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# Articling Policy

May 2007

## Policy

\*NOTE: This *Articling Policy* (released in May 2007) repeals and replaces the *Sponsoring Forester Policy* (released in January 2002).

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Application of the Policy

This policy applies to all enrolled members. The enrolled member class has three categories: Foresters in Training or FITs (including Allied Science Foresters in Training or ASFITs); Forest Pupils or FPs; and Trainee Forest Technologists or TFTs (including Allied Science Trainee Forest Technologists or ASTFTs).

The articling period is the time you must spend as an enrolled member completing academic requirements, if any, and gaining relevant work and professional experience under the guidance of a registered member before you can write a registration examination and apply to become a registered member.

### 1.2 Background

Forest resources<sup>1</sup> 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 cannot cover every administrative and technical issue that may arise in the practice of forestry. The public relies on the judgment and discretion of Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) and Registered Forest Technologists (RFTs)—who have acquired specialized skills, education and training—to manage and conserve forest resources and the values they contribute to society.

The public has entrusted the practice of forestry to the profession as a self-regulating body and to the professional forester and forest technologist as individual members engaging in professional forestry practice. Public confidence and trust is maintained when practitioners are competent and independent, acts with integrity (defined by the Code of Ethics) and is held accountable for their competence and conduct.

The articling program is an important link between the active registered member<sup>2</sup> and the new developing enrolled member. The articling program is meant to contribute to the continuity and improvement of professional practice and conduct. The articling program serves as a means to provide enrolled members with professional guidance and rights to practice under supervision of an active registered member.

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1 The words 'forest resources,' when used in relation to the practice and definition of professional forestry, encompass the full range of biological organisms, physical structures and values associated with forest and forest ecosystems.

2 The registered member category includes Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists.

The articling program (formerly called the work experience period under the *Sponsoring Forester Policy*) has been an element of the enrolment period, in one form or another, for many years. To enroll as:

- Foresters in Training or Forestry Pupils, candidates must find suitable active RPFs to act as their sponsors.
- Trainee Forest Technologists, candidates must find suitable active RPFs or RFTs to act as their sponsors.

Direction for the articling program is contained in Sections 6 and 11 of the ABCFP's Bylaws. Bylaws 6.3.1 and 6.4.1 state that enrolled members may only engage in the practice of professional forestry under the supervision of an active registered member. Bylaw 11 (Code of Ethics) calls on all members to inspire confidence in the profession and share knowledge and experience with others.

### **1.3 Purposes**

The purposes and intended outcomes of the *Articling Policy* are to:

- uphold the public interest in the practice of professional forestry by ensuring enrolled members only engage in professional forestry/forest technology practice under supervision of an active RPF/RFT.
- support a mentoring program that counsels new members in competence, independence, integrity and accountability of practice.
- provide mechanisms through which enrolled members may be guided in their development towards professionalism.
- encourage sponsors to provide advice, direction and diversity for enrolled members during their articling periods.
- hold sponsors accountable to provide advice and direction for the development of enrolled members.
- help enrolled members prepare for their registration exams and independent professional practice as registered members.

## 2.0 Obligations

The sponsor and enrolled member relationship is one of mutual obligation built on trust. Each party shares a joint obligation to ensure that the enrolled member only practises under supervision of an active RPF/RFT in good standing, consistent with the Bylaws (see sidebar).

### 2.1 The Enrolled Member

Upon signing the Articling Agreement (see Appendix I), the enrolled member undertakes to:

- follow the requirements of this *Articling Policy*;
- provide the sponsor and the ABCFP with the name of the active RPF/RFT supervising his/her work (if it is someone different than the sponsor);
- utilize only the designation of FIT or FP or TFT (as the case may be) as described in the Act and Bylaws;
- work with the sponsor to develop a personalized Professional Development Plan as described in Section 5 below;
- keep and maintain an Enrolled Member Practice Diary which records work undertaken and progress towards completion of the Professional Development Plan;
- obtain a broad exposure to the practice of professional forestry (FIT/FP) or forest technology (TFT)<sup>3</sup> in preparation for registration, including (but not limited to) exposure to each of the practice areas identified in Appendix II;
- meet with the sponsor regularly (in person or otherwise<sup>4</sup>) to discuss work undertaken, professional development and the progress towards achieving the Professional Development Plan goals/outcomes;
- complete any outstanding requirements for registration; and,
- prepare for the registration exam.

