



The
Geological
Society

Chartership Assessor Handbook



CSci
Chartered
Scientist

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I.1 Aims

Welcome to the Assessor Handbook: a guide for Chartered Fellows who support The Geological Society's (the Society's) strategy to support the professional development of Earth scientists through their volunteering.

Chartership Assessors play a pivotal role in the Society's process of awarding Chartership (CGeol and CSci). This valued status serves as a testament to an individual's competency and professionalism within the field of geology, recognized by their peers and professionals.

With the responsibility of assessing each application for Chartered status, Chartership Assessors wield considerable influence in recommending decisions to the Professional & Chartership Committee. Their meticulous evaluation not only aids individual applicants in advancing their careers but also contributes significantly to the professional reputation of both Earth scientists and the Society as a whole.

This handbook is intended to be used as a reference document to appreciate the requirements in undertaking a Chartership application review. A live, working document, this is subject to regular revisions and it is the responsibility of the Assessor to keep up-to-date with the requirements as well as with the current Chartership regulations. The Chartership Office will advertise and record any updates to this document.

In this handbook guidance, best practice and essential resources are provided to empower Assessors in fulfilling their role effectively and to strive for optimal consistency across the review process. This contributes to upholding the standards of excellence and integrity that define the Society and its commitment to advancing multidisciplinary Earth science. The Society thanks its Assessors for their dedication and contribution to Chartership.

I.2 Handbook structure

The handbook has been subdivided into three main sections, as follows:

- The Chartership Assessor – outline of the role and its governance
- General guidance – aspects of professionalism and best practice for Assessors
- The assessment process – review procedures
- Chartership competency – approach to assessment
- The craft of the Assessor – delivering the role

2: The Chartership Assessor

2.1 Governance of the Society

The Society is governed by its [Royal Charter](#), [Byelaws](#), and [Regulations](#). Section 2.11 of the Byelaws deals with being a Chartered Geologist or Chartered Scientist and states the requirement to become Chartered. The academic and professional experience and standards are set out in the Regulations. Those that are relevant to being a Chartered Geologist, Chartered Scientist or a Chartership Assessor are detailed below:

- [R/FP/02](#) Criteria and Procedure for Validation as a Chartered Geologist;
- [R/FP/05](#) Appeal Procedure;
- [R/FP/06](#) Investigation of Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures;
- [R/FP/07](#) Codes of Conduct;
- [R/FP/08](#) Accreditation of Degrees (not currently available, Nov 2025);
- [R/FP/11](#) Criteria and Procedure for Validation as a Chartered Scientist; and
- [R/FP/13](#) Continuing Professional Development.

The latest versions of these can be found on the Society's [website](#) and this handbook should be read in conjunction with these regulations.

2.2 Role outline

- Two Assessors review each application comprehensively, analysing the submitted case and conducting a validation interview where the case has merit. Following this, they collaborate to recommend a course of action to the Professional and Chartership Committee.
- Assessors are contacted by the Chartership Office through newsletters and emails to confirm their availability. They gain access to a table listing candidate names, qualification sought, areas of expertise and current employer to ensure alignment with the applicant's professional area and to identify any potential conflicts of interest.
- Assessors then contact the Chartership Office to confirm their availability and list candidates or specialisms whose applications they are able to review.
- Upon receipt of the applicant's documentation and the name/contact information of their co-Assessor, Assessors conduct a separate, thorough review. They provide a preliminary assessment of the application using the Pre-Interview Assessment Form, indicating their opinion on the applicant's readiness for interview.
- Assessors agree on the interview time/date within the interview window specified by the Chartership Office. The Chartership Office sets up the online interview and sends out online invitations.
- Immediately after the interview, Assessors complete the necessary paperwork (Joint Online Post-Interview Form) and submit it to the Chartership Office.
- Experienced Assessors are responsible for sharing their knowledge with new or observer Assessors and contributing to the dissemination of best practices.

- In adherence to the Society's charitable status, Assessors are a valued volunteer role and do not receive honoraria or payments for their time. However, reasonable travel expenses may be reimbursed where they arise, subject to approval.

2.3 Assessor input and commitment

- Assessors may anticipate undertaking no more than two assessments each year; most will undertake just one.
- It is imperative that the Assessor can allocate sufficient time to assess an application thoroughly, given the importance of Chartership for the professional reputation of geoscientists.
- The Assessor must be able to complete their work within the timeframe stipulated by the Chartership Office.
- The time to undertake the initial assessment might typically be between four to seven hours to read and carefully consider the application documentation before completing the Pre-interview Assessment Form.
- The commitment for the validation interview amounts to between two and three hours, including pre- and post-interview discussions and completing the Post-interview Form jointly with the co-Assessor.
- If an Assessor is unable to adhere to the required timetable, they must notify the Chartership Office promptly so that a substitute can be arranged.
- In exceptional circumstances an Assessor may be requested to assess no more than two applications for Chartered Status on a single occasion.
- An Assessor agrees to have their name, contact details, and areas of expertise retained on a confidential database for the use of the Chartership officer in matching Assessors to applicants.
- The Assessors' names will be disclosed to the applicant once they decide to proceed to interview stage. To ensure the integrity of the process, the candidate will be asked not to share the Assessor names and contact details outside of the individual review process, as this pertains to Assessor safeguarding.

3.1 Overview

The Society aims to improve knowledge and understanding of the Earth, to promote Earth science education and awareness, and to promote professional excellence and ethical standards in the work of Earth Scientists, for the public good.

To achieve these aims, the professional qualification of Chartered Geologist has been awarded by the Society since 1990, and the Society has also since been licenced to award the title of Chartered Scientist by the Science Council. The number of Chartered Fellows has grown steadily since this time and, in 2024, Chartered Fellows comprised 2,836, representing ~24% of the total membership.

The professional qualifications offered by the Society cover all aspects of Earth sciences, and it should be noted the titles do not define the stated area of expertise of the geoscientist.

The following sections provide details on the general aspects of what is required to be a trained Assessor with regards to the professionalism and best practice in delivering this role.

3.2 Professional conduct

Professional conduct is paramount for Assessors volunteering for the Society. As representatives of the Society's standards and values, including the Code of Conduct, Assessors are expected to uphold the highest levels of professionalism, integrity, and ethical behaviour throughout their duties. This encompasses treating all applicants with respect, fairness, and impartiality, regardless of background or affiliation. Assessors must adhere strictly to confidentiality protocols, ensuring the privacy and security of all applicant information. Additionally, they are encouraged to foster an environment of continuous learning and improvement by staying abreast of industry developments, participating in training opportunities, and actively contributing to the enhancement of assessment processes. By embodying these principles of professional conduct, Assessors play a pivotal role in maintaining the credibility and integrity of the Chartership program and upholding the reputation of the Geological Society as a leading authority in the field of Earth sciences.

