

Office of the
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commissioner

Bureau du
commissaire à
l'équité



Study of Registration Practices of the

ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND SURVEYORS, 2007

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The Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government, established under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. Its mandate is to ensure that certain regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction..... | 3 |
| 2. Background of the Regulatory Body..... | 3 |
| A. Legislation..... | 3 |
| B. Protected Titles | 3 |
| C. Definition of the Profession | 4 |
| D. Labour Market/Economic Trends..... | 4 |
| E. New Developments Within the Profession..... | 5 |
| F. Staffing | 5 |
| 3. Registration Practices | 5 |
| A. Registration Requirements and Application Process..... | 5 |
| B. Documentation Required from Internationally Trained Individuals | 7 |
| C. Credential Assessment (Third Party and/or Internal) | 7 |
| D. Academic/Program Requirements | 8 |
| E. Work Experience Requirements | 8 |
| F. Examinations | 9 |
| G. Language Requirements..... | 9 |
| H. Fees..... | 10 |
| I. Third Parties | 10 |
| J. Typical Length of the Registration Process..... | 10 |
| K. Accredited Programs | 11 |
| L. Internal Review/Appeal Process | 11 |
| 4. Bridging Programs..... | 12 |
| 5. Mutual Recognition Agreements..... | 12 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 6. Applicants' Interactions with Regulatory Body | 12 |
| A. Nature and Frequency of Communication | 12 |
| B. Backlogs | 12 |
| C. Complaints Regarding the Registration Process | 13 |
| 7. Changes Since the 2005 Survey | 13 |
| 8. Registration Information and Statistics | 13 |
| 9. Sources | 19 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) undertook a study of registration practices of Ontario’s regulated professions during the fall and winter of 2007–2008. The purpose of the study was to understand each regulated profession’s 2007 registration practices and to establish baseline data and information to enable the OFC to measure progress as it fulfills its mandate under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006.

This report reflects the registration practices of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors as of December 31, 2007. Information in this report was gathered from:

- face-to-face meetings with registration staff of the regulatory body
- additional documentation provided by the regulatory body
- relevant websites
- career maps for the profession posted on the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration’s website (where applicable).

The Association of Ontario Land Surveyors also provided registration information and statistics for 2005, 2006 and 2007 through a standard spreadsheet designed by the OFC.

An analysis and summary of the findings for all of the regulated professions is contained in the OFC’s *Ontario’s Regulated Professions: Report on the 2007 Study of Registration Practices*.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE REGULATORY BODY

A. Legislation

The Association of Ontario Land Surveyors (AOLS) governs its members in accordance with the Surveyors Act, 1990.

B. Protected Titles

All licensed or certified members of the AOLS are entitled to use the designation “Ontario land surveyor” (O.L.S.) and/or “Ontario land information professional” (O.L.I.P.). The titles are interchangeable. (Note: *Associate* members are not entitled to use the protected titles.)

C. Definition of the Profession

A surveyor is a professional with the academic qualifications and technical expertise to conduct one or more of the following activities:

- Determining, measuring and representing land, three-dimensional objects, point-fields and trajectories
- Assembling and interpreting land and geographically related information
- Using that information for the planning and efficient administration of the land, the sea and any structures on the land and sea
- Conducting research into the above practices and developing them.

Geomatics, the science of land surveying, is the science and technology of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, distributing and using geographical information. Five branches of geomatics are recognized within the AOLS:

- cadastral surveying
- geodesy
- geographic information management (GIM)
- hydrography
- photogrammetry

The AOLS issues licences to cadastral (legal boundary) surveyors, and certificates of registration in geodesy, geographic information management, hydrography and photogrammetry. All applicants must meet the academic requirements, comply with the term of articles and pass the professional examinations set out by the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee (AERC) for their particular branch.

The various functions carried out by land surveyors range from the typical surveying of land boundaries to more specialized tasks such as developing underwater hydrographic surveys, geographic information systems and the Global Positioning System (GPS).

D. Labour Market/Economic Trends

Currently, land surveyors in Ontario do not have a professional advocacy organization. Research on the labour market for land surveyors is tracked primarily by the AOLS.

Across Ontario, there are few areas where the work of surveyors is not needed.

However, the labour market for land surveyors is saturated in some areas, such as Windsor.

E. New Developments Within the Profession

There has been discussion among the land surveyor regulators across Canada about forming a national professional association of land surveyors that would create a common core syllabus and facilitate greater labour mobility.

F. Staffing

The AOLS currently employs eight full-time employees and two part-time employees, and has two contracted employees working full-time. Three of the eight full-time employees are involved in some stage of the registration process.

