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OPFA ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

OPFA By-laws pertaining to Associate Members:

Article 11.6 – Qualifications for Associate Membership

The requirements for Associate Membership are as follows:

1. Demonstration of attainment of Professional Level Ability in the geographic area and functions for which the applicant desires authority to practise;
 - 1.1 May undergo the Credential Assessment Process to identify the candidate's professional forestry competencies and gaps;
 - 1.2 Fill any gaps identified in the manner accepted by the Registration Committee to attain competencies needed to have the professional level ability in the geographic area and functions for which the applicant desires authority to practise;
2. Successful completion of 18 months of progressive, relevant, mentored forestry experience which shall be obtained after attaining a post-secondary degree or diploma and while holding a Provisional Member category of registration. The Registration Committee may consider relevant mentored forestry experience acquired while not a Provisional Member, if requested. A candidate may also be given credit for experience equal to 1/3 of the time spent in a Master and/or PhD program in forestry, to a maximum of 6 months. If the candidate must undergo the Credential Assessment Process, at least 6 months experience must be acquired after a minimum of 80% of the competencies required for the scope of practice have been demonstrated;
3. Mentoring Agreement from a Full, Associate, Inactive or Life Member of the OPFA, or another registered forestry professional in Canada, who must not be related to the candidate;
4. Adequate sponsorship reports in the required form from two people who have direct knowledge of the candidates work. At least one must be a Full or Associate (with a relevant scope of practice) Member in good standing. The second sponsor may be a work supervisor;
5. Adequate Character Witness Forms in the required form from two people. One must be a practicing member of the OPFA in good standing, or a member of another regulated profession in Canada, and have known the applicant for at least 6 months. The second character witness can be a non-member who has known the candidate for at least 2 years. The character witness must not be related to the candidate;
6. Demonstration of a commitment to professionalism and ethics; and
7. Successful completion of the Local Knowledge Assessment at the discretion of the Registration Committee.

The Registration Committee may, without lowering the standard:

1. accept alternate documentation from the normal requirements where an applicant is unable to produce the normal document;
2. approve methods other than Bridge Training modules for demonstrating specific Core Competencies; and
3. accept relevant experience acquired while not a Provisional Member and/or up to 6 months of relevant graduate or post-graduate academic study for all or part of the experience requirement.

Article 11.7 – Terms, Conditions and Limitations for Associate Membership

The certificate of registration of an Associate Member is subject to the term, condition and limitation that the Member only hold themselves out as able to engage in and shall only engage in the practice of professional forestry in the personal scope of practice approved by the Registration Committee.

How to Apply for Associate Membership

STEP 1: CONTACT THE OPFA

[Contact the OPFA](#) to discuss with the Registration Manager and/or Registrar your education, experience and career goals to determine if you are a good candidate for Associate Membership or if Full Membership would be more suitable.

Please note that Associate Members are only able to practice professional forestry in Ontario. If you plan to transfer and work in professional forestry in another province, you must complete the Credential Assessment Process (CAP) evaluation and be approved for Full Membership before you are eligible to transfer.

Associate Members are only allowed to engage in professional forestry within their approved scope of practice. Work outside of the scope of practice must be supervised by an R.P.F. (Full Member) or Associate R.P.F. (Associate Member) with a relevant scope of practice.

If Associate Membership is the correct membership category for you, you will work with the Registrar and Registration Manager to determine what your proposed scope of practice would be, and the geographical location in which you wish to practice. The final scope of practice must be approved by the Registration Committee.

STEP 2: APPLY FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP

You will need to submit:

- 1) A completed [Provisional Membership Form](#)
- 2) \$100 Application Fee
- 3) Up-to-date CV

You can submit (optional):

- 1) **Any requests for work experience credit**
 - You can do this by submitting a CV listing the name(s) and contact information of the registered forestry professional who mentored you and the timeframes of their mentorship. The [Criteria for Relevant Experience](#) will provide you with more information. A credit may also be granted for graduate degrees in forestry calculated as 1/3 of the length of the program to a maximum of 6 months.