#### Supervision

Supervision is to direct or oversee the execution of work. Supervision can be of a controlling nature, a managing direction or in an overseeing capacity. The sponsor and enrolled member relationship can be any of those mentioned. The results of accountability would be different in each relationship. For example:

- If the sponsor is the enrolled member's immediate supervisor, then the sponsor has control over the instructions to the enrolled member and therefore is accountable for the resulting actions.

- If the sponsor works for another employer, then the active RPF/RFT supervising the enrolled member, rather than the sponsor, is accountable for instructions or results. The sponsor is accountable to see that the enrolled member is supervised by an active RPF/RFT in good standing. A more complete description of what is meant by the term supervision is provided in a November 2004 guidance document on the ABCFP website at: [http://www.abcfp.ca/regulating\\_the\\_profession/policies\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.abcfp.ca/regulating_the_profession/policies_guidelines.asp)

<sup>3</sup> The practice of professional forestry is defined in the *Foresters Act*. Forest technology practice is defined in Bylaw 6.1.2. and in the Guidelines on Scope of Practice for Forest Technologists. See also Appendix II.

<sup>4</sup> Given the fact that the enrolled member and sponsor share professional accountability for the work done by the enrolled member, meeting periodically should be frequent enough to ensure this accountability is met. In-person meetings are preferable but telephone, e-mail, web and video conferencing are all options.

## 2.2 Sponsor

Sponsors are accountable for overseeing the development of enrolled members (see sidebar).

This interpretation speaks only to the aspect of accountability as it relates to legal liability. The ABCFP has published a number of commentaries on other aspects of professional accountability which should be reviewed from materials available on the website. To this end, when they sign the Articling Agreement, they are making a commitment to:

- follow the requirements of this *Articling Policy*;
- mentor and guide enrolled members through their articling period and the registration examination process;
- ensure enrolled members are aware of and practice in accordance with the *Foresters Act* and the ABCFP's bylaws;
- ensure enrolled members only engage in practice under the supervision of active RPFs/RFTs (as the case may be) in good standing;
- work with enrolled members to develop their Professional Development Plans as described in Section 5 below;
- ensure enrolled members only take on work appropriate for their experience and stage of professional development;
- meet with enrolled members regularly (in person or otherwise<sup>5</sup>) to discuss work undertaken, professional development and their progress towards achieving their Professional Development Plan goals/outcomes, and to otherwise satisfy themselves that the enrolled members are proceeding as planned (as described more fully in Section 5);
- assist enrolled members in broadening their experience and knowledge in the practice of professional forestry/forest technology by guiding them towards opportunities to work, accompany or observe other practitioners and/or areas of professional forestry practice;
- assess enrolled members' exposure to and understanding of each of the relevant practice areas appropriate to their designation identified in Appendix II;
- help enrolled members prepare for their registration examinations; and,

### Accountability

Accountability is not necessarily the same thing as professional liability. Accountability is being called to answer for specific conduct or circumstances and is always present in every aspect of a professional's practice. There are many results of accountability such as satisfactory clarification or in severe cases, professional liability. The degree to which professional liability is exacted will vary depending upon the diligence exercised by professionals in providing their services. The ABCFP recognizes that while it is mandatory for an enrolled member to have a sponsor, sponsors agree to take on these responsibilities voluntarily. The profession gratefully acknowledges the added accountability such responsibilities imply.

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

- submit annual assessments of enrolled members’ progress by the dates requested by the ABCFP and provide a final evaluation of enrolled members at the end of the enrolment period.