3. REGISTRATION PRACTICES

A. Registration Requirements and Application Process

i. Basic Requirements for Registration

The general registration requirements for becoming a fully licensed land surveyor in Ontario include all of the following:

- A degree in geomatics from an accredited university program, or its equivalent
- A 1–1½-year period of supervised work experience (called a “term of articles”)
- Successful completion of all professional examinations prescribed by the AOLS.

ii. Steps in the Application Process

The basic registration process involves the following steps.

Step 1 – Application

The applicant submits the following:

- \$200 academic evaluation fee
- A resumé

- An official transcript forwarded *directly* from his or her educational institution (in some instances, the AOLS may also require course descriptions)
- Any other supporting information — academic or experience-related — that may support the applicant’s evaluation.

Step 2 – Evaluation

The AOLS evaluates the applicant’s academic credentials, and informs the applicant of any additional courses he or she must take.

Step 3 – Additional Coursework

The applicant completes any courses or challenge exams specified by the AOLS evaluation.

Step 4 – Term of Articles

The applicant completes a term of articles (a period of work experience with an approved employer), and writes a Statutes Examination.

Step 5 – Professional Entrance Examination

After completing all other requirements, the applicant writes the Professional Entrance Examination.

On completing all of these steps, the applicant is eligible for registration in the AOLS.

iii. Associate Membership

An associate class of membership in the AOLS is offered to people who do not meet the requirements for licensing or registration, but do have an interest in geomatics. The associate class of membership is available for all five branches of membership listed in section 2.c. Associate members may *not* use the protected titles.

A person who is employed or directly supervised by an Ontario land surveyor/Ontario land information professional, either in private practice or in government, is eligible to apply for an associate membership.

Also, applicants for full registration apply for associate memberships at the start of their articling period.

Students enrolled in an AOLS-approved post-secondary geomatics program may apply for an associate membership free of charge.

Information about the application process for associate membership is available on the AOLS website.

B. Documentation Required from Internationally Trained Individuals

i. Standard Documentation

The documents required from internationally trained applicants are identical to those required from domestically trained applicants:

- A resumé
- An official transcript forwarded directly from the applicant's educational institution (in some instances, the AOLS may also require course descriptions)
- Any other supporting information — academic or experience-related — that may be required to support the applicant's evaluation.

ii. Options for Applicants with Unavailable/Destroyed Documents

Internationally trained applicants who cannot substantiate their educational credentials with supporting documentation can take AOLS challenge exams, through which they can demonstrate their level of expertise. Currently, the AOLS sets and administers the challenge exams. However, in the future, the AOLS will refer applicants with unavailable/destroyed documents or academic deficiencies to the Canadian Board of Examiners of Professional Surveyors to take challenge exams.

Note: To date, there has been no instance where the AOLS has required an applicant to write a challenge exam.

C. Credential Assessment (Third Party and/or Internal)

The AOLS will carry out a detailed academic evaluation of an applicant's post-secondary education, if he or she has one of the following:

- A four-year technological degree in engineering or geomatics obtained at a Canadian post-secondary institution
- A two-year technological diploma in geomatics
- A non-Canadian university degree that has been evaluated by Comparative Education Services (CES) of the University of Toronto
- A professional survey commission from another recognized jurisdiction.

The AOLS's academic evaluations will specify whether additional university courses are required to satisfy the academic requirements of the AOLS. If additional courses are required, the evaluation will specify them. Most of these courses are available at the post-secondary institutions offering accredited geomatics programs.

D. Academic/Program Requirements

To be registered with the AOLS as a land surveyor, an applicant must have a degree in geomatics from an accredited university program, or an equivalent to such a degree. The applicant can achieve this “equivalency” by taking additional university courses, and/or completing challenge exams.

The academic areas covered in an accredited geomatics program include courses ranging from general topics in statistics, jurisprudence, professional affairs, computing, calculus, physics and oral and written communication, to more specific topics in geomatics, surveying, survey analysis, survey law, photogrammetry and remote sensing, land management and land planning, geodesy and land information systems. A more comprehensive breakdown of the program syllabus of an accredited geomatics program can be found on the AOLS website.

E. Work Experience Requirements

An applicant must obtain at least 1 to 1½ years of training and work experience in professional land surveying to satisfy the requirements of the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee (AERC). This training and work experience is done under Articles of Agreement with an Ontario land surveyor/Ontario land information professional.

The “Articles of Agreement” is an agreement about training and service between a supervising surveyor (an employer who is a member of the AOLS) and an applicant. The applicant agrees to serve the supervising surveyor in the practice of professional land surveying. The supervising surveyor agrees to provide the applicant with the scope of experience specified by the AERC. The Articles of Agreement must be approved by the AERC.

The work period covered by the agreement is called the “term of articles.”

If an applicant has received work experience in professional land surveying before entering into his or her term of articles that is comparable to the stipulated requirements, the AERC may reduce the articling time requirement. Under certain circumstances, an applicant may be permitted to have his or her articles transferred to another surveyor.