STEP 3: SUBMIT A MENTORING AGREEMENT AND BEGIN THE WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

You will receive written confirmation of your approval as a Provisional Member along with a list of the remaining requirements for Associate Membership. You must provide at least one completed [Mentoring Agreement](#), usually submitted within 30 days of approval as a Provisional Member. Please refer to the [Mentorship Instructions](#) for more information on who can be a mentor and the mentorship process.

You should create a Personal Practice Focus and a Learning Plan at the beginning of your work experience period, to keep track of your learning goals. You are encouraged to discuss this, along with your current work experience with your mentor. See the [Practice Guidance-Competency Support](#) for further details on how to create the document. Once complete, you should update it regularly and have your mentor sign off on it to demonstrate that you have shared it with them. It is recommended that you meet with or discuss your progress with your mentor at least once a month. This document is to provide you and your mentor with guidance on maintaining regular contact and discussion of your progress during the work experience period. The document does not need to be submitted to the OPFA office unless it is requested.

18 months of progressive, professional forestry experience (after graduation and within the last 5 years) under the supervision or mentorship of an OPFA member or licensed forestry professional in another Canadian jurisdiction, is required after you are approved as a Provisional Member. The last 6 months of this experience must be obtained after you have successfully demonstrated a minimum of 80% of the professional competencies required for your scope of practice.

- You may, at any time, request that the Registration Committee review your prior experience to determine if you qualify for a credit towards the required 18 months experience. You can do this by submitting a resumé and providing the name(s) and contact information of the professional registered forester(s) (or equivalent in another country) who mentored you and the timeframes of their mentorship. The [Criteria for Relevant Experience](#) will provide you with more information. A credit may also be granted for graduate degrees in forestry calculated as 1/3 of the length of the program to a maximum of 6 months.

During your work experience period, you are required to maintain a record of your work history, which your supervisors should sign off on (where applicable). You can use the [Provisional Member Work History Form](#) on the OPFA website to do so. This work history record must be provided to your sponsors at the end of the work experience period, who are required to confirm that they have reviewed it and submit it to the OPFA.

Please note that you can begin your 18-month work experience requirement whilst also working on completing the remaining steps to Associate Membership. You must have met the full 18-month requirement before completing the final step and applying for Associate Membership.

STEP 4: CREATE A PROPOSED SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Complete the [Proposed Scope of Practice Development Form](#) and submit it to the Registration Manager along with an up to date CV, if not recently provided. You will need to list the tasks and services you wish to be able to perform unsupervised as an Associate Member, as well as identify all the professional forestry competencies that are required to work within that scope of practice.

STEP 5: PROPOSED SCOPE OF PRACTICE IS REVIEWED

The Registration Manager and the Registrar will provide you with comments and suggestions and will work with you to refine your proposed scope of practice. When this is complete it will be submitted to the Registration Committee for review at the next scheduled meeting.

The Registration Committee will either:

- 1) approve the proposed scope of practice
- 2) approve the proposed scope of practice on the condition that certain changes are made (including adding additional required competencies, if necessary)
- 3) request more information

If the Registration Committee approves the proposed scope of practice and required competencies, they will also decide whether the scope of practice requires you to undergo the Credential Assessment Process (CAP). If you have a broad proposed scope of practice the assessment will require the CAP. If you have a narrow proposed scope of practice the Registration Committee may be able to conduct the assessment.

Please note: If your proposed scope of practice is very broad, the Registrar may advise you to undergo the CAP before submitting your proposed scope of practice to the Registration Committee.

STEP 6: DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU MEET THE REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

You may be required to undergo the Credential Assessment Process (CAP) to demonstrate your competency if you have a broad proposed scope of practice. More information can be found on this process on the [CFPFA CAP Applicant page](#), as well as the [Application Processes and Forms page of the OPFA website](#). The Registration Manager is available to guide you through the process.

