

## Chapter GHSS 2

### PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGIST LICENSURE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

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**Note:** Chapter GHSS 2 was created as an emergency rule effective May 15, 1999.

**GHSS 2.01 Authority and purpose.** This chapter is adopted under authority in ss. 15.08 (5) (b), 227.11 (2), 470.03 (1) (a), 470.03 (2), 470.04, and 470.07, Stats. The purpose of this chapter is to interpret basic education, experience, and examination requirements for licensure as a professional geologist as specified in ss. 470.04 and 470.05, Stats., and to govern biennial continuing education of professional geologists.

**History:** Cr. Register, December, 1999, No. 528, eff. 1-1-00; **CR 24-078: am. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.**

**GHSS 2.02 Applications.** An applicant for a professional geologist license shall file an application. An applicant who does not comply with a request for information related to the application within one year from the date of the request shall file a new application.

**Note:** Instructions for applications are available on the department's website at <http://dsps.wi.gov>.

**History:** Cr. Register, December, 1999, No. 528, eff. 1-1-00.

**GHSS 2.03 Application contents.** An application for licensure as a professional geologist shall include:

(1) Either of the following:

(a) Official transcripts of graduate and undergraduate training, properly attested to by the degree granting institution and submitted by the institution directly to the board establishing that the applicant has been granted a bachelor degree in geology or a bachelor degree with a geology major meeting the requirements under s. 470.04 (2) (c), Stats., granted by a college or university accredited by a regional accrediting agency approved by the state board of education in the state in which the college or university is located, or accredited by a Canadian accrediting agency satisfactory to the board, or

(b) A chronological history of the applicant's employment or other qualifying experience in satisfaction of s. 470.04 (7), Stats.

(2) A chronological history of the applicant's employment or other qualifying experience in satisfaction of s. 470.04 (2) (c) 1., Stats.

(3) For applicants applying under s. 470.04 (2) (c) 1. or 2., Stats., a completed "supervised geologic experience" form completed by a supervisor relating to professional geology and who is one of the following:

(a) A professional geologist who, during the time of the supervised practice, was licensed in this state.

(b) A professional geologist who, during the time of the supervised practice, was licensed in another licensing jurisdiction that has licensure requirements not lower than the requirements for licensure in this state.

(c) A person whom the professional geologist section determines is qualified to have responsible charge of geologic work.

(4) For applicants applying under s. 470.04 (2) (c) 2., Stats., submission of at least 3 "peer evaluation" forms satisfactory to the professional geologist section completed by licensed professional geologists who have had professional contact with the applicant's practice and who certify that the applicant is qualified to assume responsible charge of geologic work.

(5) References from at least 5 individuals, at least 3 of whom shall be professionally competent to evaluate the applicant's practice and at least one of whom shall be licensed as a professional geologist in this state or in a state where an applicant by reciprocity is currently licensed.

(6) The fee required under s. 440.05 (1), Stats.

(7) For applicants previously licensed in another state, territory or possession of the United States or in another country, verification of the applicant's licensure in the licensing jurisdiction of original licensure or, if the applicant has permitted his or her licensure in the jurisdiction of original licensure to lapse, verification of licensure in the licensing jurisdiction where the applicant is currently licensed and where the applicant was last engaged in the practice of professional geology.

(8) For applicants who have a pending criminal charge or have been convicted of a crime, all related information necessary for the professional geologist section to determine whether the circumstances of the pending criminal charge or criminal conviction are substantially related to the circumstances of the practice of geology.

(9) Any additional data, exhibits or references showing the extent and quality of the applicant's experience that may be required by the professional geologist section.

(10) Evidence of successful completion of the fundamentals of geology examination and the principles and practice of geology examination.

**Note:** Application forms, including the "Supervised Geologic Experience" form and the "Peer Evaluation" form are available on the department's website at <http://dsps.wi.gov>.

**History:** Cr. Register, December, 1999, No. 528, eff. 1-1-00.

#### GHSS 2.04 Experience as a professional geologist.

(1) To qualify as satisfactory professional geologic work for the purposes of s. 470.04 (2) (c), Stats., an applicant's experience shall include the application of accepted principles in the practice of geology and shall demonstrate an applicant's progressive development of competence to practice as a professional geologist. The experience shall be acquired in the areas of the practice of geology which in the opinion of the professional geologist section provide the applicant with a knowledge of principles and data related to the practice of geology at least equivalent to that which would be acquired by experience in the areas of practice listed. Experience in every listed area is not required.

