

Requirements for validation as a Chartered Geographer (GIS)

What is a Chartered Geographer?

Geography is the integrated study of the earth's landscapes, peoples, places and environments. Geographers may specialise in the dynamics of any of these phenomena, from local to global scales across the world; the relationships between peoples; or between peoples and their physical environments. As appropriate to the problems they address, their skills may be based in quantitative or qualitative methods in the environmental or social sciences or in the humanities. Geographers' integrating perspective often provides an effective framework for relating insights and skills from other fields of knowledge to applied problems. This may occur in many areas of work: in education and training, in research, in the commercial world, including consultancy, in the public sector, charitable organisations, the planning professions and in resource management. A successful Chartered Geographer will have maintained and demonstrated the application of such insights and skills throughout their professional lives.

Chartered Geographer is the professional qualification for those Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) who can demonstrate a high level of competence and professionalism in the practice of geography and related disciplines, and who are committed to maintaining their expertise through Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

A successful applicant shall be entitled to be called a Chartered Geographer and to adopt the style "CGeog". Anyone who wishes to indicate a specialist area within the discipline of geography must apply to do so at the time of their initial application; currently the approved post-nominals are (Geomorph), (GIS) and (Teacher). Chartered Geographer (GIS) has been introduced to establish Chartered status for those working in the GI Science fields to indicate their competence and experience in interpreting geographical information and in geographical analysis.

Requirements for Chartered Geographer *(Notes on these requirements are provided below)*

1. An **honours degree**, or a qualification/academic achievement which is equivalent to an honours degree, in geography or a closely allied discipline awarded by a university or other educational establishment recognised by the Council as having an appropriate standard of education. If no degree, a minimum of fifteen years of successful geographical professional experience.
2. If graduating from a first degree, have not less than **six years experience** in the profession and practice of geography. The amount of experience required depends on the nature of the first degree or equivalent qualification.
3. Evidence of a commitment to **continuing professional development** (CPD).
4. **Support from two professional colleagues/referees** who can comment on the applicant's geographical skills and knowledge and their application.
5. A completed **application**, which includes a proforma, extended CV and professional self evaluation which makes the case explicitly why the applicant should become a Chartered Geographer.
6. If not one already, to become a **Fellow** of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).
7. **Payment** of the required application fee, the annual renewal fee and annual Fellowship fees.
8. Have a knowledge and understanding of the **Code of Conduct** of the RGS-IBG.

Notes on the Requirements for Chartered Geographer (GIS)

1. Hold an honours degree

- a. A first degree (honours, 2nd class minimum) in geography or a closely allied discipline (such as Environmental Science or Geographical Information Science) from a university or other educational establishment recognised by the Council as having appropriate standard of education; **or**
- b. A first degree (honours, 2nd class minimum) obtained where geography forms 60% or more of the material covered from an educational establishment recognised as above; **or**
- c. A BEd degree (honours, 2nd class minimum) obtained where the core academic subject is geography from an educational establishment recognised as above; **or**
- d. A postgraduate degree in geography or a closely allied discipline from an educational establishment recognised as above; **or**
- e. If not holding a first degree or a postgraduate degree in geography or a related discipline, demonstrate 15 years of successful geographical professional practice to the satisfaction of the Council; **or**
- f. If not holding any degree, demonstrate 15 years of successful geographical professional practice to the satisfaction of the Council; **or**
- g. Applicants whose academic experience does not match any of the above are required to first submit an extended curriculum vitae to the Society. They will be advised whether an application for validation could be accepted. Any such application subsequently submitted will be considered in the same manner as all other applications.

2. Have not less than six years (with a degree) or fifteen years (without a degree) experience in the profession and practice of geography

- a. Applicants applying for Chartered Geographer status are required to demonstrate that their practical experience supports the advancement of geography and geographical learning or the application of geographical knowledge and skills in the professional workplace. The applicant should describe in detail any key geographical techniques and skills that they have learnt, developed or applied. Practical experience should be more than simply employment in a technical capacity in the application GI methods. The candidate should show an awareness of relevant current developments in the discipline and a commitment to promoting geographical understanding as a part of their wider professional role. It is expected that applicants will normally have experience of disseminating the results of their experience and achievements in a way that is readily available to others. It is particularly helpful if the candidate can demonstrate how they have made innovative progress or significant contributions to geographic applications.