### 3.0 Rules of Conduct

The diversity of sponsors, enrolled members and places of work require that fundamental rules of conduct be established for the program to function effectively and achieve the stated purposes. Following are a few rules that must be observed at all times.

- Sponsors must be active RPFs in good standing for FITs/FPs/TFTs, or active RFTs in good standing for TFTs.
- A sponsor and enrolled member relationship should not exist if any of the following circumstances are present:
  - the enrolled member is in an employment position of authority over the sponsor;
  - the enrolled member and the sponsor are related (see sidebar); or,
  - the sponsor is unable to provide adequate time and direction to the enrolled member.

**Definition of ‘Related’**  
‘Related’ generally refers to a close relationship through birth, marriage or even business in which the enrolled member has a position of power or authority over the sponsor or the sponsor’s source of employment (enrolled member is the sponsor’s business partner, supervisor or boss). More specifically, the term ‘related’ describes the terms on which one person has dealings with another person to the extent that professional principles may be, or may be perceived to be, compromised.

Enrolled members should look for a sponsor with whom they work or are in direct contact with on a regular basis. While it is possible to have a sponsor with whom the enrolled member does not work, it makes the relationship more challenging. The enrolled member and sponsor must ensure close contact and that any work undertaken by the enrolled member is supervised by an active member in good standing with legal authority to supervise the work.

### 4.0 Changing the Sponsor or the Enrolled Member

There are a wide range of circumstances in which it may become necessary or desirable for a change in sponsor. These can range from something as simple as a change in geographic location by either the sponsor or enrolled member, to a breakdown in the relationship between the two parties.

In any situation where enrolled members feel that they may not be getting sufficient guidance from the sponsors, they should address the matter directly with the

sponsor in question. If the situation cannot be resolved, the enrolled member is free to consider either changing the sponsor or seeking out additional mentors.

If the situation is such that the parties cannot live up to the obligations expected of them in this policy, a change of sponsor may be required. Altering the sponsor/enrolled member relationship in some way will often have positive outcomes for both participants. Neither participant should feel the pressure to continue in a mentorship that is not working.

#### **4.1 Changes by the Enrolled Member**

An enrolled member will likely rely on the mentorship of several registered members during the articling period. The sponsor is one mentor to the enrolled member. In addition, other respected individuals contacted by the enrolled member or introduced by the sponsor will also serve as mentors.

The articling period provides the enrolled member with the opportunity to explore various elements of the profession prior to the registration exam and final evaluation by the sponsor. During this period, enrolled members may wish or need to change their sponsors. Common reasons for a change of sponsor are:

- the enrolled member moves from the area;
- the enrolled member has a change in employment;
- the enrolled member requires a different perspective; or,
- enrolled member and sponsor incompatibility.

In any case, the enrolled member will contact the current sponsor to inform him or her of the intended change and to discuss the reasons why.

#### **4.2 Changes by the Sponsor**

Sponsors may also find it necessary to change their commitment to their enrolled members. Common reasons for changing this commitment are:

- the sponsor moves from the area;
- the sponsor is unavailable to continue the mentor commitment;
- sponsor and enrolled member incompatibility; or,

- the sponsor ceases to be an active registered member in good standing with the ABCFP.

The sponsor will contact the enrolled member, discuss the intended change and assist the enrolled member in finding a new sponsor.

### **4.3 Notifying the ABCFP**

The association must be notified of any changes to sponsor/enrolled member relationships. The enrolled member will notify the ABCFP's registration department of the change and the name of the new sponsor. The current sponsor will submit a letter acknowledging the change in sponsorship. The new sponsor and the enrolled member must complete and sign a new Articling Agreement (see Section 2 and Appendix I).

The ABCFP's registration department staff will record the change and forward any information to the new sponsor.