(2) Areas of experience in the practice of professional geology include:

(a) Mineralogy, including identification of minerals and mineral assemblages, the determination of physical and chemical properties of rocks, and determination of probable genesis and sequence of mineral assemblages.

(b) Petrography or petrology, including identification and classification of major rock types, determination of physical and chemical properties of rocks, and determination of probable genesis and sequence of rock formation.

(c) Geochemistry, including evaluation of geochemical data, and construction of geologic models based on geochemical analyses.

(d) Stratigraphy or historical analysis, including identification of rock sequences, establishment of the relative position of rock units, determination of the ages of rock units, interpretation of depositional environments and geologic histories, performance of facies analyses, and establishment of stratigraphic classifications.

(e) Structural geology, including identification of structural features and their interrelationships, determination of the orientation of structural features, performance of qualitative and quantitative structural analyses, correlation of separated structural features, and interpretation of structural features and tectonic histories.

(f) Paleontology, including determination of estimated relative geologic ages of rocks, identification of fossils and fossil assemblages, correlation of rock biostratigraphy, and paleoecological interpretation.

(g) Geomorphology, including identification of landforms, performance of geomorphic field investigations, determination of geomorphic processes and the development and age relationships of landforms and soils, and interpretation of geomorphic field data.

(h) Geophysics, including performance of geophysical investigations in the field, performance of geological interpretations of geophysical data, and identification of potentially hazardous geological conditions by use of geophysical techniques.

(i) Hydrogeology, including design and interpretation of hydrologic and hydrogeologic testing programs, utilization of physical and chemical data to evaluate hydrogeologic conditions, development and interpretation of groundwater geologic maps and sections, application of geophysical methods to analyze hydrogeologic conditions, determination of the physical and chemical properties of aquifers and vadose zones, determination of groundwater resources and quality, design of wells and drilling programs, development of groundwater resource management plans, and development of remedial action programs.

(j) Engineering geology, including geologic interpretation for engineering design, identification and interpretation of potential seismic and geologic hazards, development and interpretation of engineering geology maps and sections, evaluation of materials resources, establishment of site selection and evaluation criteria, design and implementation of field and laboratory programs, and provision of sample soils for geologic analysis and materials properties testing.

(k) Mining geology, including formulation of exploration programs, implementation of field investigations on prospects, performance of geologic interpretations for mineral reserves, performance of economic analyses and appraisals, provision of geologic interpretations for mineral resource, mine development, and mine reclamation or abandonment.

(L) Petroleum geology, including formulation of exploration plans, implementation of field investigations on prospects, per-

formance of geologic interpretations of physical properties and hydrocarbon reserves, performance of petroleum economic analyses and appraisals, and provision of geologic interpretations for development and abandonment of hydrocarbon reservoirs.

(m) Glacial geology, including understanding glacial processes, deposits, landforms and environments; identification and classification of glacial sediment; performance of facies analyses; identification of glacial sequences and establishment of stratigraphic classifications; determination of glacial histories; and development and interpretation of glacial geologic maps and sections.

(3) Not more than one year of satisfactory experience credit may be granted for any calendar year.

**History:** Cr. Register, December, 1999, No. 528, eff. 1-1-00.

**GHSS 2.05 Education.** (1) In satisfaction of the education requirement under s. 470.04 (2) (b), Stats., the professional geologist section shall accept a bachelor degree in geology, or a degree reflecting that the applicant has completed at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of course credits in geology of a variety and nature sufficient to constitute a major in geology, granted by a college or university accredited by a regional accrediting agency approved by the state board of education in the state in which the college or university is located, or accredited by a Canadian accrediting agency satisfactory to the board.

(2) If the degree is from an educational institution not meeting the requirements of sub. (1), the applicant must provide an official evaluation by a transcript evaluation service acceptable to the professional geologist section which shows that the degree is equivalent to a bachelor degree in geology or a bachelor degree with a major in geology meeting the requirements under sub. (1).

