
Self-Assessment Guide

Updated September 2012

Guide

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Introduction

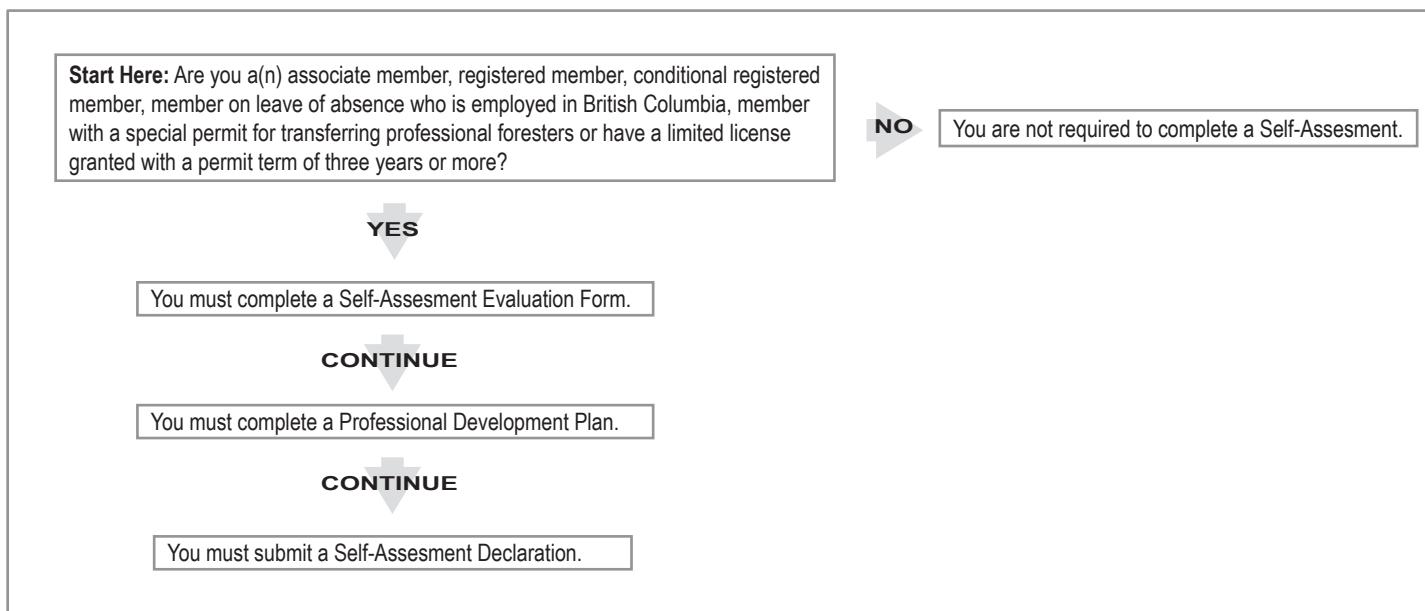
The results of the self-assessment should be a valuable tool to ensure you meet our obligations under the ABCFP Code of Ethics (Bylaw 11) and Standards of Professional Practice (Bylaw 12). Both documents can be found on the ABCFP website (www.abcfp.ca).

This self-assessment guide is intended to clarify what is required in each section of the self-assessment process. This guide provides instructions on how to complete your Self-Assessment Evaluation Form, prepare a Professional Development Plan and submit your Self-Assessment Declaration.

Participation

Flow Chart

The participation flow chart below provides a brief outline on who is required to participate in the self-assessment process and what is required from them.



Who Must Participate

All associate members, registered members, conditional registered members, members on a leave of absence who are employed in British Columbia, members with special permits for transferring professional foresters and limited licenses granted with a permit term of three years or more are required to annually submit a Self-Assessment Declaration within one year after they become registered or receive their permit or limited license.

By submitting a Self-Assessment Declaration, you agree with the following statement:

I have reviewed my practice as a member of the Association of BC Forest Professionals and documented this in the Self-Assessment Evaluation Form. I have created a Professional Development Plan to address the continuing professional development objectives I have identified and I will work toward achieving them. I understand that I must retain the completed, Self-Assessment Evaluation Form and Professional Development Plan in my files. I acknowledge that

declaring that I have completed the Self-Assessment Evaluation Form and Professional Development Plan when I have not is in direct violation of Bylaw 11.4.4. Should the association become aware of such a violation, there will be no choice but to forward information to the registrar for investigation. This could form the basis for a complaint against me.