If the Registration Committee approves your proposed scope of practice and you are informed that you are not required to undergo the CAP, the Registration Manager will provide you with a modified Self-Assessment Matrix. This is the same document used in the CAP, but only includes those competencies that are required for your scope of practice. Instructions on how to complete this will also be provided, and the Registration Manager is available to guide you through the process. Once you have completed the modified Self-Assessment Matrix and provided the supporting documents, these will be submitted to the Registration Committee who will assess which competencies have been successfully demonstrated.

As part of this process (whether submitted to CAP or the Registration Committee), along with the self-assessment matrix you will need to provide:

- Original transcripts
 - submitted to the OPFA directly from the educational institution, or directly from a third-party credential assessment service (if applicable).
 - Foreign applicants who have not completed a graduate degree in Canada must have their educational credentials evaluated for equivalency to a degree from a Canadian University.
- Course outlines and syllabi (listed alphanumerically)
- Line-numbered CV
- Examples of work
- [Witness Feedback Forms](#)
 - Please see the [Information for Competency Witnesses](#)

The Registration Manager can help you with these documents.

STEP 7: FILL ANY IDENTIFIED GAPS IN THE REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

If you had gaps identified in the required competencies, either through your CAP assessment or assessment by the Registration Committee, you will need to fill these knowledge gaps. The recommended method of gap filling is to complete the relevant [Bridge Training for Foresters](#) online modules. Successful completion of a Bridge Training module guarantees that competency has been met. Gap filling through experience, other courses, or other means is also acceptable, if the Registration Committee decides that it was adequate. Documentation will have to be provided to the Registration Committee to enable them to make this assessment.

STEP 8: MEET THE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

When approved as Provisional Members, applicants for Associate Membership will be informed that they are required to complete modules 1-4 of the [Ontario Forest Policy and Legislative Framework Bridge Training](#). This includes past OPFA Associate Members who are reapplying for practicing membership who last practiced more than five (5) years ago.

If you are working within a limited scope of practice, you can request an exemption from modules that you do not consider relevant to your scope of practice. In this case, you are required to write a letter explaining your request and provide information on the legislation and policies that are relevant to your prescribed scope of practice, and your qualifications and experience in these areas. This document will be provided to the Registration Committee who will consider the request on a case-by-case basis and determine which modules (1-4) of the Ontario Forest Policy and Legislative Framework Bridge Training are required, according to the prescribed scope of practice and your experience. If you wish to make this request, it is recommended that you contact the Registration Manager for guidance.

STEP 9: OBTAIN SPONSORS

Sponsorships are needed at the end of the 18-month work experience period. You are encouraged to identify who will act as your sponsors earlier on in your work experience period, to ensure that your sponsors have adequate knowledge of your work. Sponsorship forms must be provided by two (2) sponsors who have direct knowledge of your work.

- One sponsor must be a Full or Associate Member (with a relevant scope of practice) and be in good standing. The other can be a work supervisor, even if not a member of the OPFA.
- Your sponsors need to be made aware of and agree with your proposed scope of practice.
- Please note that your mentor (who completed the Mentoring Agreement) may also complete one of the sponsorship forms if they have direct knowledge of your work.
- Completed sponsorship forms should be forwarded to the OPFA office directly from the sponsors. The [Sponsorship Form](#) and [Sponsorship Instructions](#) are available on our website.

STEP 10: REPORT THAT YOUR PERSONAL PRACTICE FOCUS AND YOUR LEARNING PLAN ARE COMPLETE AND UP TO DATE

The Personal Practice Focus (PPF) and the Learning Plan (LP) are the documents that guide your competency goals and continuing education while you are a member. See the [Practice Guidance-Competency Support](#) for further details. You need only report that these documents are completed and up to date and retained in your files, you do not need to submit the documents themselves unless requested.

STEP 11: APPLY FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

You will need to submit:

- 1) A completed [Associate Membership Application Form](#)
 - This includes your proposed Scope of Practice
- 2) Two [Sponsorship Forms](#)
- 3) Two [Character Witness Forms](#) (if did not undergo CAP)

When all these steps have been completed, the Registration Committee will consider your application at the next meeting. You will be informed of their decision regarding your application for Associate Membership.

Summary: OPFA Associate Membership Process