Professional conduct is important for all persons involved with the Chartership application and review process. Safeguarding of Assessors, in carrying out their role for the Society, is an important consideration when managing the expectations of candidates and in dealing with unsuccessful outcomes. To address this, Assessor identities are only shared with candidates once the interview is arranged and applicants make the following declaration when submitting their Chartership application:

"I agree that I will direct all communications regarding my application via the Chartership Office and will not contact the Assessors outside of the application process, or beyond the interview stage, without prior agreement."

Any Assessor with concerns about candidate conduct during the review process should contact the Chartership Office in the first instance.

3.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

3.3.1 Introduction

Equality is defined as having equal opportunities and rights, being treated fairly, and being able to reach your potential. In practice, it aims to provide everyone with the same opportunities, such that no-one is treated differently, or discriminated against, because of their personal characteristics. These are known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins);
- religion or belief (including lack of belief);
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

Equity principles are also adopted, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly, by removing barriers to resources or opportunities that some groups in society face.

Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences.

Inclusion is where these differences between people and groups are seen as a benefit, and where people feel comfortable to share their perspectives and differences, knowing that their opinions and ideas are valued.

3.3.2 Equal Opportunities Statement

The GSL has a responsibility to ensure that individuals are valued, treated with dignity and respect and that discrimination has no place within the geosciences. The Society aims to be representative of and welcoming towards all sections of society.

This statement has been written in line with the provisions set out in the UK Equality Act (2010) and the Science Council's Declaration on delivering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. As the Society is a membership organisation with members from around the world, we recognise and uphold the principles of fairness and equality set out in the following internationally recognised agreements: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Society expects all Fellows and accredited institutions to abide by these principles.

The Society is committed to:

- Fostering an inclusive culture that promotes equity, values diversity and maintains a harmonious inclusive environment in which the rights and dignity of all its Fellows, Candidate Fellows, visitors, and staff are respected.
- Welcoming applicants for Fellowship, employment, awards, and grants from all who are suitably qualified regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or national origins, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Ensuring that all members and prospective members of the geological community are treated solely based on their merits, abilities and potential without being subject to discrimination or unfavourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- Providing and promoting a positive working, learning and social environment that is free from prejudice, discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying, victimisation or persecution.
- This statement applies to Fellows, Candidate Fellows, applicants for Fellowship, Award & Grant applicants and recipients, job applicants, employees, visitors, and anyone acting on behalf of the Society.

All are expected to respect and act in accordance with the principles set out in this statement. Breach of these principles is a serious offence and could result in disciplinary action. Allegations of improper behaviour will be investigated in accordance with the Society's Employee Handbook and/or Code of Conduct respectively.

Details of how EDI considerations are integrated into the Chartership application and review/interview process are set out [on the Society's website](#). If you are interested in finding more about any aspect of equity, diversity, and inclusion at the GSL please contact diversity@geolsoc.org.uk.

3.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of utmost importance for Chartership Assessors within the Society. All application documentation provided to Assessors shall be treated with the strictest confidence, ensuring that it is not left in open public areas or discussed with colleagues who are not involved in the assessment process. Any transfer of application information shall be conducted securely, with electronic transfers occurring through protected sites to safeguard the applicant's private information. Furthermore, it is imperative that Assessors adhere to a policy of prompt document disposal, ensuring that all application documents are destroyed as soon as the assessment is completed, thus maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of the Chartership assessment process.

Individuals make the following declarations when applying to become an Assessor:

Declaration by applicant

I agree that all data provided on this form can be used by The Geological Society in the course of the Chartership review and interview process and, as such, may be distributed only to members of staff and other Chartered Fellows of the Society directly involved in the working of that process.

I agree that my name and speciality will be shared with the candidates I agreed to interview.

I agree that my name and speciality can be shared with the Regional Group in my area.

I declare that I am currently following a personal programme of CPD.

I agree that all information related to chartership applications will be treated in confidence and not be used, published or redistributed.

I agree that I will store the documents and data related to chartership applications securely and destroy all of them when no longer needed.

I agree that, if elected to being an Assessor, I shall promote the interests and welfare of the Society and observe its Orders, [Bye-laws](#) and [Codes of Conduct](#).

The management and storage of data associated with the processing and review of Chartership applications is addressed through the implementation of GDPR, as described below.

A guidance note for candidates about the confidentiality of their documents and suggestions for managing this when compiling their application is available [on the Society's website](#).

If the employer of a candidate has unresolved concerns about data security and confidential documents an Assessor may, in rare cases, be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to uphold the confidentiality of the information they handle.

3.5 Data security: UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

3 5.1 What is GDPR?

GDPR is the General Data Protection Regulation, an EU regulation governing the use of personal data, which first came into effect in 25 May 2018. Despite Brexit, it still applies to the UK as it forms part of UK law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

3.5.2 Overview of the basics

At GDPR's heart is an individual's right to privacy and organisations must adhere to its key principles and obligations to process personal data legally. The regulations are strict and breaching them can result in substantial fines – up to £17.5M or 4% of an organisation's turnover, whichever is higher.

GDPR covers personal data relating to living persons. The definition is quite broad and includes anything which can be related to an individual. It can be as simple as a name, but will include things such as addresses, work and personal email addresses, telephone number, health information, information on religion, gender or sexuality, bank card details, photos, signatures, academic qualifications, etc. It also includes online identifiers such as IP addresses and cookie data.

Under GDPR there are three main actors:

- Data Subject – the individual whose personal data is being processed;
- Data Controller – the organisation, or overall group/person, who determines the way data is processed and stored (i.e. the Geological Society); and
- Data Processor – the person or subcontracted organisation who processes data on behalf of the Data Controller (i.e. Society staff or volunteers who host the Society's data).

'Processing' covers every aspect of dealing with personal data, including adding, editing or deleting files. Even doing nothing is included if personal data is still stored.

3.5.3 Key aspects of GDPR

There are three main aspects to GDPR to be mindful of, broadly:

- Rights of the individual (Data Subject) – that is a person has the right to know what is being held about them, ask for corrections or withdraw consent for it to be processed.
- Lawful basis - Organisations (or Data Controllers) must set out very clearly the single lawful basis under which they are processing the data subject's personal data. There are six lawful bases, and only one can be used for each purpose.
 - Consent (clear, informed consent from the Data Subject for a specific reason);
 - Contractual (necessary to fulfil a contract);
 - Legal obligation (complying with common law or statutory obligation);
 - Vital interest (saving the data subject from harm);
 - Public interest/Task (in the public interest or set out in law); and
 - Legitimate interests (legitimate interests of the Data Controller).
- Data Protection Principles – Data Controllers (or more usually the Data Processors who act on behalf of the Controller) must process the personal data in a manner which meets all seven of the data protection principles.
 - Lawfulness, fairness and transparency (clear privacy notices and statements);
 - Purpose limitation (using the data for the specific purpose it was collected);
 - Data minimisation (not collecting excessive or irrelevant data);
 - Accuracy;
 - Storage limitation (not keeping data for any longer than is needed);
 - Integrity and confidentiality (security); and
 - Accountability (demonstrating accountability for the above).