Confidentiality: Submission to the ABCFP Not Required

The association respects the confidentiality of its members by not requiring the Self-Assessment Evaluation Form and Professional Development Plan to be submitted. But the ABCFP holds a duty to the public to ensure its practising members are maintaining competency in their area(s) of practice; hence, self-assessment completion for required members must be declared (a Self-Assessment Declaration must be submitted). Self-assessment documents are also useful when carrying out a Voluntary Peer Review and self-assessment documents are examined if a member is randomly chosen for a Practice Review.

Retaining Documents

Members are required to retain their completed Self-Assessment Evaluation Forms and Professional Development Plans for a period of six (6) years.

Components of the Self-Assessment Process

Self-Assessment Evaluation Form

The 20 statements in Self-Assessment Evaluation Form will help you to assess whether you are professionally competent as per Bylaw 12.2.

When responding to the self-assessment statements, you are asked to indicate whether you conform to the statement, improvement is needed to conform to the statement, or the statement is not applicable to your work situation and responsibilities. Any statement where improvement is needed must be addressed in the Professional Development Plan.

Even if you do not practise professional forestry (this includes members on a leave of absence or retired members working in non-forestry jobs within British Columbia), the Self-Assessment Evaluation Form is a valuable tool to improve your job competence.

The following provides an explanation of each competency statement.

Statement 1:

I have a clear understanding of my professional forestry and non-professional forestry performance expectations and they are documented.

In order to properly assess your performance in relation to your job requirements, you need to know what is expected of you. A starting place is a complete and up-to-date job description. You or your employer may already have one on file. If not, you should write down all of the job-related activities for which you are responsible.

Statement 2:

I have documented all the professional development activities I undertook during the last year to maintain my competency in my area(s) of practice.

In order to determine if you are keeping current in your area(s) of professional forestry, you should maintain a record of professional development, continuing professional development and training activities. The following tools are available to assist you:

- Certificate of Professional Development Application (available on the ABCFP website).
- Employer records of your training activities.
- A professional development file, a professional diary or journal, or your own database system (e.g. Excel or Access) for tracking purposes.

When reviewing what you have done over the last year consider the following (not a complete list):

- Practice: Outline new projects and activities which were a learning experience.
- Peer Discussions: Record types of learning discussions held and with whom.
- Courses: Record courses taken or given.
- Reading: Record books, periodicals, articles, etc. you have read, written or prepared.
- Office sessions and field trips with peers and specialists.
- Committee Work: Record the nature and types of committees, as well as duties.
- Lecturing/facilitating: Record lectures, presentations, seminars, courses and training given.
- Recent performance reviews by your employer.
- Recent certification audits or internal audits that looked at aspects of your area(s) of professional forestry or non-forestry practice.
- Mentoring, including sponsoring enrolled members.
- Research or operational trials.
- Strategic planning meetings or brainstorming sessions to improve organizational or professional performance.

Statement 3:

I am keeping up-to-date with legislation and policies which affect my areas of professional forestry and non-professional forestry.

The Code of Ethics (Bylaw 11.4.6) states: To keep informed in the member's field of practice and to be aware of current issues and developments in forestry.

The Standards of Practice (Bylaw 12.2.1) states: Competent members maintain sufficient knowledge in their field(s) of practice.

You are obligated to maintain your competency in all areas in which you have professional responsibilities. Here are some examples of provincial legislation with which you may want to keep up to date. You should also be familiar with associated regulations and policies and applicable federal legislation if they are applicable to your area(s) of practice.

- *Agrologist Act*
- *Assessment Act*
- *Assessment Authority Act*
- *College of Applied Biology Act*
- *Drinking Water Protection Act*
- *Ecological Reserve Act*
- *Engineers and Geoscientists Act*
- *Environmental Assessment Act*
- *Environment and Land Use Act*
- *Environmental Management Act*
- *Fisheries Act*
- *Forest Act*
- *Forest and Range Practices Act*
- *Foresters Act*
- *Forestry Revitalization Act*
- *Health Act*
- *Heritage Conservation Act*
- *Integrated Pest Management Act*
- *Land Act*
- *Ministry of Environment Act*
- *Ministry of Forests and Range Act*
- *Nisga'a Final Agreement Act*
- *Park Act*
- *Private Managed Forest Land Act*
- *Protected Areas of BC Act*
- *Range Act*
- *Water Sustainability Act*
- *Water Protection Act*
- *Weed Control Act*
- *Wildfire Act*
- *Wildlife Act*
- *Workers Compensation Act*

Statement 4:

I am keeping up to date with my professional obligations under the *Foresters Act* and Bylaws. This means that I am familiar with the Act, ABCFP Bylaws, interpretive guides and guidance documents applicable to my professional forestry practice or job expectations, especially documents related to professional reliance.