## **5.0 Professional Development Plan and Enrolled Member Practice Diary**

A Professional Development Plan (Plan) and the Enrolled Member Practice Diary (Diary) are required for all enrolled members. The Plan and Diary provide the enrolled member, the sponsor, and, if required, the association, with a chronological written record of professional development. Over time, the ABCFP may develop means by which it will review the Plan and Diary.

Each enrolled member will draft a Plan with the assistance of his/her sponsor and mentors. An example of the format the Plan may take is included as Appendix III. The Plan must contain the strategy for gaining adequate exposure to the practice areas described in Appendix II. The Plan may need to be modified from time-to-time. This will be done by the enrolled member in consultation with, and with the approval of, the sponsor.

Each enrolled member will keep and maintain a Diary which will document activities and demonstrate the enrolled member's exposure in the practice areas described in Appendix II. An example of the format the Diary may take is included as Appendix IV.

The sponsor and enrolled member will meet periodically so that the sponsor can:

- review the Professional Development Plan and the Enrolled Member Practice Diary;
- verify the contents of the Diary and applicability of work experience to meet the requirements of Appendix II and the Plan;
- discuss the work and any questions the enrolled member may have;
- ensure the work being undertaken by the enrolled member is being supervised by an active RPF (for a FIT/TFT/FP) or RFT (for a TFT) in good standing and is appropriate given the experience of the enrolled member; and,
- sign off on the Diary.

The sponsor and enrolled member should meet as frequently as is necessary to fulfill these obligations. By signing the Diary, the sponsor is acknowledging that he or she has met with the enrolled member, reviewed the document and confirmed that the progress of the enrolled member appears to be consistent with the Professional Development Plan, or by accompanying comments, given guidance to the enrolled member.

The Plan maps out the course of knowledge and practice. The Diary will document the enrolled member's diligence in following the Plan. These tools of enrolment practice will encourage the enrolled member to expand his or her horizons and think at a professional level.

## **6.0 Registration Exam**

The final test of the enrolment period is the registration examination. The exam is a test of the candidate's knowledge, application and communication of principles, and issues of importance to the profession. Registration exam success begins long before the examination date. Preparation is important to gain the necessary knowledge as well as to develop a level of confidence to allow the enrolled member to relax and effectively communicate during the examination process. While it may have been many years since the sponsor has been involved in the exam, sponsors can assist enrolled members in acquiring the necessary resources and by introducing them to other enrolled members who are writing the exam.

**APPENDIX I:  
Articling Agreement**



# Articling Agreement

The following form of agreement will be entered into by the sponsor and enrolled member at the beginning of the relationship and each time an enrolled member changes sponsors.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to act as the sponsor for \_\_\_\_\_ FIT/FP/TFT.

**By affixing our signatures to this agreement we confirm that:**

(1) I, \_\_\_\_\_, as the enrolled member assume primary responsibility to ensure that I maintain a strong relationship and frequent contact with my sponsor and gain the necessary exposure to the practice areas outlined in the Articling Policy (dated for reference May 2007).

(2) I, \_\_\_\_\_, as the sponsor assume responsibility for overseeing the growth and development of the enrolled member towards registration and the work that the enrolled member does during his/her articling period.

(3) We have read and understood the ABCFP *Articling Policy*.

(4) We agree to be bound by the mutual obligations and duties outlined in the *Articling Policy*.

**Signatures**

Sponsor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor Stamp or Seal \_\_\_\_\_

FIT/FP/TFT Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_.

## **APPENDIX II: General Provisions Applicable to All Enrolled Members**

Achieving adequate exposure across the required practice areas is the joint responsibility of the sponsor and the enrolled member. The sponsors must be satisfied that enrolled members have obtained adequate exposure to and understanding of each of the applicable practice areas before an they may write the registration examination. While it is impossible to prescribe how much exposure in any one area is 'enough,' the sponsors' duty is to see that their enrolled members have gained sufficient experience in the profession to allow them to independently engage in professional forestry practice at a level commensurate with their experience and to the standards expected of the profession.