3.5.4 GDPR in practice – Chartership process

The Society processes personal data under a number of lawful bases, examples being:

- Consent – consenting to receive marketing emails or newsletters from the Society about future publications, events, etc. This can be withdrawn;
- Contractual – to receive services Fellows have paid for, their personal data must be processed;

- Legal obligation - storing financial information for 6 years +1;
- Public interest – archiving historical records; and
- Legitimate interest – Use of CCTV, statistical analysis, etc, for the benefit of the Society.

3.5.5 Assessors as Processors and their obligations

In the case of the Chartership process, the lawful basis is 'Contractual'. That is, in order for a candidate to gain Chartership, their data must be processed i.e. their application must go through a review process.

When a candidate submits their application and supporting documentation to the Society to apply for Chartership, these data should be treated in a manner that complies with GDPR.

Under GDPR the Society is the 'Controller'; that is, it should determine how data are stored and processed. An Assessor is classed as the 'Processor'; that is, a third party who processes data on behalf of the Society. To comply with GDPR a Controller gives instructions to the Processor how to deal with data which they must follow.

Note: If any data breaches occur because the Controller's guidance has not been followed, the Processor is liable, not the Controller.

During the Chartership process Assessors must follow all the Data Protection Principles:

- PURPOSE LIMITATION - Ensure that the candidate's application/supporting documentation is only used for the Chartership process. Any information cannot be reused or repurposed any outside of this, without seeking further permission from the candidate.
- DATA MINIMISATION - Any data requested from the candidate e.g. during the interview process, should be relevant to the Chartership process. Excessive or irrelevant data should not be requested.
- ACCURACY – Candidate performance reports should be compiled accurately.
- STORAGE LIMITATION - Once the final report is completed and is no longer needed, the candidate's application/supporting documentation should be securely deleted.
- INTEGRITY & CONFIDENTIALITY - The candidate's application/supporting documentation should be stored in a secure manner i.e. in such a way that other people cannot access it, e.g. on a shared computer.

3.5.6 Notes on security

- Other than Society staff or Assessors who are directly involved in a candidate's application, the contents of the candidate's application/supporting documentation should not be shared with anyone else;
- Use Lock Screen when not at your computer ensure you lock your screen using the 'windows key' with the letter "L". It does not affect any documents you are working on at the time;
- Shared computers - Do not store candidate data on shared computers; and

- Working on the move - Do not use free public wifi services, only use VPNs or your own 4G/5G network where applicable. On the limited occasions where the data needs to be portable, encrypted USB sticks must be used. The Society's IT department has a supply.
- Phishing, Viruses, Ransomware, Spoofing - Beware of emails purporting to originate from well-known establishments or individuals asking you to follow or click on links. They may look genuine, but if you are not expecting the email, then do not click on any links. Report to IT in the first instance.
- When surfing the internet, look for https - Look to see that a website is secure by checking that there is an "s" in the https link and check for a locked padlock icon. This, in itself, does not ensure complete safety that the website is secure, particularly if you arrive on the site as a result of clicking on a link from a phishing email, but it is good practise to ensure the existence of these points before submitting any personal data online.

3.5.7 Data breaches

- If something happens to the personal data such as: accidental deletion; it being stolen; accessed illegally; or lost or destroyed in some way, the Society MUST be notified as soon as possible by the Processor (Assessor), even if it is only suspected that it has suffered any of the above. This is because, under GDPR, the Society (the Controller) has only 72 hours to notify the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) of the breach. Failure to do so is, in itself, a breach of the rules and increases the potential for a penalty to be imposed.
- Please direct any queries about data security to dpo@geolsoc.org.uk.

3.5.8 GDPR training for Assessors

It is compulsory for all Geological Society volunteers working with sensitive data to have valid, up-to-date training about GDPR. Every organisation is required to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that they are managing data safely and in accordance with general data protection legislation. An Assessor is likely to come in to contact with personal data and sensitive information, so the Society will provide training to provide Assessors with an awareness of their responsibilities as a volunteer in relation to data protection.

4.1 Introduction

This section provides details on the technical aspects of the role that is required of a trained Assessor when reviewing a Chartership application.

4.2 Chartership application routes and eligibility

4.2.1 Regular route

All applicants must be Fellows of the Society before they make a Chartership application.

The majority of applications received are via the 'normal' routes in which the applicants seeking Chartership typically have from approximately four to fifteen years of professional practice following their academic training in an Earth sciences or related subject. This qualification must be to Master's level ([QAA Level 7](#)) or equivalent. Candidates holding a maximum of a Bachelor's qualification (QAA Level 6), they must also provide a Master's level equivalence report (MLER).

4.2.2 Experience route

This applies to applicants who have more than 20 years' professional experience. Due to the number of years' experience, where these "20+" applicants have a maximum of Bachelor's qualification (QAA Level 6) they do not have to provide a MLER.

4.2.3 Retrospective route

Candidates who have gained a professional qualification with the Society can be awarded the other status retrospectively for a period of up to two years without the need for a further interview.

4.2.4 Reciprocal recognition route

Reciprocal arrangements have been agreed with:

- American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG);
- American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG); and
- Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI).

These applicants have to become a Fellow of the Society before making an application. Also, they will have completed an application form, paid the required fee and have provided proof that they are a Professional Geologist of one of the above organisations.