(3) In order to be considered a major in geology, an applicant must have completed at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of course credits which include credits in at least 4 of the following areas:

- (a) Geochemistry or geophysics.
- (b) Geologic field methods.
- (c) Glacial geology or geomorphology.
- (d) Hydrogeology or hydrology.
- (e) Mineralogy.
- (f) Petrology or petrography.
- (g) Stratigraphy or sedimentology.
- (h) Structural geology.

(4) In addition to the coursework required under sub. (3), other coursework that may be used to satisfy the 30 semester hour or 45 quarter hour requirement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Engineering geology.
- (b) Historical geology.
- (c) Mining geology.
- (d) Paleontology.
- (e) Petroleum geology.
- (f) Physical geology.

**History:** Cr. Register, December, 1999, No. 528, eff. 1-1-00.

**GHSS 2.06 Examinations.** (1) **REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS.** An applicant for initial licensure as a professional geologist shall pass examinations for the professional practice of geology approved by the professional geologist section. Required examinations shall include a fundamentals examination and a principles and practice of geology examination.

(2) **FUNDAMENTALS EXAMINATION.** The fundamentals examination requires an understanding of the physical and mathe-

mathematical sciences involved in the fundamentals of geology. To be eligible to take the fundamentals examination, an applicant shall have done one of the following:

(a) Completed at least 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours of course credits in geology and be of not less than second semester senior standing in a bachelor program meeting the requirements of s. GHSS 2.05.

(b) Completed at least 4 years of experience, which is determined by the professional geologist section to be equivalent to the requirements of s. GHSS 2.04 (1).

**(3) PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE EXAMINATION.** The principles and practice examination requires the ability to apply geologic principles and judgment to problems in the practice of professional geology. To be eligible to take the principles and practice examination, an applicant shall have done one of the following:

(a) To be eligible to take the principles and practice examination, an applicant under s. 470.04 (2) (c) 1., Stats., shall have done all of the following:

1. Met the requirements under s. 470.04 (2) (a), Stats.
2. Met the requirement under s. 470.04 (2) (b), Stats., or have at least 5 years of professional experience in addition to the qualifying experience under subd. 3., which is determined by the professional geologist section to be substantially equivalent to the requirement under s. 470.04 (2) (b), Stats.

3. Completed at least 4 years of professional experience in geologic work of a character satisfactory to the professional geologist section, or completed at least 3 years of professional experience in geologic work of a character satisfactory to the section if the applicant has one or more advanced degrees relevant to the practice of professional geology, demonstrating that the applicant is qualified to assume responsible charge of geologic work. At least one year of the qualifying professional experience under this subdivision must have been performed under the supervision of one or more of the following:

a. A person who is at the time of application licensed as a professional geologist under this chapter or who, during the period of supervised experience, was licensed as a professional geologist under ch. 470, 1997 Stats.

b. A person who, during the period of supervised experience, was licensed as a professional geologist in another state, territory or possession of the United States or in another country that has licensure requirements for professional geologists that are not lower than the requirements for licensure under this chapter.

c. A person who, during the period of supervised experience, is deemed by the professional geologist section to have been qualified to have responsible charge of geologic work.

(b) To be eligible to take the principles and practice examination, an applicant under s. 470.04 (2) (c) 2., Stats., shall have done all of the following:

1. Met the requirements under s. 470.04 (2) (a), Stats.
2. Met the requirement under s. 470.04 (2) (b), Stats., or have at least 5 years of professional experience in addition to the qualifying experience under subd. 3., which is determined by the professional geologist section to be equivalent to the requirement under s. 470.04 (2) (b), Stats.

3. Completed at least 6 years of professional experience in geologic work of a character satisfactory to the professional geologist section, or completed at least 5 years of professional experience in geologic work of a character satisfactory to the section if the applicant has one or more advanced degrees relevant to the practice of professional geology, demonstrating that the applicant is qualified to assume responsible charge of geologic work. At least one year of the qualifying professional experience under this

subdivision must have been performed under a peer review system approved by the professional geologist section.

**(3m) APPLICATION FOR EXAMINATION.** An applicant for initial licensure shall file an application for examination with the board not less than 2 months before the scheduled date of the examination.

**(4) AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.** Otherwise qualified applicants with disabilities shall be provided with reasonable accommodations.

**(5) EXAMINATION AND REFUND FEES.** The fee for the examinations for professional geologists and the requirements for refund of fees are specified in s. 440.05 (1) (b), Stats., and s. SPS 4.06, respectively.