Over time, and as resources allow, the ABCFP may require additional reporting obligations of the sponsor and enrolled member. This policy recognizes that members work throughout the province where opportunities for exposure will vary with job positions and geographic location. These are important factors when considering whether an enrolled member has met the exposure requirements.

There are a variety of ways to gain the required exposure besides direct work experience. They include (but are not limited to) such things as: formal continuing education; research and publication; field tours and seminars; attendance at public meetings and processes; accompanying other practitioners while they do their jobs; volunteer work; presentations; and reading materials and/or personal discussions with recognized experts as directed by the sponsor or other mentors; and finally by demonstrating that the materials have been read, understood and can be applied in practice.

It is the enrolled members' responsibility to document achievement in the exposure areas in their Enrolled Member Practice Diary, as described in Section 5 of this policy.

### **Areas of Practice Exposure – for FIT/FP Enrolled Members**

Professional forestry encompasses a broad range of activities and practices. While it is impossible to gain experience in all such activities and practices and while professional foresters tend to develop more narrow specialties over time, the ABCFP expects that newly registered professional foresters will have had some exposure across the range of practice during their enrolment period.

Exposure to activities within the following four categories of broad practice areas, identified by the board of examiners and council, is required. In developing these four broad categories, the intention was that any aspect of the practice of

professional forestry could be described as falling into one or more of the broad categories. The categories, however, should not be taken as limiting the breadth and scope of professional forestry practice.

### **1. Planning**

The word ‘planning’ refers to both strategic and operational organization of activities to achieve identified goals. Planning often requires partnerships in knowledge and practice with other resource professionals. In this regard, professional foresters are often required to work in concert with technical staff and other professionals, both within the profession of forestry (other forest professionals) and outside it (other resource professionals).

Examples of strategic planning tools include (but are not limited to): regional and subregional land use plans; local resource use plans; landscape unit plans and higher level planning processes and documents; tree farm license management plans; and timber supply reviews. Examples of operational planning tools include (but are not limited to): forest development planning; management plans; prescriptions; forest health assessments; fire management plans; and riparian assessments.

### **2. Inventory and Information Management**

Practice under this category includes: the acquisition of data; analysis of data; understanding its availability, adequacy, limitations and reliability; and the appropriate use and display of data and information.

### **3. Forest Resource Operations**

Forest resource operations include a wide range of activities across the breadth of forest resources. For example, this term can include such things as (but are not limited to): recreation trail building; silviculture treatments and monitoring; habitat enhancement/rehabilitation; fire suppression; establishing wildlife tree reserves; harvesting; and development for harvest and/or transportation systems.

### **4. Systems and Business Processes**

This category includes such things as: finance; business; organizational structure and behaviour; management theory and practice; auditing results of planned activities; and certification and the valuation and appraisal of forest resources.

## **Areas of Practice Exposure – for TFT enrolled members**

Section 20 of the *Foresters Act* allows forest technologists to:

...engage in aspects of the practice of professional forestry to the extent consistent with their education, training and experience

(a) independently, if carrying out functions described in the Bylaws for this purpose;

(b) while executing, supervising the execution of, or inspecting work designed by a professional forester admitted under Section 14 or special permit holder acting within the scope of their permit; or,

(c) under the supervision of a professional forester admitted under Section 14 or a special permit holder acting within the scope of their permit.

The Bylaws describe four areas of practice in which registered forest technologists can practice independently. Bylaw 6.1.2 states that RFTs may practice; "... independently, if carrying out those aspects of professional forestry practice within the following general practice areas as are described in guidelines established by council from time-to-time:

- forest measurements;
- silviculture;
- forest operations; and,
- forest protection."

The association has provided more specific guidance on what is included in each of these four practice areas through the Guidelines on Scope of Practice for Registered Forest Technologists published on the website at: [http://www.abcfp.ca/regulating\\_the\\_profession/policies\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.abcfp.ca/regulating_the_profession/policies_guidelines.asp).