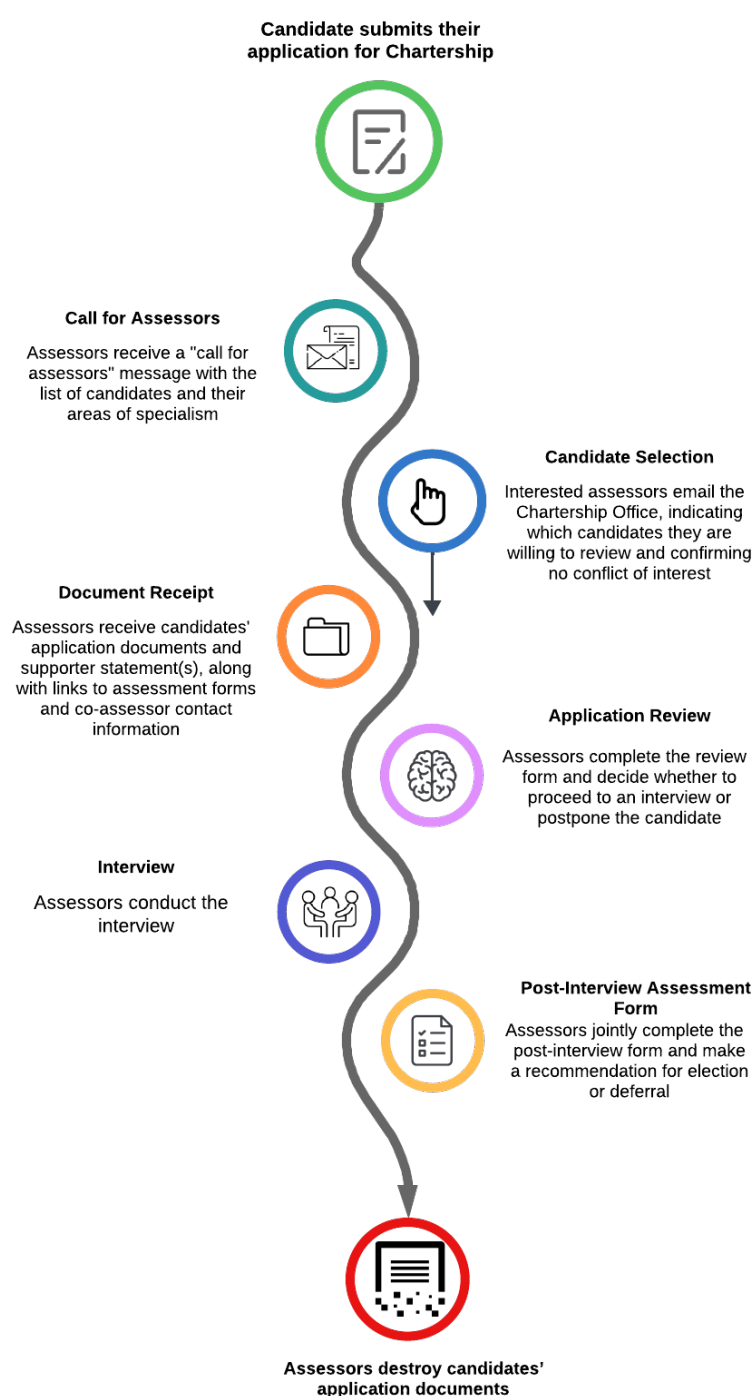
4.3 The review procedures

4.3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the overview of the application and review processes and timeline.

4.3.2 Outline

A flowchart that summarises the various stages of the application assessment process is given below which outlines the process undertaken from the initial application by the applicant to its completion.



A flow chart reflecting the review stages and the roles of all those involved in the review process are given in **Appendix A**. More detailed descriptions of the application review and interview processes are given later in this handbook. Information about the initial stages of the review process is given in the sections below.

4.3.3 Call for Assessors

The initial call for Assessors is done through the use of Assessor newsletter. These Society communications are usually issued within a week of each application deadline. Assessors should check their membership dashboard to enable receipt of these in both their newsletter subscription settings and that their own email settings do not prevent these incoming messages being received e.g. not being blocked by company firewalls. Further information about email settings is available within the relevant area of the membership dashboard.

4.3.4 Candidate selection

From the list of candidates, Assessors can advise of any preferences for specific candidates or areas of expertise to review.

Those who are experienced Assessors are able to review candidates outside of their main specialism if they feel confident to do so. Nonetheless, at least one Assessor will be closely aligned with the area of expertise of the candidate and where two areas of expertise are stated, an Assessor will be aligned with each.

Assessors and other Fellows directly participating in the Chartership application review process should act impartially with respect to applicants. Therefore, to promote the interests and welfare of the Society, and uphold its Code of Conduct, any Assessor who is allocated to review a candidate's application where a conflict of interest arises should declare this to the Chartership Office as soon as possible so that an alternative Assessor can be assigned without delay to the review timeline. As set out in the Chartership regulations, a conflict of interest is considered to arise if:

- a candidate and Assessor work for the same company;
- they are closely related;
- there used to be, or is, some form of personal or professional relationship that might cause them to lose impartiality;
- there is evidence of previous areas of professional conflict; or
- the Assessor has undertaken a previous assessment of a candidate that resulted in a Defer decision.

4.3.5 Application receipt

On receipt of the documents from the candidate the Chartership Office undertakes the following checks:

- The required forms and documents have been received;
- Candidate eligibility requirements have been met e.g. FGS status, academic qualifications and (for 20+ candidates) the number of years of professional experience;

- The word/page numbering content of the application documents do not exceed the stipulated maximums where prescribed (Professional Report, competency criteria sections, Supporting Documents);
- Copies of the academic certificate(s) have been provided and checked. If not an accredited degree¹ its acceptance is confirmed by the Chair of the Professional & Chartership Committee (P&CC);
- A Master's Level Equivalence Report (MLER) has been provided if required.
- CPD records meet the minimum requirements for the number of years of records and annual hours, and that a Plan-Act-Reflect approach has broadly been followed; and
- A cover note for each Supporting Document has been provided to set out the candidate's contribution to the work and sign post the assessors to the criteria being demonstrated.

These checks are undertaken prior to issuing application packs to assessors in order to streamline the review process.

4.3.6 Document transmittal

The application document packs are sent out securely in line with GDPR requirements by WeTransfer facility. These links are time-restricted for security reasons so Assessors should download documents promptly on receipt, and store securely. If any document files are found to be missing or corrupted, Assessors should contact the Chartership Office immediately.

If an Assessor is able to access WeTransfer links (e.g. blocked by their company computer), please contact the Chartership Office to arrange alternative document transmittal.