**(6) PLACE AND TIME OF EXAMINATIONS.** The examinations required by this section shall be held at sites and on dates designated by the professional geologist section.

**(7) PASSING SCORES.** (a) The passing scores set by the professional geologist section represent the minimum competency required to protect public health and safety.

(b) All required examinations are scored separately. The fundamentals of geology and the principles and practice of geology examinations of the association of state boards of geology are scored separately. An applicant shall achieve a passing score on each of the required examinations to qualify for licensure.

(c) The professional geologist section may accept the recommendations of the association of state boards of geology for the passing score on the fundamentals of geology and the principles and practice of geology examinations.

**(8) CHEATING.** The professional geologist section may deny release of scores or issuance of a credential if the board determines that the applicant violated rules of conduct of the examination or otherwise acted dishonestly in taking the examination.

**History:** Cr. Register, December, 1999, No. 528, eff. 1-1-00; am. (7) (b), r. (7) (d), Register, November, 2000, No. 539, eff. 12-1-00; correction in (5) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., Register November 2011 No. 671.

## GHSS 2.08 Continuing education requirements.

**(1) INITIAL APPLICABILITY.** Continuing education requirements will begin in the renewal period that starts on August 1, 2026, and ends on August 1, 2028, as specified in s. 440.08 (2) (a) 63u., Stats. Renewal applications due on August 1, 2028 will require continuing education.

**(2) GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.** Except as outlined in sub. (3) or (6), or if granted a waiver under s. GHSS 2.13, every licensee shall complete at least 24 hours of approved contact hours each biennium. The contact hours shall be pertinent to the practice of professional geology, which may include scientific, technical, ethical, or relevant managerial content. A minimum of 1 of the total 24 continuing education contact hours shall be for record-keeping, under s. GHSS 2.12.

**(3) NEW LICENSEES.** Between the date of initial licensure and the following renewal date specified in s. 440.08 (2) (a) 63u., Stats., a new licensee shall not be required to comply with the continuing education requirements. A new licensee is required to comply with continuing education requirements beginning in the licensee's first full biennium.

**(4) CONTENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION.** During each biennial renewal period, each licensee shall complete a minimum of 4 of the total 24 continuing education contact hours in each of the following categories:

(a) Courses or activities in which the licensee practices.

(b) Courses or activities in the area of professional conduct and ethics, which may include the area of Wisconsin statutes and rules that regulate professional geologists.

**(5) TYPES OF COURSES AND ACTIVITIES.** Continuing education credit may be obtained from any of the following courses or activities that are offered by acceptable sponsors or providers under s. GHSS 2.10 (2):

(a) Successful completion of geology-related courses, presented by correspondence, internet, television, or video, and ending with examination or other verification processes. These may earn a varying number of contact hours depending on the course duration and course content.

(b) Successful completion of a college or university course in the area of geology or ethics.

(c) Successful completion of professional geology courses or activities offering contact hours on geologic topics.

(d) Active participation and successful completion of professional geology programs, seminars, tutorials, workshops, short courses, or in-house courses.

(e) Attending presentations at related technical or professional meetings at which at least 50 minutes is spent discussing professional geology issues, or attending a lecture on geology related issues, or both.

(f) Teaching courses, activities, or programs on a professional geology topic. Teaching credit is counted for teaching a course or seminar for the first time only and does not apply to faculty in the performance of their regularly assigned duties. Two contact hours will be awarded for every 50 minutes of teaching.

(g) Authoring professional geology related papers, articles, or geographical maps that appear in circulated journals, trade magazines, or in published geology textbooks. Credit is earned in the biennium of publication. A maximum of 16 contact hours per renewal period shall be awarded for this activity.

(h) Field trips organized and run by professional or technical societies or in conjunction with meetings, conventions, or conferences. These shall be awarded one contact hour for every 50 minutes of duration, up to 8 contact hours per day.

**(6) CARRYOVER ALLOWED.** Continuing education hours earned in excess of the minimum requirements for renewal of a license may be carried forward to the next renewal period but are limited to a maximum of 12 contact hours.

**History:** CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.

**GHSS 2.09 Compliance.** A licensee who fails to meet the continuing education requirements by the renewal date, as specified in s. 470.07, Stats., may not engage in the practice of professional geology until the license is renewed based upon verification of compliance with the continuing education requirements.