During the articling period, the applicant is assigned a monitor. The monitor is independent of the company that the applicant articling with, and receives the applicant’s work reports and other written submissions.

Articling applicants must complete the term of articles within four years after they start the process.

F. Examinations

i. Statutes Examination

The Statutes Examination, set by the AERC, is a requirement for completing the term of articles. All articling applicants must successfully pass this three-hour examination before they proceed to the final step in the registration process: the Professional Entrance Examination.

ii. Professional Entrance Examination

The Professional Entrance Examination, set by the AERC, is four hours in length, and consists of written and oral components.

The Professional Entrance Examination is normally offered twice a year to candidates who have completed their term of articles. To apply to take this examination, an applicant should apply in writing to the Registrar at least one month before the examination.

After successfully completing the examination, the applicant is eligible to apply for full membership in the AOLS.

iii. Study Aids

The types of self-assessment and exam study materials that are available from the AOLS include the last five years of Professional Entrance Examinations, and information on the statutes, bylaws and policies to be tested in the Statutes Examination.

iv. Challenge Exams

Applicants from non-accredited post-secondary programs (or with unavailable/destroyed documents) may be required to take challenge exams. Currently, the AOLS sets and administers challenge exams. However, in the future, the AOLS will refer applicants with academic deficiencies to the Canadian Board of Examiners of Professional Surveyors (CBEPS) to write challenge exams.

Note: To date, there has been no instance where the AOLS has required an applicant to write a challenge exam.

G. Language Requirements

The AOLS academic evaluation has a communications component. Beyond this, students are not expected to take language tests. Applicants need to be proficient in English or French to the extent that they can clearly understand and communicate technical information and meet the reporting requirements of Ontario land surveyors.

H. Fees

| Fee | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Academic evaluation fee | \$200 |
| Past copies of Professional Entrance Examinations | \$5 each |
| Annual fee for articling students | \$85 |
| Annual fee for associate members | \$50 |
| Annual fee for licensed members (cadastral surveying) | \$1,000 |
| Annual fee for certificate of registration members (geodesy, geographic information management, hydrography, or photogrammetry) | \$350 |
| License to operate land surveying business with one surveyor + fee for each additional surveyor registered with the business | \$500 + \$250 per additional surveyor |

Challenge exams do not have set fees. The AOLS's policy is that if a challenge exam is required, the fee will be similar to the cost for the corresponding university course (usually about \$500).

I. Third Parties

| Name of Third Party | Relationship to Regulatory Body |
|---|--|
| Comparative Education Services (CES) of the University of Toronto | Performs credential assessment on the degrees of internationally trained applicants. |
| Canadian Board of Examiners of Professional Surveyors | Sets challenge exams for applicants who are lacking academic requirements. (The board will take over this role from the AOLS in the future.) |

J. Typical Length of the Registration Process

The length of the registration process depends on the number of core-subject requirements that a candidate has already met. For example, it could take a student as long as six years to complete a university program in geomatics and the term of articles. However, an applicant who comes to the AOLS with an accredited geomatics degree or its equivalent can be registered in under two years.

The only time restriction in the registration process is in the articling component (see section 3.e). Once an applicant has begun articling, he or she has four years to achieve the 1 to 1½ years of experience required.

K. Accredited Programs

Membership in the AOLS requires a degree in geomatics from an accredited university program, or its equivalent.

Currently, the only accredited geomatics programs in Canada are offered at the following universities.

- Ryerson University, Toronto
- York University, Toronto
- University of Calgary, Calgary
- University of New Brunswick, Fredericton

The two geomatics programs offered in Ontario, at Ryerson University and York University, are engineering programs with geomatics streams. Because of the small number of students in these programs, some required geomatics courses are not offered by one or the other university:

- Students from Ryerson's geomatics program will be lacking one of the core-subject requirements of the AOLS academic requirements.
- Students from the York University geomatics program will be lacking four of the core-subject requirements.

York and Ryerson currently share the responsibility for offering survey law courses to students in the two programs. Survey law is one of the core-subject areas required by the AOLS.

L. Internal Review/Appeal Process

Each Statutes Examination and Professional Entrance Examination is marked by two individuals, and the average of the two graders' marks becomes the mark that the student receives. Any examination that has received two marks that vary by more than 20 per cent will be automatically reviewed. An applicant who is not satisfied with the grade he or she receives can request a review by the AERC.

If licensure is denied for any reason, an applicant can appeal his or her case to the Registration Committee, which is a statutory committee of the AOLS. Hearings are formal and recorded, and

applicants may be represented by legal counsel. All applicants are notified of the appeals process when they are denied licensure.

The Registration Committee consists of at least three AOLS members and one person appointed by the government. The government-appointed committee member is also one of three government-appointed members of the AOLS Governing Council.