4.3.7 Timeline

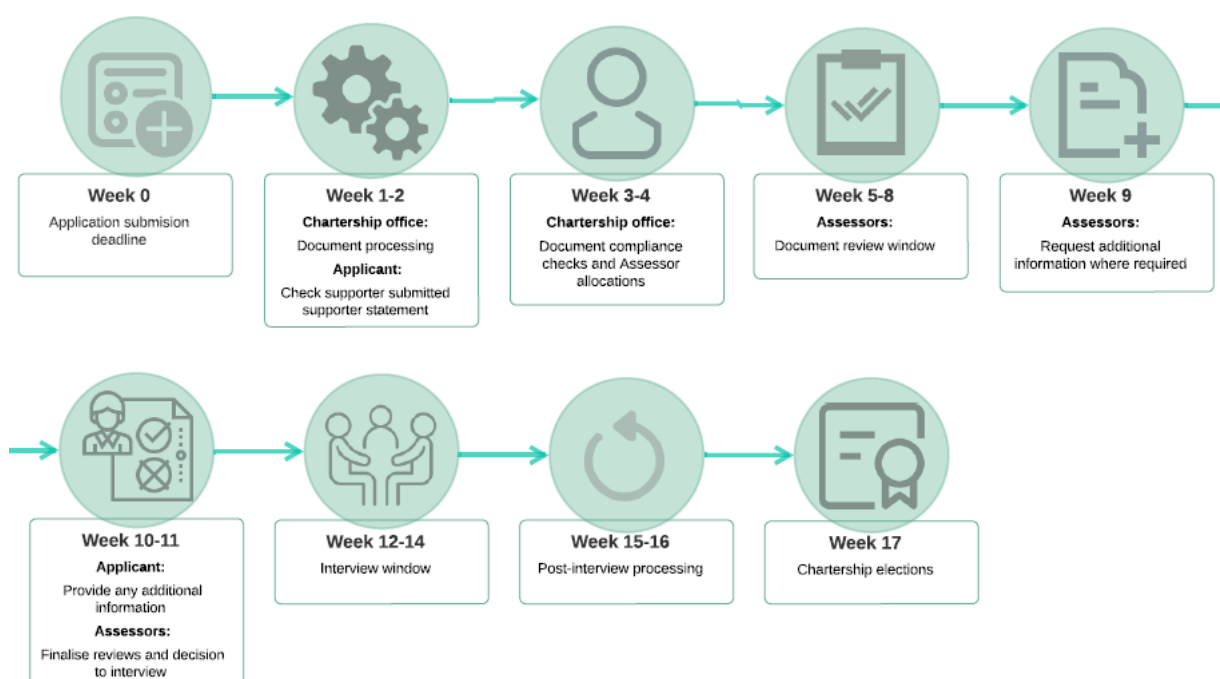
The Society operates four application review rounds per year. These correlate to an approximately four-month window ahead of each Society Council meeting where elections for Membership and Chartership are formally made. Examples of the typical application deadlines and their corresponding elections dates are given in the table below.

¹ An accredited degree is one that the Society recognises as having sufficient geoscience content to meet the QAA requirements.

Application submission deadline	Interviews will be held before	Election date
01 June 2024	06 September 2024	25 September 2024
01 August 2024	01 November 2024	27 November 2024
01 January 2025	04 April 2025	23 April 2025
01 March 2025	06 June 2025	25 June 2025
01 June 2025	05 September 2025	24 September 2025
01 August 2025	07 November 2025	26 November 2025

There are five Council meetings per year. There is no formal application round associated with the first (typically early February) Council meeting due to the impracticability of completing reviews and interviews over the festive period.









The outline schedule between the applicant submission deadline and the election date is set out in the graphic below:



When the call for Assessors is issued, calendar dates will be provided by the Chartership Office aligned with the above schedule, and Assessors should make note of the interim deadlines provided, like in the example below.

Assessment deadlines	
Request additional information deadline	31 July
Application Review Form submission deadline	15 August
Assessor discussion forum	w/c 11 August
Interview window	18 August to 12 September
PCC meeting	16 September
Council meeting	24 September
Review outcome notification	25 September

It is important that these are adhered to for the smooth running of the review and interview schedule. This is because communication with the candidates is made via the Chartership Office for Assessor safeguarding reasons. Since this schedule has also been shared with the candidates to manage their expectations e.g. timing of interview window, it is important that this trust in the professionalism of the process is upheld. Some practical tips are given below.

-  Add **deadlines to your calendar** as soon as you receive the timeline
-  Set personal **reminders** a few days before each submission deadline
-  **Schedule time for document review** – treat it like any other work commitment
-  Start with a quick scan of the documents to **flag potential issues early**
-  Respond to placeholder polls promptly to **secure interview slots early**
-  **Coordinate with your co-assessor** early to avoid last-minute pressure
-  **Submit forms as soon as decisions are made** – don't wait for the deadline
-  **Reach out** to the Chartership Office if you foresee any delays

Late review of documents leading to delays in either (i) requests for additional information or (ii) decision to proceed to interview, in particular, can cause candidates distress and place an increased burden on the Chartership Office with additional communications.

4.4 The application-review-and-agreement-to-interview form

4.4.1 Introduction and form outline

The purpose of the [Assessor's Application Review and Agreement to Interview](#) form is to determine if the application should proceed to interview. The form comprises four sections:

- Candidate details – candidate's name, Fellowship number, application type, and one or two areas of expertise, together with confirmation of the documents supplied;
- Summary comments reporting on each of: the online application form, Professional Report, CPD record, Supporters Statement(s), MLER (if applicable), each Supporting Document, career progression and whether the information supplied supports the application;
- Competency overview - comments on each of the Chartership competency requirements and a likely score for these based on the information supplied; and
- Overall comments and decision confirming whether: (i) the application is suitable to proceed to interview for validation or (ii) any further information is required. If proceeding to interview, outline question areas for interview can be provided, before the relevant declarations are made when signing off the form.

Assessors carry out their review of the application documents independently of each other in the first instance and may then convene to discuss their findings. There are three possible outcomes from this assessment stage:

- To proceed to interview stage;
- To Postpone the application; or
- To first request additional information (with which to reach one of the above two conclusions).

These are outlined in more detail below.

4.4.2 Decision to proceed to interview

Where both Assessors are in agreement that the supplied documents demonstrate competence across all Chartership competency criteria, they advise the Chartership Office of their agreement to proceed to interview.

4.4.3 Borderline applications

Candidates should ideally score Competency (see the [competency checklist](#)) in all Chartership criteria within their application such that the interview serves to validate the application. It is nonetheless recognised that borderline applications may arise.

Assessors may wish to see further information from the applicant before making their recommendation. In this case, please request additional information from the candidate via the Chartership Office following the instructions on the pre-interview assessment form.

Assessors should state clearly what is required, in a format that can be provided directly to the candidate and so that the candidate knows what information to supply. Where the request is more general and open to interpretation the Assessors may not receive what was anticipated by them.

The information requested should be readily available by the candidate e.g. information pertaining to an existing project but that was not included with the original Supporting Document in question or an example document referred to or implied by elsewhere in the application such as in the Professional Report/Career Account.

The Chartership Office will collate any such requests from both Assessors to provide this to the candidate in one communication, in order to maintain a streamlined process. Assessors should therefore complete their initial review of the application documents promptly to facilitate this process and ensure that the narrative of the request is self-explanatory.

On receipt of this information further assessment is undertaken before deciding whether or not to proceed to interview.

4.4.4 Postponement

The Chartership Office advises that Assessors should Postpone interviews for those applicants whose application is not considered strong enough to go forward to interview with a likely successful outcome, either following the provision of additional information or if significant changes to the entire application are required by a resubmission. By postponing applications that are weak, and which have a reasonable likelihood of a Defer recommendation following interview, candidates and Assessors are both likely to have a more positive experience and successful outcome at interview.

A Defer outcome (an unsuccessful application *following* interview) is disheartening and costly for candidates as they will need to pay their application fee again when resubmitting. In contrast, candidates have two years following a Postpone outcome to resubmit their application at no additional cost. Defer outcomes are also resource heavy, requiring the time of a further two Assessors to carry out a Defer Review (and often a further two Assessors if/when the candidate re-applies, bringing the total number of Assessors involved in that application to six).