To keep up to date with your professional obligations, you should be familiar with the *Foresters Act*, ABCFP Bylaws, interpretive guides and all applicable information listed under the Publications & Forms menu of the ABCFP website. It is important to be familiar with ABCFP guidance papers related to professional reliance.

Statement 5:

I am practising only in those forestry areas where training and ability make me professionally competent.

To be competent means that you can confidently perform all duties independently without help, with help or within a team environment. If you feel you need to improve your competency, it is important to acknowledge this with your employer and take the necessary steps for improvement.

Statement 6:

I acquire appropriate job-related knowledge when it is lacking (e.g. continuing professional development activities, reading, involvement with discussion groups and committees, consulting with mentors, peers and specialists).

Statement 6 is related to Statement 5 and is an acknowledgement that you seek out appropriate job-related knowledge when you feel it is lacking.

Statement 7:

In order to carry out my job responsibilities I have adequate knowledge about Aboriginal peoples, their culture and Aboriginal rights and title interests, and concerns with forest land and resource use.

In order to have adequate knowledge, you should be competent with respect to all of the following Aboriginal competency statements which are applicable to your job. If improvement is needed with respect to any one of these statements, it must be addressed in your Professional Development Plan.

1. I have a working knowledge of the implications of court decisions pertaining to Aboriginal rights and title such as Calder; Sparrow; Delgam Uukw; Haida and Tsilqotin (found in *Why Treaties?*); Guerin (found in *Primer on the Recent Law Affecting Aboriginal People*); and Rio Tinto Alcan.

Links are provided to give summaries about these important court decisions. You are encouraged to research more information about these decisions if they pertain to your work. These decisions relate to Aboriginal rights and title, duties to consult and accommodate Aboriginal interests and the Crown's fiduciary responsibility with respect to Aboriginal relationships.

2. I am aware of the reasons why BC and Canada are attempting to work with First Nations and Aboriginal groups on treaty rights and treaty related measures and why BC has to enact an Aboriginal interim measures policy until such time as treaties are settled dealing with consultation, accommodation and reconciliation of any infringement on an Aboriginal right or title.

This is related to the above statement where the legal decisions provide some reasons for treaties and Aboriginal interim measures policies. The *Why Treaties?* document is from the BC Treaty Commission and it explains the need for treaties. Until treaties are finalized, it is important to know how interim measures can be initiated so consultation, accommodation and reconciliation of any infringement on an Aboriginal right or title can be addressed.

This awareness requires an effective relationship and communication with local Aboriginal communities. Once this happens you will better be able to obtain knowledge about how Aboriginal cultural and spiritual interests will be affected by your or your client's or employer's actions.

3. I have an effective relationship with appropriate Aboriginal communities.

An effective relationship with an Aboriginal community means (not a complete list):

- You have an ability to communicate with the whole Aboriginal community, not just council members or elected and hereditary chiefs;
- You receive positive responses to your communication efforts;
- You are involved with local Aboriginal community events;
- Presentations to local Aboriginal communities are met with friendly dialogue;
- You have demonstrated knowledge about local Aboriginal culture, issues and concerns;
- Aboriginal community members respect your integrity;
- You don't impose timelines on projects; and
- You are able to work out solutions with the whole Aboriginal community.

4. I have a basic awareness of the various distinct Aboriginal groups and First Nations that exist within my operating areas. This includes governance models pertaining to the land and resources within traditional territories (e.g. from the hierarchical, matrilineal societies and governance models that exist in coastal areas to the more egalitarian societies in the interior and northern parts of BC).

This includes knowledge of traditional territories and their overlap within your interest area and all the Aboriginal communities affected by your interest area. Knowledge of the governance models within the various First Nations of your interest area will enable you to communicate more effectively.

5. I am able to effectively communicate directly or indirectly with Aboriginal peoples.

See above

6. I am aware of the impacts on Aboriginal communities and culture as a result of my employer's, client's or my own actions when I carry out my job responsibilities.

This awareness requires an effective relationship and communication with local Aboriginal communities. Once this happens you will better be able to obtain knowledge about how Aboriginal cultural and spiritual interests will be affected by your or your client's or employer's actions.

If improvement is needed with respect to any one of the above Aboriginal competency statements, members are strongly encouraged to register for the online workshop entitled Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples provided by Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. This workshop can be recorded in your self-assessment professional development plan and is a first step in understanding BC Aboriginal issues.