The candidate should note any responsibilities they have had for developing policy within their organisation; or how the candidate has influenced organisations/departments/groups etc (including those external) in the uptake and/or utilization / implementation of geographical (GIS/analytical) methods in policy guidance, strategic development, and/or decision-making processes. The candidate should note how they have promoted the understanding of GI and its benefits both within their sphere of influence and in society as a whole. Any encouragement to others to enter into the field of geography should be noted,

including details of how the candidate may have helped develop the professional knowledge of others. The candidate should also be explicit in describing how they have advanced their personal and professional knowledge in recent years including details on any personal development. This application should not just be an extended CV.

- b. For those with a suitable first degree, as defined in 1 a–c above, up to 2 years spent on a taught post-graduate course or up to 4 years on research for a PhD can count as part of the 6 years practical experience.
- c. For those with a higher degree in geography, but not a first degree, at least 6 years relevant practical experience.
- d. Part-time work will count as pro-rata towards the length of time necessary for validation.

3. Have evidence of a commitment to CPD

Professional development is valued by all employers and is an integral part of career progression. Hence Continuing Professional Development is an ongoing criterion for Chartered Geographer status. The CPD requirement is 35 hours per year comprising 20 hours external and 15 hours internal training.

- a. External hours – These may be accumulated by, for example, chairing or attending conferences and seminars, presenting papers, leading/facilitating discussions, and attending training courses relevant to professional expertise. The Society will provide guidance on hours; for example: attendance at a full day professional event will attract up to 5 CPD hours, depending on relevance and level; attendance for two days or more at the AGI Annual Conference is worth 10 external hours. Allowances for article, magazine or journal publication are difficult to define and the Society will consider these in light of the work required and evidence of their wider professional impact.
- b. Internal hours – Subject to the approval of the Society, hours for internal activities are those actually spent subject to a limit of 5 hours per day.

As an academic, internal hours can be accumulated by internal seminars or workshops-leading and taking part in internal training in HE teaching, teaching at levels above first degree, leading field trips, or by publication in peer-reviewed journals.

As a professional, internal hours can be accumulated by formal or informal training provided by the employer, systematic analysis of professional practice or by preparation of publication in reports or peer-reviewed journals.

- c. Relevant study areas also include wider professional subjects and skills such as management training, information technology, language skill, teaching/communication/presentation skills. Also included is managerial or organisational work such as with a Learned Society or professional body; involvement in consultations or acting as an expert witness; and professional activities supporting learning and teaching or mentoring.
- d. Applicants who are working part-time, or are job sharing, applicants from overseas and applicants who are unemployed will be expected to provide adequate evidence of CPD after accreditation to retain their status. Guidance will be given to non-UK applicants to assist them in complying with CPD requirements.

- e. Once CGeog status has been awarded, applicants will be required to complete an annual log which reports the CPD activities undertaken and demonstrates their impact. Guidance notes and log sheet for CPD will be issued every December.

4. Provide names of two referees

Applicants must nominate two referees to whom they are known professionally, who have a knowledge of geography and are of higher professional standing, such as the applicant's Head of Department or Line Manager. The referees will be asked to comment on the extent to which the candidate has mastered the various requirements specified above (particularly the application of geographical skills and knowledge) and to indicate whether or not they support the application for Chartered Geographer status.

It is the responsibility of applicants to give the proforma for references to each referee and to ensure that the referees submit them independently to the RGS-IBG at approximately the same time as the applicant submits the application.

If the candidate is applying for Fellowship at the same time as Chartered Geographer, at least one of these referees must be a Fellow of the RGS-IBG in order to fulfil Membership Department requirements. Applicants who do not know any Fellows of the Society are asked to contact the Professional Officer.