When contacting the Chartership Office to advise on a Postpone decision this should present in detail what are considered to be the application deficiencies so that these can be conveyed constructively to the candidate. The rationale for the decision should be included as well as comments on how the application might be improved or strengthened, and what Assessors would be looking to see in future. The candidate will need to be clear from the feedback about what is being sought from them before it is deemed to be ready to proceed to interview. This feedback will be relayed to the candidate via the Chartership Office and the candidate encouraged to submit within an appropriate timescale, as indicated by the Assessors' review.

Should the situation arise where both Assessors are unable to reach an agreement whether to proceed or Postpone, the Chartership Office may assign a third Assessor to make an independent assessment without reference to the reports from the original Assessors. Depending on the result of this third assessment, the Chartership Office will inform the candidate accordingly.

In the event of a Postponement, when the candidate reapplies the Chartership Office will aim to utilise one of the original Assessors for continuity, in reviewing whether the previous concerns have been addressed. Candidates are asked to provide a summary sheet of the key changes made to update the application to facilitate the review process, as well as an updated Supporter Statement. This is to ensure that the Supporter has been involved in the review of the previous feedback and has provided ongoing support to the candidate in the resubmission.

The second Assessor will be new to the candidate review who can review with a fresh perspective. This is useful especially where the candidate has updated their entire application, rather than just exchanging, for example, a couple of Supporting Documents. Involving a third assessor in the review also provides an additional level of quality assurance for the candidate around the rigour of the review process.

In the event of a candidate being Postponed for a second time, the Chartership Office informs the candidate with summarized feedback. Additionally, one Assessor is asked to volunteer for an informal feedback call, which may include the Chartership Office if preferred by the candidate. This call aims to provide more detailed feedback through a one-off Zoom/Teams meeting to provide support to the candidate towards a successful future application.

In the event of a challenge to the second Postponement, a further Assessor may be requested to conduct a review (similar to a defer review) to validate the perspectives of the existing three Assessors.

4.4.5 The assessment approach

The assessment process is the evaluation of the information presented within the documents provided to give assurance to the Assessor that the candidate has reached that point in their career to be considered competent in the Chartership criteria as it is related to their stated field of expertise.

It should be noted that CGeol applications do not require specific knowledge of UK geology, but that the required level of geological knowledge gained is from the places that the candidates has worked and can demonstrate that it shows the necessary level of competence.

In addition, when considering whether the candidate has evidenced the competencies of each of the Chartership criteria, this standard should be applied consistently across all candidates. The rate of progression of an individual's career pathway is not part of the assessment focus. In other words, a candidate with over twenty years of experience should not be assessed as a subject matter expert, but against the same competencies as someone with fewer years of experience.

The Supporting Documents form an important part of the application to evidence the Chartership competencies and it is necessary for the Cover Sheet to convey clearly what is presented. There are limitations imposed on the size of individual documents that can be supplied. If these are exceeded, they are returned for editing by the applicant following the Chartership Office's compliance checks. It can be

beneficial if the Cover Sheet also confirms which competencies they are considered to demonstrate including signposting to the specific parts of the document, plus clarification about the candidate's contribution to the work. A guidance document for candidates about the Supporting Documents is available on the Society's [website](#).

4.5 The validation interview

4.5.1 Introduction

The interview serves to provide confirmation of the prior assessment of the application documents and, therefore, to validate the application. It should take place once the assessment of the application documents is considered to demonstrate and meet the competency criteria required for Chartership.

The interview should not be seen as the point at which the decision to make a recommendation to Accept, and hence the award of Chartership. The interview is not a formal examination of the candidate, and therefore it should be approached as a conversation and not be overly formal. The purpose of the interview is to assess further by detailed questioning the depth of knowledge that the candidate has and not what they do not know.

4.5.2 Interview format and recording

The Society aims to carry out interviews via an online meeting unless accessibility (neurodivergence) requirements necessitate an in-person setting. In this way, candidates are assessed in a way that is consistent for all. The Society records online Chartership interviews. This decision was made with the utmost respect for both Assessors and candidates and it is important to clarify that the intent behind recording is neither to critique nor to control the Assessors' methods. The primary purpose of these recordings is to serve as a valuable tool in the event of an unsuccessful interview outcome, necessitating a Defer review. In such cases, having access to the interview recording enables the Defer reviewers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the candidate's performance, allowing for more informed decision-making.

Interview recordings will be automatically deleted 60 days after taking place (and following the election of successful candidates), unless there is mutual agreement from both the Assessors and the candidate to retain the recording for training purposes. Recordings for candidates who are Deferred are kept in order to facilitate the Defer review process and then destroyed once no longer required. This approach ensures transparency, fairness, and integrity in the Chartership assessment process, reinforcing the Society's commitment to maintaining high standards and supporting continuous improvement.

4.5.3 Preparing for the interview

Thoroughly review the candidate's application beforehand and submit the 'Application-Review-and-Agreement-to-Interview' form. Assessors should be familiar with the candidate's professional geoscience background and prepare relevant questions. Views between the two Assessors should be aligned and provide a balance in the focus of questions. It is recommended that the Assessor take the opportunity to

convene ahead of the interview, to provide a flowing and coherent interview and question approach to the candidate.

It may prove helpful to annotate copies of the Professional Report and Overview of Competences to highlight specific aspects to be discussed at interview. Use the cover sheets of the Supporting Documents to list relevant questions and information in the document that require further explanation and/or discussion

4.5.3 Interview protocols

During the Chartership review process, Assessors typically determine between themselves who will assume the role of the 'lead' Assessor, although the Chartership Office may proactively approach a more experienced Assessor to take the lead, especially when one of the Assessors is new to the process. The purpose of having a lead Assessor is to:

- Chair the interview and be responsible for guiding the interview's direction, ensuring all relevant areas are covered comprehensively;
- Introduce those present and provide information at the start and end of the interview about the procedures e.g. format of the interview, when the candidate can expect to be notified of the outcome;
- Facilitate effective communication between the Assessors and the candidate. Make sure that the co-Assessor has been able to contribute equally to the questions and discussion, and for the candidate to have the opportunity to ask any questions;
- Supports the development of less experienced Assessors, fostering a culture of learning and continuous improvement within the Assessor community; and
- Synthesize the observations and insights from both Assessors and collate the feedback to provide a suitable summary (~100-200 words) that can be provided to the candidate.

This leadership role aims to strengthen the integrity and robustness of the assessment process. Nonetheless, the views of both Assessors carry equal weight in the assessment decision itself.