**History:** CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.

**GHSS 2.10 Standards for approval.** (1) To be approved for credit, a continuing education course or activity shall meet all of the following criteria:

(a) The course or activity includes instruction in an organized method of learning contributing directly to the professional competency of the licensee and pertains to subject matters which integrally relate to the practice of the profession.

(b) The course or activity is conducted by individuals who have specialized education, training, or experience and are considered qualified concerning the subject matter of the course or activity.

(c) The course or activity provides proof of attendance or certificate of completion.

(2) The professional geologist section may approve sponsors or providers for continuing education courses and activities, including the following:

(a) Technical or professional societies or similar organizations devoted to geologic sciences and education.

(b) Accredited colleges, universities, or other educational institutions and schools of higher education.

(c) Governmental units.

(d) Any other provider approved by the professional geologist section or its designee.

(3) The professional geologist section or its designee may approve courses, credits, contact hour value for courses, and other methods of earning credit.

(4) Contact hour credit for college or technical school courses approved by the professional geologist section shall be based on the definition of contact hour in s. GHSS 1.02 (4).

**History:** CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.

**GHSS 2.11 Certification of completion, proof of attendance.** (1) Each licensee shall certify on the renewal application their full compliance with the continuing education requirements in this chapter.

(2) The professional geologist section may require additional evidence demonstrating compliance with the continuing education requirements, including a certificate of completion, proof of attendance, or documentation of completion or credit for the courses or activities completed.

(3) A licensee may be subject to discipline by the board for failure to comply with sub. (2).

**History:** CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.

**GHSS 2.12 Recordkeeping.** It shall be the responsibility of the licensee to maintain records of continuing education hours for at least 2 biennia from the date on which the course or activity is completed. A minimum of at least one contact hour per biennium is required for recordkeeping purposes, with increments of one-quarter contact hour allowed thereafter. The recordkeeping may include any of the following:

(1) The name and address of the sponsor or provider.

(2) The title of the course or activity and a brief statement of the subject matter.

(3) Printed program schedules, registration confirmations or receipts, certificates of completion, proof of attendance, examination scores, or other proof of participation.

(4) The number of contact hours attended for each course or activity and the date and place of the course or activity.

**History:** CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.

**GHSS 2.13 Waiver of continuing education.** (1) A licensee may apply to the professional geologist section for a postponement or waiver of the continuing education requirements of this chapter on grounds of prolonged illness or disability, or on other grounds constituting extreme hardship. The professional geologist section shall consider each application individually on its merits, and the section may grant a postponement, partial waiver, or total waiver as deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

(2) A renewal applicant seeking renewal of a license without having fully complied with the continuing education requirements shall file a renewal application, the required fee, a statement setting forth the facts concerning noncompliance, any supporting documentation, and a request for a waiver of the requirements. These materials shall be submitted prior to the renewal date. If the professional geologist section finds from the statement or any other evidence submitted that extreme hardship has been shown, the section may grant a postponement, partial waiver, or total waiver of the continuing education requirements for the applicable renewal period.

(3) A licensee who receives a waiver for continuing education may be required to complete continuing education upon or before the licensee's return to the active practice of professional geology as determined necessary by the professional geologist section to ensure the ability of the licensee to practice professional geology in a safe and competent manner.

History: CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25.

**GHSS 2.14 Late renewal.** (1) A licensee who applies for renewal after the renewal date specified in s. 440.08 (2) (a) 63u., Stats., shall verify to the professional geologist section that the licensee has completed continuing education that meets the requirements of this chapter and shall meet the requirements for late renewal specified in s. 440.08 (3), Stats.

(2) Continuing education hours submitted to satisfy this requirement for late renewal shall not be used to satisfy continuing education requirements for a subsequent renewal.

(3) Subsections (1) and (2) pertain to a licensee applying for renewal of their license less than 5 years after its expiration, as stated in s. GHSS 1.05 (1). A licensee who applies for renewal more than 5 years after the expiration date shall still comply with subs. (1) and (2) and meet the requirements for reinstatement as described in s. 440.08 (3), Stats., and s. GHSS 1.05 (2) (a) and (b).

History: CR 24-078: cr. Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25; correction in (3) made under s. 35.17, Stats., Register August 2025 No. 836.