Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Program Outline

Council directed the Professional Development Committee to “develop an outline for a mandatory continuing professional development (MCPD) program and make recommendations to Council.”

The Professional Development Committee reviewed what other self-governing professional regulatory organizations (primarily the other land surveying associations in Canada) do with respect to MCPD programs. Many of the other professional regulatory organizations have some form of mandatory reporting of their members’ CPD activities while a number of others have an additional requirement that their members obtain a minimum number of hours or points in different CPD categories.

As a regulatory body, the purpose of any program must be to ensure that the public interest is protected. As such, an ALSA MCPD program needs to ensure that Alberta Land Surveyors have the continuing education they need to practice in a manner that best serves the public.

The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association is fortunate to already have one of the best continuing competency programs in the profession of land surveying or any other profession. The ALSA’s Continuing Competency Review program asks each practitioner a number of questions during the course of their review including several questions about each practitioner’s continuing professional development activities. Unfortunately, in phase one of the Continuing Competency Review program, the responses were too vague to provide very meaningful information for the Practice Review Board.

The Professional Development Committee recommends:

1. The Association’s mandatory continuing professional development program will be administered by the Practice Review Board through the Continuing Competency Review program.

2. Alberta Land Surveyors will be expected to enter in their continuing education activities through the to-be-developed national GeoEd web portal. Practitioners will enter in the specific activities in one of the categories and the number of hours they spent on that activity.
   a. The categories are expected to be: (i) formal activities (courses, seminars, webinars), (ii) participation in association committees/meetings, (iii) presentations, papers, and research, (iv) informal activities (self-study, reading magazines), (v) community involvement and (vi) other.
   b. The self-governing land survey associations are currently discussing the parameters of a national tracking system.

3. Alberta Land Surveyors will not be required to report their continuing professional development activities by a specific date each year. Instead, Alberta Land Surveyors will be encouraged to enter in the continuing professional development activities on a regular basis (i.e.: monthly, semi-annually, annually).
4. When an Alberta Land Surveyor’s CCR file is opened, there will no longer be questions in the CCR questionnaire about the practitioner’s continuing professional development activities. Instead, the Director of Practice Review will go to the GeoEd web portal and extract that Alberta Land Surveyor’s activities from the system and include that information in the Director’s analysis. Until such time as the web portal is fully operational, the Director of Practice Review will continue to ask the CPD questions currently in the CCR questionnaire.

5. The Alberta Land Surveyor will be informed that they need to make sure their CPD tracking report is up-to-date prior to submitting the CCR questionnaire.

6. While the national tracking system is expected to capture information on an Alberta Land Surveyor’s community involvement, it is recommended that this data not be included in a practitioner’s continuing competency review because it is highly questionable how community involvement helps a land surveyor protect the public interest.

7. It is recommended that a new question be added to the CCR questionnaire. Alberta Land Surveyors will be asked what professional development activities they plan on undertaking during the next CCR period. The purpose of this self-assessment is to assist practitioners in determining their professional development needs by reflecting on where they are in their career and what knowledge and skill sets they need at that level.

8. The Director of Practice Review will analyze the information contained within the CCR questionnaire (including the self-assessment) and the continuing professional development activities and conduct a holistic review of the Alberta Land Surveyor.

9. The Director of Practice Review, as is done now, will make his recommendations to the Practice Review Board. The Director of Practice Review may make a number of recommendations concerning the Alberta Land Surveyor’s continuing professional development activities. Those recommendations may include (but are not limited to):
   a. That the practitioner attends specific seminars or courses
   b. That the practitioner spends more time on certain CPD activities (ie: become involved with an ALSA committee)
   c. That the practitioner reconsiders his self-assessment for continuing professional development based on concerns or issues identified elsewhere during the review.
   d. That the practitioner explains why, if applicable, they did not undertake all of the professional development activities they planned.

10. The Practice Review Board will issue its decision to the practitioner.

11. No changes to acts or regulations are required.