4.5.4 Interview structure

After the introductions, the interview begins with the candidate's presentation, usually lasting 15 minutes. Begin by offering the candidate the option to either start with an uninterrupted presentation or if they prefer questions during their presentation. This empowers the candidate to choose the format that best suits their comfort level. If there is any indication of the candidate being nervous, it is usually best to promote an uninterrupted presentation.

Following this, organize the interview into distinct segments, each focusing on different competency areas relevant to the Chartership assessment. This structured approach ensures comprehensive coverage of the candidate's skills and experiences, allowing for a thorough evaluation by the Assessors.

If it is evident that the presentation will allow broader discussion and demonstration of the competencies required, it is acceptable to lengthen the presentation as appropriate. If the candidate starts to wander it is acceptable to remind them that there is a nominal length of time for the presentation.

Candidates applying via the 20+ route should prepare a longer presentation, typically 30 minutes.

4.5.5 Professionalism and attitude

In evaluating candidates during the Chartership interview, Assessors should pay close attention to the candidate's professionalism and attitude as these elements are indicative of their readiness to uphold the standards of the profession. This includes assessing their communication skills, punctuality, and overall demeanour during the interview. How candidates handle challenging or unexpected questions can also provide insight into their problem-solving abilities and composure under pressure.

Assessors should remember that the objective of the interview is not to measure the candidate against their own breadth of knowledge or to expect them to be world-leading experts in their field. Instead, the focus should be on the candidate's ability to demonstrate what THEY know and how they apply their knowledge and skills in a professional context at this stage of their professional career.

The goal is to ascertain that the candidate is competent and meets the criteria set out in the Chartership regulation guidance, showing that they possess the necessary understanding and expertise to practice at a professional level. This perspective ensures that the assessment is both fair and focused on identifying the qualities that define a professional ready to contribute positively to the geoscience community.

4.5 6 Closing the interview

Closing an interview requires finesse and clarity to leave both the candidate and the Assessors with a clear understanding of the next steps. As the interview draws to a close, the lead Assessor should summarize the key points discussed during the assessment and express appreciation to the candidate for their participation. It is important to offer the candidate an opportunity to ask any final questions or provide additional information they feel pertinent.

The lead Assessor should then outline the timeline for the assessment process. It is imperative that the candidate is briefed on the subsequent procedure, whereby Assessors will submit their evaluations to the Chartership Officer who then presents the list of candidates and outcomes to the Professional & Chartership Committee before proceeding to the final stage of ratification by the Society's Council. The candidate should be informed that the outcome of their assessment will be communicated to them one day subsequent to the Council meeting and official vote. This systematic closure ensures that candidates are aware of the timeline and process post-interview, promoting transparency and managing expectations effectively. Finally, the lead Assessor should thank the candidate once again for their time and participation, reaffirming the value of their contribution to the assessment process.

4.5.7 Observers

The interview observer role is primarily intended for Assessors who are either new to the assessment process or have not been active for a while, providing them with a valuable learning opportunity. Observers do not actively participate in the interview; their role is purely educational, allowing them to understand the dynamics of the interview process firsthand. Typically, observers join the meeting before the candidate arrives, which gives them a chance to discuss the interview plan with the Assessors and familiarize themselves with the session's objectives. At the beginning of the interview, the lead Assessor introduces the observer to the candidate, clearly explaining their non-participatory role to ensure transparency for all parties involved.

Following the introduction, the observer turns off their camera and microphone, silently observing the interview proceedings. This continues beyond the interview and the subsequent Assessors' discussion once the candidate has left, and allows the observer to witness the decision-making process, after which they may ask questions to gain further insights into the assessment criteria and the rationale behind the Assessors' recommendations.

As part of their preparation and training, observers will usually receive a condensed candidate pack ahead of the scheduled. This preparatory step allows the observer to familiarize themselves with the candidate's qualifications, experience, and the specific competencies they aim to demonstrate during the Chartership assessment. Additionally, observers may be asked to fill out the Pre-Interview Assessment Form for training purposes.

Although this exercise is purely for the observer's training and learning and does not contribute to the official assessment of the candidate, it is invaluable in enabling the observer to engage with the assessment criteria and to consider how they would evaluate the candidate's evidence against the standards required for Chartership. This process not only enhances the observer's understanding of the assessment procedure but also prepares them for the critical thinking and evaluative skills they will need when they transition from observing to conducting assessments themselves. This approach ensures that new Assessors are thoroughly prepared, contributing to the integrity and effectiveness of the Chartership assessment process.

If after the Assessors have discussed the candidate and made their recommendation as to an Accept or Defer decision and the observer has questions, it would then be appropriate to ask the Assessors these questions. It should not be seen as an opportunity to challenge the Assessors on their decision. Should the observer have questions following the interview these should be addressed to the Chartership Office.

Observers are also required to fill out an [observer form](#) to reflect on their learning experience. New Assessors are encouraged to observe one or more assessments before conducting one themselves, to ensure they are well-prepared and confident in their role to uphold the standards of our Chartership process.

Likewise, for experienced Assessors, being an observer from time to time provides an opportunity to reflect on their own approach to interviewing and obtain some fresh perspective and ideas from observing other Assessors in action.

To maintain the required standard between interviews the Chartership Office will occasionally request Assessors to act as a monitor whilst an interview is undertaken. Like an observer, the monitor does not take part in the actual interview during which their connection will be on mute and with the camera is switched off. The role of the monitor is to observe how the Assessors undertake the interview, how well it is handled and, where improvements are identified, these are forwarded to the Chartership Office.

On completion of the interview the monitor will complete the observer form which is conveyed directly to the Chartership Office on completion. The choice of the number of interviews that are monitored, and who will be requested to act as monitors is determined by the Chartership Office.

4.6 The post-interview assessment form

4.6.1 Overview

This [form](#) is filled out jointly by both Assessors. It is recommended that the Assessors stay on immediately after the interview to discuss their observations. The Assessors are required to report on the following:

- the presentation that was made and how long it lasted;
- whether the candidate demonstrated competence for each of the Chartership criteria and to state how this was demonstrated;
- clear comments if competency was not demonstrated in any criteria, and why; and
- feedback for the candidate. both [Accept](#), [Defer](#) and [Accept Subject To](#) decisions.

4.6.2 Recommendations

There are three possible recommendation options for Chartership that can be made by the Assessors to P&CC following the completion of the interview:

- that the candidate should be [Accepted](#);
- that the candidate should be [Accepted Subject To](#); or
- that the candidate should be [Deferred](#).

The Accept Subject To recommendation is used relatively rarely, where the candidate needs to provide a final piece of missing or revised documentation e.g. a CPD plan, a missing or additionally requested Supporter Statement, or a change of claimed area of expertise to that applied for.

The types of feedback for Accept candidates could be advice on career progression, and any areas of weakness that should be addressed by future CPD. For Defer candidates it should be clearly stated what is required in a future application to be able to demonstrate competence, advice on types of work that could be undertaken to broaden experience and to help the candidate in the preparation of a new application. Advice to the applicant, whether successful or unsuccessful, is a very important part of the report.