Statement 8:

I ensure that my work is scientifically and technically sound.

You should ensure that your work conforms to and follows the latest scientific principles, standards, technology and methodology. If your work product extends beyond the norm, (e.g. is innovative), then it should be accompanied by a sound rationale or reasoning and possibly a monitoring plan and/or risk assessment.

Statement 9:

When making significant decisions, I provide a clear analysis of all practical options, considerations and implications.

Since significant decisions have significant consequences, they should be supported by analyses of all practical options. Each option should be analyzed for its implications, cost, practicality, efficiency, how it can be measured for success and achievability. These analyses should be available for review and knowledgeable peers, mentors or specialists should be consulted to ensure the analyses are sound.

Statement 10:

My work, where appropriate, is supported by sufficient rationale so that, others can implement recommendations or action plans and meet the objectives and commitments embodied in the work.

Statement 10 may be viewed as a continuation of statement 9, where after you have completed analyses of different options you would provide a rationale to support your choice or recommendation.

If your work does not include analyses of options, your rationale (if it is appropriate to have one) should be clear so third parties can understand the reasoning behind your decision. This will facilitate successful monitoring and implementation and make the achievement/measurement of objectives easier. Clear rationales improve the probability that plans, recommendations and prescriptions will be implemented as planned and approved.

Statement 11:

My work is checked for errors or omissions before submission.

Self-explanatory

Statement 12:

If appropriate, my work is checked for legal requirements before submission.

Self-explanatory

Statement 13:

Where my scope of work product or opinion is qualified or limited in some way, I state clearly those qualifications or limitations.

As a forest professional, you may carry out work for which you are not fully qualified. This is only acceptable if you outline your competency limitations to your client/employer who can then decide whether they want you to proceed. In this case, the client/employer may proceed with the assignment on the understanding that you will acquire the knowledge along the way and there will be no undue delay or cost.

Statement 14:

Where my work product requires or implies objectives, I provide specific, measurable and verifiable objectives so results can be evaluated.

When a work product is clear and concise, it provides reviewers with the assurance that the work is well thought out. It also provides the implementers with a clear direction of how to achieve and measure the results.

A measure commonly describes a specific set of properties that can be physically described or counted. Something is measurable if it has a numeric classification. There is also a standard of measure which sets a baseline for future comparison. There is an expectation described or an outcome; there is a reliance on specialized skill and knowledge; there are established processes for action and agreement on how the outcomes will be evaluated.

In the simplest method, a result or strategy is measurable if achievement was objectively assessable, usually by a numerical indicator. An increased complexity regarding a standard of measure increases the risk that the outcomes will not be measurable. The extent to which the outcome must be strictly measurable should be proportional to the value that it represents.

Outcomes can be unmeasurable if they include confounding qualifiers such as “if necessary” or “will move towards” or subjective qualifiers such as “if practicable.” Outcomes are also unmeasurable when numeric indicators are too broad to offer a reasonable assessment of the outcome.

Verifiable is generally understood as being able to establish truth, accuracy, or reality of existence. The quality of verification in a commitment is one aspect of testing whether a defined outcome has been achieved. The complementary quality to verification is validation. Prior to an outcome being measured and verified, the professional will have determined that it is a valid indicator or representation of the objectives to be achieved. In short, validation confirms that the outcome is the right thing and verification determines that the outcome was achieved. All of the components form the verification process in evaluating a commitment.

Statement 15:

All my work is appropriately filed and backed up offsite and I will be able to retrieve all work, if needed, in the future.

As a professional, you need to retain your work files, either electronically and/or in hard copies.

The ultimate limitation period for professional documents under law is 30 years. Most documents you create do not need to be kept this long. However, if there are documents that have a liability life of a longer period, you need to ensure that you or your employer has a system to keep them in safe storage for the full period of time. You should be able to access them regardless of whether you still work for the current employer.

You may need to talk to your employer to ensure they are aware of your filing obligations and to see that the appropriate records management systems are put into place. You may also want to keep personal copies of your own work, if permitted.

When files are stored electronically, you should ensure that the method by which they are stored is continually upgraded to present technology standards so they can always be retrieved with your current computer system.

You must be able to produce unaltered professional documents for which you are responsible. This is even more critical when it comes to electronic documents which can be easily altered without your knowledge. Another member may amend the document, in which case he or she also takes on some professional responsibility. You must be able to produce the original unaltered document.

