

Chartered Geographer Ethics and a Code of Practice

This Code of Practice describes the ethical standards which the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) (henceforth RGS-IBG) follows in supporting Chartered Geographer (henceforth CGeog) applications and assessments. These standards embody the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality for all who are involved in these activities. The Code is also intended to provide guidance to assessors in discharging the responsibilities placed on them in assessing applications, and sets out the proper conduct expected of them.

Information for applicants

Application procedures For each CGeog application, the RGS-IBG issues guidelines on the information to be supplied by applicants, details of the criteria against which the application will be assessed, and the process and timescale for assessment of the application.

Data Protection Applicants are required to sign the application to indicate that the information provided therein is, to the best of their knowledge, complete and accurate. The RGS-IBG is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and adheres to its data protection principles. Applicants should be aware that information they provide will be circulated as necessary for the assessment procedures to be followed. Application forms, papers and references will be destroyed 3 years after the final decision on the application has been made. Details of applicants (including name and profession) will be used to compile lists of Chartered Geographers to be published on the Internet, and to produce statistical and historical information. Queries submitted under the terms of the Data Protection Act about the processing of personal data should be addressed to the RGS-IBG's Head of Finance.

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

Equal opportunities The RGS-IBG is committed to the promotion of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities throughout the geographical professions and is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination. All applicants will receive equal treatment.

Assessment process All applications are judged on their professional merit, activity and experience through a process of peer review by appropriate experts. Recommendations are passed to the final assessors committee for final decision on applications prior to Council officially awarding Chartered Status. Applicants are informed in writing of the outcome of their application.

Appeals All applications receive careful scrutiny by the assessors with the final decision resting with Council. Appeals may therefore not be made against the professional judgement of the RGS-IBG assessors, panels, or Committees. The sole ground on which an appeal may be made is one based on procedure. Anyone wishing to make an appeal against a decision should write to the Professional Officer no later than two months after the result of the application is announced, citing the specific decision and setting out clearly the substantive basis of the appeal. The Professional Officer will respond in writing within 30 days.

Information for assessors

Assessors examining applications are required to keep all information which they acquire in the discharge of their duties confidential and secure, and not transmit any information to any persons other than in accordance with the prescribed procedures for the selection process. Information provided to assessors in an application may only be used for the purposes of evaluating the proposal in accordance with the RGS-IBG's guidelines.

Conflict of interest Those who undertake responsibility for assessing applications are required to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest and observe the following guidelines:

Assessors may not evaluate applications for which they have acted as referees or mentors. Mentors can write letters of reference but cannot be an assessor.

Where an application involves a recent former student, colleague in the same department or co-researcher, a family member, or a person with whom there is or has been a current or prior relationship, a potential assessor is required to declare any potential conflict of interest to the Professional Officer who will advise them whether they can take part in the assessment process.

Fair evaluation Assessors are normally drawn from subject-specific experts within the RGS-IBG's Fellowship and wider geographical community. In cases where individual assessors feel unable to offer an informed view on a proposal, they should decline to act as an assessor, and the Professional Officer will seek an alternative assessor.