



Criteria for Relevant Experience

1.0 EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

The OPFA by-laws include the following requirement for membership (Article 11.5 (3) for Full membership and Article 11.6 (2) for Associate membership:

“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.”

2.0 RATIONALE FOR EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

Forest resources are important to people locally, nationally and internationally. Requirements aimed at protecting societal forest values are set out in legislation, policy, and standards. However, these requirements cannot cover every administrative and technical issue that may arise in the practice of forestry. The public of Ontario relies on the judgment and discretion of an OPFA Full (R.P.F.) Member or Associate (Associate R.P.F.) Member, who has acquired specialized skills, education, and training, to manage and conserve forest resources and the values they contribute to society.

Public confidence and trust are maintained when practitioners are competent and independent, act with integrity (defined by the Code of Ethics and in the Standards of Professional Practice) and are held accountable for their competence and conduct.

Relevant experience under the supervision and/or mentorship of OPFA members provides the following benefits:

- Serves as a means of providing Provisional Members with professional guidance and the right to practise under the supervision of an active Full (R.P.F.) Member or Associate (Associate R.P.F.) Member;
- Supports a mentoring program that counsels new Provisional Members in competence, independence, integrity, and accountability of practice;
- Provides mechanisms through which Provisional Members may be guided in their development towards professionalism;
- Ensures sponsors gain first-hand knowledge of the Provisional Member’s capabilities;
- Encourage sponsors to provide advice and direction to Provisional Members; and
- Helps Provisional Members prepare for registration and professional as registered members.

3.0 ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE

Acceptable experience is normally gained as a Provisional Member (R.P.F. in Training). Subject to the approval of the Registration Committee, mentored relevant professional forestry experience prior to Provisional membership may be considered.

This guiding document outlines what experience will be considered relevant to professional forestry and to the Ontario work environment.

3.1 General Criteria for Experience (mandatory; required by all applicants):

- 18 months experience under the mentorship or supervision of:
 - a) A Full, Associate, Inactive or Life Member of the OPFA; or
 - b) a professional forester licensed in another province or country.
- Experience does not have to be consecutive.
- Experience must be under the informal mentorship of a registered forestry professional;
- Working knowledge of one or more of Ontario's forest regions: the Boreal Forest, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest, the Carolinian Forest and/or the Urban Forest, or the equivalent in another country;
- Experience may be gained anywhere and does not need to be gained exclusively in Ontario or in Canada;
- Experience may be gained from paid or volunteer work;
- Experience must show progression from the technical level to the professional level;
- Experience must show adherence to the applicable legislative environment. For example, Ontario experience must show adherence of Ontario forest policy, legislation and guidelines if applicable.
- For those who have graduated from a program accredited by the [Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board \(CFAB\)](#), the Registration Committee may grant a credit to a maximum of 18 months for relevant, mentored post-graduation (from a post-secondary diploma or degree) experience that was obtained within the last 5 years. These applicants will have demonstrated all required core competencies during their accredited program.
- For those who have not graduated from an accredited program and must undergo the Credential Assessment Process (CAP):
 - The Committee may grant up to a maximum of 12 months experience before core competencies are substantively demonstrated ($\leq 80\%$).
 - The experience must have been attained after a post-secondary degree or diploma is attained and within the last 5 years.
 - A minimum of 6 months of relevant experience must be required after core competencies are substantively demonstrated ($\geq 80\%$).
 - If a Provisional Member's CAP assessment report identifies no substantive gaps in competencies ($\leq 20\%$; or 7 or less competencies not demonstrated), the Committee will then consider additional credit for relevant experience prior to the date of the CAP assessment report. If the applicant does not have additional relevant experience to claim, they may continue to complete the remaining work experience requirement.
 - If a Provisional Member's CAP assessment report identifies substantive gaps in competencies ($>20\%$), the applicant will have to fill those gaps (up to 80% competency) in a manner approved by the Registration Committee, and then complete the final 6 months of mentored experience.

3.2 Examples of Acceptable Professional Forestry Experience and Competencies

Examples of the demonstrable competencies can be viewed in the [national Certification Standards for the Profession of Forestry in Canada \(2008\)](#). The member must adhere to the OPFA Code of Ethics at all times.

3.3 Consideration of Prior Experience as a credit towards the required 18 months:

According to OPFA by-laws (Articles 11.5 and 11.6):

The Registration Committee may, without lowering the standard:

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.

Some applicants that apply for Provisional membership may already have significant forestry-related experience and have received guidance on the practice of professional ethics and forestry from forestry professionals.

Supervision and/or mentorship of registered forestry professionals from other Canadian provinces or other international jurisdictions will be accepted.

The Registration Committee can give consideration for credit for an applicant's experience prior to being approved as a Provisional Member. This experience must be attained within the last 5 years after attaining a post-secondary degree or diploma and it must be forestry-related. The applicant must make the request in writing (email, fax or mail are acceptable formats for the request). The following documentation is also required to support the request:

- Provide a brief written summary of the duration/dates and description of relevant forestry experience. This may already be included in the applicant's resume.
- The names of the licensed professional foresters (and their registration numbers if possible) that either directly supervised or mentored the applicant. If the professional forester is not from Ontario, then their province/country of registration is also required.

With the above information, OPFA staff will confirm supervision/mentorship of the applicant with the identified registered members. The Registration Committee will then consider the request at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision of the Registration Committee and if successful, how much (if any) of the required 18 months experience still has to be met while a Provisional Member.

A person that has already been approved as a Provisional Member (R.P.F. in Training) may still request consideration for previous relevant experience by submitting the request and the supporting documentation as outlined above.