

Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists

Application and Intake Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and transparent guidelines for the application process for new members.

Application Requirements

The following are required in order to apply to the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists (NSIA):

- A completed, signed application form
- A cover letter outlining the applicant's professional background and experience
- The applicant's current resume
- Official copies of any transcripts to be evaluated
- The current application fee as listed on the NSIA website

Timeline

There are four intake deadlines annually which are:

- February 28th
- April 30th
- August 31st
- November 30th

Applicants will be notified of a decision on their application within six weeks of the intake deadline immediately following their full application submission.

Evaluation

An evaluation sheet will be completed for each applicant and made available to the applicant in compliance with the Access to Records Request Policy.

The Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists requires that all successful P.Ag. applicants meet the National Education Standard as developed by Agrologists/Agronomes Canada. This Standard requires the completion of:

- A 120 credit, four-year baccalaureate degree in Agrology is required and must consist of the following course credits:
 - Foundational Knowledge Courses = total 24 credits
 - Natural Science based Agrology degree:
 - 15 credits in introductory natural sciences, plus
 - 3 credits in Economics, plus
 - 3 credits in Mathematics or Statistics, plus
 - 3 credits in Communications
 - OR
 - Social Science based Agrology degree:
 - 15 credits in introductory social sciences, plus
 - 3 credits in natural sciences, plus
 - 3 credits in Mathematics or Statistics, plus
 - 3 credits in Communications
 - Agrology Courses = total of 60 credits
 - 24 credits required to be Senior Level Courses

In addition to Education Requirements, applicants must have a minimum of 3 years work experience in Agriculture (within the last 5 years) to obtain full Professional Agrologist (P.Ag.) status.

- Applicants who do not meet the work experience requirement may be admitted to the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists as an Articling Agrologists (A.Ag.) and must complete the required Articling Agrologist program to obtain full P.Ag. status.
- Applicants who use alternative documents (as outlined in the Acceptance of Alternative Information Policy) may be admitted to the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists as an Articling Agrologist (A.Ag.) and must complete the required Articling Agrologist program to obtain full P.Ag. status.

International Transcripts must receive an official third-party course by course evaluation, at the cost of the applicant, which is to be submitted to Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists office for evaluation. The Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists recommends using either World Education Services (WES) or International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS) but does not require use of either.

The combined graduate degrees and undergraduate academic history may be assessed to determine if they are equivalent to the National Education Standard.

If an applicant has completed an International Food Business Degree from Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture the credits associated with their work placement term(s) will be counted as Senior Agricultural credits.

Response

All responses will be sent to the applicant within six (6) weeks of the intake deadline immediately following their full application submission.

Notification of Acceptance will include:

- Letter of acceptance outlining:
 - Ability to use the P.Ag. designation
 - Purpose of NSIA
 - “Professionalism and Ethics” information session details
 - Welcome message
- A copy of the Professional Development (PD) Policy
- Members Only site overview and login information
- Prorated membership fee for the remainder of the calendar year
- Articling Agrologist guide as applicable

Notice of Denial will include:

- Letter outlining the reason applicant was not accepted
- Requirements to meet the criteria in the future
- Right to appeal the decision as outlined in the Internal Review Policy

Fees

Upon acceptance to the Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists the annual fee for the current period will be prorated to cover the remainder of the year.

- If an A.Ag. is accepted in the first half of the calendar year (Jan – Jun) the prorated fee will be based on the reduced first year fee and the subsequent full year will be billed at the annual price.
- If an A.Ag. is accepted in the second half of the calendar year (July – Dec) the prorated fee will be based on the annual price and the subsequent full year will be billed at the reduced first year price.
 - This method allows the applicant the most benefit from the permitted reduced-price year

Applications Scenarios and Solutions

When the National Education Standard was adopted by NSIA at a general meeting of the membership, interpreting and applying those standards fell to the Membership Committee and Council. Our initial approach was rather rigid and left many, suitable, applicants out or dictated a rigorous application process for certain applicants. The below two examples are regular scenarios that the committee faces which could have improved process.

Example 1

Scenario

Applicant has an undergraduate degree from an international university
Applicant also has a Master's level degree in agrology from a recognized Canadian university

Issue

An applicant with an M.Sc from Dal AC and an undergrad from an international university is required to submit an international application review. These reviews cost money and take time. The review also doesn't provide good detail on whether the course meets the agrology type courses we require under the national education standard.

Solution

Grad schools require review and pre-requisites for admission to Master's programs and conduct a review of the student's courses. If a Master's student requires some additional learning, they are often required to take a course before or while studying their Master's program. Upon completion of Master's degree in Agrology, the student can then be accepted into the Articling Agrologist Program.

Example 2

Scenario

Applicant has an undergraduate degree in a non-agrology program
Applicant also has a Master's level degree in agrology from a recognized Canadian university

Issue

This will keep applicants with domestic undergraduate degrees inline with those who have foreign degrees.

Solution

Grad schools require review and pre-requisites for admission to Master's programs. If a Master's student requires some additional learning, they are often required to take a course before or while studying their Master's program. Upon completion of Master's degree in Agrology, the student can then be accepted into the Articling Agrologist Program.

*Applicants who have completed a master's level degrees in agrology from a Canadian institution may be able to count their master's degree as one year towards their professional experience.