4. BRIDGING PROGRAMS

The AOLS does not currently offer a bridging program. However, it does permit applicants who are missing certain academic requirements to take challenge exams. This allows applicants to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competencies, and helps applicants achieve the qualifications they need in order to be registered.

5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

The AOLS is a signatory to a mutual recognition agreement organized by the Association of Canada Land Surveyors and surveying associations in all of the other provinces except Prince Edward Island. Under this agreement, a licensed surveyor from any of the participating jurisdictions may achieve membership in another jurisdiction by demonstrating knowledge of local jurisprudence and local land registration systems, through an examination or completion of an assignment.

6. APPLICANTS' INTERACTIONS WITH REGULATORY BODY

A. Nature and Frequency of Communication

Following the academic evaluation process, most of the communication between the AOLS and the applicant is at the initiative of the applicant.

Once the articling process begins, applicants are in regular contact with their monitors. Monitors are professionals of the AOLS who are specifically trained by the AERC to monitor articling applicants. The monitor is independent of the company that the applicant articling with, and receives regular written work reports from the applicant.

B. Backlogs

There are no backlogs in the registration process of the AOLS.

C. Complaints Regarding the Registration Process

In the past, there have been very few complaints about the AOLS's registration process. If an application is refused or is approved conditionally or with restrictions, the applicant may appeal to the Registration Committee, which will hold a formal hearing.

7. CHANGES SINCE THE 2005 SURVEY

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration conducted a survey in 2005 to collect information about occupational regulatory bodies in Ontario.

There have been no changes to the registration practices of the AOLS since the 2005 survey.

8. REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

Definitions used in these tables:

Alternative class of licence: a class of licence that enables its holder to practise with limitations; additional registration requirements must be met in order to be fully licensed. The Association of Ontario Land Surveyors (AOLS) has no alternative classes of licence.

Applicant: a person who has applied to start the process for entry to the profession.

Applicant actively pursuing licensing: an applicant who had some contact with the AOLS.

Inactive applicant: an applicant who had no contact with the AOLS within the year specified.

Member: a person who is currently able to use the protected title or professional designation "Ontario land surveyor" and/or "Ontario land information professional." Note: Associate members may not use the titles, and are not included in these tables.

Languages in which application information materials were available

| Language | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| English | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| French | No | No | No |
| Other(s) | | | |

Countries where internationally educated applicants were initially trained in land surveying

| Applications Received | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Largest number | Russian Federation | China | Romania |
| Second-largest number | Bangladesh | Sri Lanka | Sri Lanka |
| Third-largest number | China | Russian Federation | Bulgaria |
| Fourth-largest number | Iran | Albania | China |
| Fifth-largest number | Bangladesh | Philippines | Colombia |

Staff employed by the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors

| Number of Staff | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Involvement in registration process | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Involvement in appeals process | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in land surveying (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)¹

| Members | Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International | TOTAL |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Total members | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 645 |
| Non-practising members | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

¹ The AOLS does not track this information.

Applicants processed by the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors in 2005

| Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in land surveying (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario) | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--|
| In 2005 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31) | Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International | TOTAL | |
| New applications received | 14 | 1 | 0 | 19 | 34 | |
| Applicants actively pursuing licensing ¹ | 13 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 30 | |
| Inactive applicants ² | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | |
| Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Applicants who became members | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | |

¹ The new (2005) applicants who were actively pursuing licensing.

² The new (2005) applicants who were not pursuing licensing.

Applicants processed by the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors in 2006

| Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in land surveying (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario) | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--|
| In 2006 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31) | Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International | TOTAL | |
| New applications received | 18 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 28 | |
| Applicants actively pursuing licensing ¹ | 18 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 24 | |
| Inactive applicants ² | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | |
| Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Applicants who became members | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | |
| Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | |

¹ The new (2006) applicants who were actively pursuing licensing.

² The new (2006) applicants who were not pursuing licensing.

Applicants processed by the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors in 2007

| Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in land surveying (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario) | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--|
| In 2007 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31) | Ontario | Other Canadian Provinces | USA | Other International | TOTAL | |
| New applications received | 10 | 5 | 0 | 10 | 25 | |
| Applicants actively pursuing licensing ¹ | 10 | 5 | 0 | 10 | 25 | |
| Inactive applicants ² | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Applicants who became members | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | |
| Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | |

¹ The new (2007) applicants who were actively pursuing licensing.

² The new (2007) applicants who were not pursuing licensing.

9. SOURCES

Association of Ontario Land Surveyors website. <http://www.aols.org/>. Last accessed: March 26, 2008.

Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors website. <http://cbeps-cceag.ca/cms/>. Last accessed: March 26, 2008.

Representatives of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors met with staff of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner on November 5, 2007, to provide further information for this study.

[To Contents](#)