These guidelines may be updated from time to time as professional practice evolves and our understanding of the roles of RPFs and RFTs deepens. Please refer to the Guidelines on Scope of Practice for Registered Forest Technologists for the full detailed description on the four independent practice areas in which Trainee Forest Technologists should gain exposure during their articling period.

## **APPENDIX III: Enrolled Member Professional Development Plan**

A Professional Development Plan is a document that sets out the intended course of action that an enrolled member will take to develop and improve professional attributes for the duration of the articling period. The sponsor and enrolled member will periodically review the Professional Development Plan and enrolled member progress to determine if adjustments are necessary.

Enrolled members and their sponsors should think about the following criteria when constructing the Professional Development Plan.

- Reflect on the enrolled member's experience.
- Identify the recognized core knowledge defining the practice of professional forestry/forest technology practice.
- Design a strategy to achieve a broad contact with the practice of professional forestry/forest technology practice.
- Document a program that includes courses, seminars, field trips, contacts/ interviews, work schedule, etc.

### **Steps for Completing the Professional Development Plan**

1. Review the definition of the practice of professional forestry (*Foresters Act*)/forest technology practice (Guidelines on Scope of Practice for Forest Technologists).
2. With the help of your sponsor, other foresters/forest technologists and enrolled members, draft a list of what the practice of professional forestry/forest technology practice includes.
3. Summarize your experience including work position, projects, educational participation, skills, etc.
4. Identify the areas of practice, from your practice list in item 2 above, where you need to acquire knowledge, experience or skills. Prioritize the areas of needed improvement.
5. Identify and develop strategies for gaining adequate experience in each of the practice areas identified in Appendix II.
6. Update your Enrolled Member Practice Diary as you complete components of your Professional Development Plan.

7. Increase your awareness of practice gaps by talking to your sponsor and other forest professionals in your area.

You have completed a blueprint for professional practice improvement. Update and modify your Professional Development Plan on a regular basis. You should feel confident that you have a realistic framework for reaching important stages in your professional development.

## **APPENDIX IV: Enrolled Member Practice Diary**

The purpose of the Enrolled Member Practice Diary is to provide a chronological, written record of professional development.

Enrolled members, with the assistance of their sponsors, will identify a Professional Development Plan for their articling period. The Professional Development Plan outlines the knowledge and experience to be covered by the enrolled member. The enrolled member Practice Diary entries will document the progress and action that the enrolled member has undertaken in completion of the Professional Development Plan. Entries should be made as often as required to capture the work done and experience gained.

The sponsor will review the Diary periodically and sign at the end of the last page entry. Sponsors, by their signature, are acknowledging that they have reviewed the document and confirm that the progress of enrolled members appears to be consistent with the Professional Development Plan, or by an accompanying comment, giving guidance to the enrolled members.

Besides the work experience, all professional development activities such as courses, seminars, and involvement with related organizations should be recorded.

### **Tips for Completing the Enrolled Member Practice Diary**

- Make entries as soon as professional development activities are completed.
- Use action verbs in your entries (for example: analyzed, attended, collected, compiled, coordinated, designed, devised, estimated, investigated, managed, planned, plotted, researched, reviewed, specified, studied, visited, etc.).
- Your entries should be descriptive and specific.
- Make entries in chronological order.
- Ensure you include all professional development activities such as undertaking, assisting or observing the services and works stated in the definition of the practice of professional forestry/Guidelines on Scope of Practice for Forest Technologists. Other activities in your Professional Development Plan such as seminars, training courses, community involvement, working groups, presentations, etc., all related to the practice of professional forestry, should also be included in the enrolled member Practice Diary.
- Indicate (clearly) the start and finish of each project and write a short summary of the project after your work on it has been completed.

- Ask your sponsor to sign the Diary at least once every three (3) months.
- Use headings to group similar activities, if applicable.
- If you choose to handwrite your diary, for audit purposes, ensure it is legible and in dark ink.
- Keep your signed Diary pages in a binder.





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