

## **Continuing Education Purpose Statement**

### **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW DRAFT, 7/2016**

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The Oregon State Board of Geologist Examiners is reviewing the merits of requiring all registrants to complete continuing education as a condition of maintaining their registrations to publically practice geology in Oregon.

The Board's hypothesis is that a continuing education requirement is now appropriate and advisable to ensure that all registrants maintain a high level of proficiency within their discipline and stay current with new developments related to the practice of geology. The practice of geology in the United States and around the globe continues to evolve in response to new theories, studies, data collection efforts, and remote sensing equipment and techniques. Looking closer to home, Oregon is a large state with a complex and varied geological history that we continue to learn more about. This means that registrants also need to maintain a broad knowledge and skill basis to work in Oregon's varied geographic and geologic regions. The Board also feels that as the study of geology continues to expand throughout the world, the rate at which new and important information is developing requires that registrants find new ways to access, share and apply this information in public practice.

As Oregon continues to develop in rural and urban areas and Oregonians continue to demand wise use of Oregon's natural resources and landscapes, the assessment of the geologic conditions upon which Oregonians build and work will be increasingly important. Registrants provide critical services to the public, and it is important that these geologists who have a right to practice in Oregon stay current with new science and technologies so the citizens of Oregon and Oregon resources can best be protected.

Absent a continuing education requirement, the Board has very limited ability to assess whether registrants are reviewing new information, sharing this new information with others, and implementing new science and techniques in their practice in Oregon. A continuing education requirement appears to be the best tool for the Board to address the issue of continued competency of registrants. Continuing education, when implemented in a manner that is fair and flexible, could improve and maintain the geologic knowledge base applied within Oregon and thus be the most protective for public health, safety, and welfare. A fair and flexible requirement would be one that registrants can understand and reasonably comply with and that allows individuals to select educational opportunities best suited to their individual practice and business needs. The Board's effort to inquire about the merits of developing a continuing education requirement is in keeping with similar efforts of geologist registration Boards in other states.

In its current role, the Board manages a registration system in which registrants who make timely payments can maintain their registrations without any review of practice unless a potential violation is brought to the attention of the Board. This is an entirely reactive approach to regulation of the profession. Continuing education as part of registration would be a proactive way to maintain and even potentially improve the overall competency of geologists with a right to practice in Oregon by virtue of being registered.