5. Have completed an application

The application comprises five main components as follows:

- a. A completed **application form** which includes contact details of **two referees** (see section 4). Applicants must sign their application form to declare that the information provided therein is complete and accurate. The applicant's current employer must also sign the form to confirm that they have read the supporting documents and that the information is, to the best of their knowledge, correct.
- b. An **extended CV** which sets out, with dates, details of education and training, qualifications achieved, and a full record of employment history including the tasks undertaken during each period and the level of responsibility. This should clearly demonstrate the professional practice of geography.
- c. A **professional self evaluation** of no more than 1,000 words. In this self-evaluation, the applicant should explicitly make the case why they should be a Chartered Geographer, in particular how they have applied geographical skills and understanding in their professional lives, and how this has advanced geography outside of the normal work requirements. Examples of completed self evaluation forms are provided on the website for guidance.
- d. A record of **continuing professional development** activities over the last six years (see section 3).
- e. All applicants are strongly encouraged to include **supporting documents** with their application. If applicants do not hold a geography or related degree, then supporting documents are compulsory and these should take the form of a professional portfolio which provides evidence of a sustained period of structured self-directed education in the advancement of geography and geographical skills or the application of geographical knowledge and skills in the professional workplace. Applicants are encouraged to be selective in the documentation that they submit in support of their application.

- i. Documents may comprise: reports, technical and informational, published papers in journals and professional magazines, books, keynote conference addresses, advice/consultancy work with radio and television and other media.
- ii. Web-authored material may comprise: reports or work relating to the role of the expert witness, teaching syllabuses and examination papers, planning schemes of work and coursework design, any other similar documents.
- iii. Each supporting document should be countersigned, where practicable, to indicate that the report was prepared by the applicant. For documents that are not wholly prepared by the applicant, the percentage contribution that the applicant has made should be indicated clearly.

All applications should be submitted in English unless prior consent of the Council has been obtained for submission in another language and (or) if any other accommodations are to be made.

6. *If not one already, to become a Fellow of the RGS-IBG*

- a. Applicants may apply for both Fellowship and Chartered Status at the same time, but the latter will not be awarded until the applicant is a Fellow. If the applicant is already a Fellow of the RGS-IBG, no additional action is required.
- b. Applicants for Fellowship will need a Fellow of the RGS-IBG to propose them. This is not necessarily the same person as the referee for Chartered Geographer status. However, if a Chartered Geographer is a referee then there is no need to duplicate the reference for the Fellowship application. If the applicant does not know a Fellow of the Society, they are encouraged to contact the Research and Higher Education office of the RGS-IBG for advice.

7. *Have paid the application fee*

For validation as a Chartered Geographer the fees to be paid (to be reviewed on an annual basis) are:

- a. Initial non-refundable payment that covers administration costs (currently £50).
- b. Once status has been achieved, the applicant will need to pay an annual administration fee to maintain the accreditation in the second and subsequent years (currently £20).
- c. Annual Fellowship fee (currently £82).

The cost of Chartered Geographer is tax deductible as a professional expense.

8. *Have a knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct of the RGS-IBG*

All Chartered Geographers should adhere to the Fellow's Code of Conduct.

Additional Notes

Professional Interview

An interview may be required for a Chartered Geographer applicant who is not able to submit an adequate portfolio of supporting documentation. The interviewers will be appointed by the Final Assessors Committee.

At the absolute discretion of the Final Assessors Committee, the interview will be held as close as possible to the applicant's normal place of work. If the applicant is resident overseas, every effort will be made to appoint interviewers in that country. The interview may be delayed until a suitable date can be arranged for the applicant to be interviewed in the UK or at a major international event.

Records

The Research and Higher Education Division is responsible for maintaining the following records:

- a. A list of those applicants who have applied for validation as Chartered Geographer (GIS);
- b. A list of those applicants whose application for Chartered Geographer (GIS) has been successful;
- c. A list of those who are willing to act as assessors for Chartered Geographer (GIS); this record shall include the sub-disciplines of the assessors;
- d. A copy of each application form and professional self-evaluation shall be placed in the Society's archives.

The RGS-IBG is registered under the Data Protection Act of 1998 and adheres to its data protection principles.

Personal information provided by applicants will be used for monitoring and statistical purposes only and will not form part of the assessment process.

Further Information

If potential applicants are unsure about their eligibility to apply, they should contact the Professional Officer including a detailed CV with details of their education, training and professional experience. The Professional Officer may consult a member of the assessment panel to decide on eligibility.

Applicants that are unclear about any section of the application are encouraged to seek further information still before submitting their evidence.

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