS) can report their experience online in six to twelve month increments so that experience credits can be accumulated during the pre and post graduation periods as part of the 48-month experience requirement to apply for P.Eng./PGeo.

Trainees will get the most value from this system by using it early in their work experience so that they can be given feedback in terms of experience credits (in months) and comments from the experience reviewers. Experience can be recorded retroactively, starting from any experience the trainee or MAPS member may have gained after the second year of university studies in engineering/geoscience.

When a trainee decides to begin logging his/her experience, he or she should first verify that his/her P.Eng/P.Geo. supervisor is available to use this system. Then, he or she should start with the oldest experience, including any pre-graduation experience (co-op or summer) gained after the second year of university studies under the supervision of a P.Eng. /P.Geo. He or she will be notified of the experience credits assigned for that particular work period as soon as possible.

The following flowchart depicts each six-month reporting cycle:



Once a trainee has received 42 months of credit, he or she will then be working on his or her last summary. After having obtained 48 months of experience, the trainee should visit www.apeg.bc.ca to submit an application for registration as a P.Eng/P.Geo., ask references to submit a reference form (available on the APEGBC website) on his or her behalf, and submit the last six-month work summary for review. An assessment of the trainee's application will be completed, and he or she will be informed of the result. Typical results will include registration as a P.Eng/P.Geo, an invitation to attend an interview to discuss the trainee's experience, or an assignment of specific experience and/or training.

Challenges with Online Reporting

As with any system, there are a number of issues that have emerged over the years. These will be covered in more depth during the presentation. They are:

- The actual format of the reports. (No format/Specific format)
- Review times. (Because all of our reviewers are volunteers there is no guarantee that reviews can be completed on a consistent basis. This has led to problems with regards to prolonged delays for work periods being credited)

- Subjectivity. (Work periods online are reviewed by one reviewer at a time. As with any evaluation, some element of subjectivity is unavoidable)
- The appeal process. (If candidates are not awarded the amount of credit they are asking for, they are likely to dispute the review)
- Credit disputed or disallowed upon review at 48 months. (All candidates who go through the online system need to have their entire experience confirmed upon final review. This has resulted in previously awarded credit occasionally being overturned leading to a prolonging of the application process)

Moving Forward

Despite the challenges, APEGBC truly believes that the online reporting of experience is the way of the future. In fact, the electronic reporting of experience will become mandatory for all applicants for registration, not just EIT/GIT's as the association moves towards a paperless application format. Presently, the EIT/GIT Online Experience Reporting System is being revised and we hope to have a new system in place for preliminary testing and troubleshooting in the coming year. The goal is to take all that we have learned since its inception and to improve on the process so that all involved, such as the member-in-training, the supervisor, and the reviewer, can use a system that is not only user friendly, but also an integral part of the application process towards professional membership.