Supporting materials underlying professional documents such as field cards/notes originals, assessments, analyses or expert reports should be on file and appropriately cross-referenced. You also need appropriate controls in place to prevent accidental destruction and loss (e.g. through fire or flood) of professional documents.

Statement 16:

I keep a professional diary of daily activities and important decisions and a phone log of significant verbal dialogue.

A diary of daily activities and a phone log of significant dialogue records information for future reference. As professionals, we are called to account for our work and we can only do this if we can refer to our thoughts, actions, conversations and reasoning related to past decisions. If you record what has been agreed upon by two or more parties, it will reduce the likelihood of future questions and make it easier to respond.

Statement 17:

I have a clear understanding of my client's or employer's objectives and how they relate to other values or interests associated with their work.

Bylaw 11.5.3 states: The responsibility of a member to the client or employer is to obtain a clear understanding of the client's or employer's objectives.

Satisfactory completion of a task requires clarity of objectives. Although this may appear obvious, members are advised to achieve clarity of objectives before accepting an assignment. If the objective is quantifiable, determine the desired degree of precision. If the objective is subjective, seek agreement on how performance would be measured. When agreement on objectives is reached, it should be expressed in writing.

It is also important to ensure that client or employer objectives are compatible with legislation, policy and the public interest. If there is a conflict, it needs to be resolved.

Statement 18:

I met the objectives spelled out in my previous Professional Development Plan.

You should review your Professional Development Plan from the previous year to determine if you met your goals. For each goal not met, you must assess the relevance of that goal and determine what further action is required, if any, to meet it.

Statement 19:

I maintain safe work practices and consider the safety of others.

You are responsible for your own safety and if you are responsible for the safety of others, you must ensure safe work practices are in place to protect their well-being.

Statement 20:

When I delegate work to others, I am confident they are qualified, are professionally authorized to carry out the work and their work makes sense to me based on my personal knowledge.

When you delegate work to others, either to a contractor/consultant or to employees within your own organization, you must practise due diligence to ensure their work is carried out to professional standards. You are professionally accountable for their work that is incorporated into your own work product. This also includes supervision of others. You should:

- Ensure they have the proper qualifications and experience to carry out the work (check resumes, references or you may have personal knowledge about their qualifications).
- Ensure they are members in good standing of an applicable professional association if the work falls under the definition of professional practise of that association.
- Carry out quality assurance (field and/or office checks) of the work so that you are satisfied with its quality.

Professional Development Plan

Once you have completed the Self-Assessment Evaluation Form, you must develop a Professional Development Plan to implement during the coming year. List each statement from the Self-Assessment Evaluation Form that was answered “improvement needed.” For each statement, list the action(s) to be taken with an anticipated completion date. If you have several items to address, you can prioritize them by determining which items leave you most at risk in your practice. You should add the actual date of completion for your records once you have completed your Professional Development Plan.

During the year, some items may become less relevant and some of your plans may change. This should be noted in your Professional Development Plan. This year’s Professional Development Plan will be referred to again when you complete your next Self-Assessment Evaluation Form; therefore, it is helpful to note why a particular aspect of your plan was not carried out in the manner originally stated.

Example

Statement Requiring Action	Action(s) to be Taken	Anticipated Completion Date	Date Completed (and/or Disposition)	Reason for not Completing by Anticipated Date
I acquire appropriate job-related knowledge when it is lacking (e.g. continuing professional development activities, reading, involvement with discussion groups and committees, consulting with mentors, peers and specialists).	Take a First Nations cultural awareness workshop.	March 15, 2010	March 1, 2010	E.g.: workshop was cancelled.
Where my work product requires or implies objectives, I provide specific, measurable and verifiable objectives so results can be evaluated.	Check with the field crew to verify that my field objectives can easily be implemented.	April 30, 2010	April 23, 2010	

Note: Please feel free to use your own tools, performance reviews, audits and other activities to help in your assessment. If you have any recommendations or tools you wish to share, please contact the association.

Self-Assessment Declaration

You are required to submit a Self-Assessment Declaration once you have completed your Self-Assessment Evaluation Form and Professional Development Plan. This is part of your annual ABCFP membership renewal. The due date for Self-Assessment Declarations is December 1st, which is also the due date for membership renewals. If your Self-Assessment Declaration has not been received in the ABCFP offices by December 1st, you will be subject to administrative fees.

Important: If your Self-Assessment Declaration is not received by January 31st, you will be removed from the membership rolls and not entitled to practise forestry in BC.

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions regarding the self-assessment process or comments on how it can be improved, contact:

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Ensuring BC's Forests Are In Good Hands.