If there is a marked disparity between the assessment made from the evaluation of the documents and how the candidate performed during the interview such that it is now considered the candidate should be Deferred, careful evaluation between the Assessors is required as to the reasons why. If necessary, contact

the Chartership Office to discuss this further. Further information about giving feedback to any candidate is set out in the later sections below.

4.7 The Defer review process

4.7.1 Overview

If, on the completion of the assessment of the documents and interview, it is assessed that the candidate has not demonstrated competence in all Chartership criteria a recommendation to Defer is made. The Assessors will then complete the [Joint Post-Interview Form](#) (JPIF) that will confirm this decision. It will identify those criteria where competence was not demonstrated and state the reasons for each criterion. In addition, it will provide feedback that can be conveyed to the candidate for future guidance. The Chartership Office contacts the candidate informing them of the decision and which criteria where competence was not demonstrated, and that a review will be undertaken.

The Chartership Office then appoints two senior Assessors whose experience is in the candidate's stated area of expertise to act as reviewers. The reviewers are supplied with copies of the documents supplied by the candidate and the forms completed by the two Assessors. Access is also provided to the recording of the interview. The reviewers then undertake independent assessments of all the information provided and do not liaise on any aspect of the review.

The reviewers document their assessment in the [Application Defer Review form](#), providing general comments and scoring on all the documents supplied by the candidate. They then comment on the Assessors' forms, including if they consider the Assessors were justified in their comments and whether the feedback provided by the Assessors was helpful. The reviewers can then provide additional feedback/advice for the candidate that they consider appropriate and present a conclusion based on their review. The Assessor concludes whether or not they concur with the Defer decision, providing an explanation for their conclusion.

On receipt the Chartership Office appraises the review forms. The outcomes would be:

- Both reviewers concur with the defer decision;
- Both reviewers do not concur with the defer decision; or
- The reviewers are split, one concurs, and one does not.

For a Defer outcome, the Chartership Officer advises the candidate of the Defer decision via a letter from the Secretary, Professional Matters, advising on the feedback provided and with recommendations for a future re-application.

If the reviewers do not concur either with each other or with the original recommendation, the Chartership Office liaises with the Chair of the PCC and a decision can be reached to overturn the Defer recommendation. They would then prepare a letter for the candidate advising of the revised decision and that their Chartership application was successful and would also provide feedback.

If the outcome is not unanimous the Chartership Officer then undertakes its own assessment of the application. In this situation the Chartership Office may decide to offer the candidate a second interview

and does not have to make a new application. The Chartership Office then prepares a letter advising the candidate of the decision made together with any feedback provided. If the candidate accepts this offer, they can provide further or amended information to the Chartership Office. On receipt the Chartership Office appoints two new Assessors who then undertake an assessment of the information supplied and interview the candidate. This assessment and interview can be undertaken outside of the routine dates for Chartership applications.

In all of these outcomes, the letter to the candidate is signed by the Chartership Officer and the Secretary Professional Matters.

5.1 Introduction

The following sections provide Assessors with some steer about assessing the competency of the application in relation to the Chartership criteria. Academic eligibility is first considered followed by notes for each of the Chartership competencies. This should be read in conjunction with the applicable Chartership regulations and the guidance provided there for each competency criteria.

5.2 Eligibility

5.2.1 Academic qualifications

Chartership applicants must provide proof of the academic qualification in the Earth sciences or other sciences they have obtained. This will be checked by the Chartership Office to confirm if this is a degree accredited by The Geological Society. It is anticipated that degrees awarded by British academic institutions will have been accredited.

Where the applicant has obtained their degree outside of the UK the Chartership Office will check if it has been accredited by the Society. If not, details of the degree are reviewed by the Secretary, Professional Matters who would make an assessment if the content studied for the degree is of the required standard and content that it complies with the requirements of section 2.4 of the Byelaws. If this is confirmed the application for Chartership can continue. Assessors will not be approached by the Chartership Office to act as an Assessor if the degree is found not to be compliant.

5.2.2 Master's Level Equivalence

To be eligible to apply for Chartership, the candidate must have an academic qualification at Master's level or equivalent. If the candidate does not have this level of academic qualification, they can still apply by providing a Master's Level Equivalence Report (MLER) as part of the application process.

What is required for a Master's degree in the Earth sciences is presented by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education ([QAA](#)) in its report; *"Subject Benchmark Statement: Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies"* ([2022](#)), to which reference can be made. The Benchmark Statement by the QAA makes the following comments in the section on, "Employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise:

"1.13 Employability is the set of competencies, demonstrated by a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours, that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, benefiting themselves, society and the economy. It includes problem identification and solving, innovation, creativity, expression, communication and practical action. Entrepreneurship enhances employability by promoting personal development. It fosters those attributes that enable students to transition into successful graduates, actively participating in society and identifying opportunities to enable them to develop a meaningful career combined with the creation of cultural, social and economic value."

These attributes apply equally across ES3², although the emphasis within the learning outcomes of the subjects will differ. Developing close links with employers and involving them in curriculum and assessment design will contribute positively to graduate employability. Employability and entrepreneurship focus on competencies (knowledge, skills and behaviours) and cross-cutting, transferable themes such as business awareness, professional ethics, health and safety codes and personal motivation.

1.14 In the context of the Earth sciences, employers will be looking for competence with the selection, application and interpretation of appropriate numerical, digital, qualitative and quantitative techniques and the ability to understand the Earth system in four dimensions.”

With regard to the MLER, this must demonstrate through professional practice since graduating that the candidate has gained the knowledge and experience of a technical level of difficulty that would be equivalent to what have been obtained when graduating with a Master’s degree. A guidance document is available regarding the requirements for the MLER on the Society’s [website](#).

The Assessor should satisfy themselves that the candidate has an acceptable level of basic geological knowledge. When commencing on their career the candidate then develops more specialist knowledge that will be the basis for their stated field of expertise. The report provided to the Assessor should be related to the field of expertise claimed by the candidate. As an Assessor if you have any queries with regards to the report that has been supplied the Chartership Office will provide further guidance.

5.3 Assessing Competency

The Assessor is required to appraise and evaluate all the information provided by the candidate and then to make a judgement as to whether it demonstrates competence across all of the relevant Chartership criteria. Due to the broad range of fields of work that can be covered by the geological sciences it is not possible to be specific as to what is required to demonstrate competence for any particular field. This has to be assessed against what the candidate claims to be their stated area of expertise.

Being competent is defined in the [Collins Concise Dictionary](#) as “Having sufficient skill, knowledge, etc.; capable” and being “Suitable or sufficient for the purpose”. It should be noted that these do not specify being an expert who is a person who has extensive skill or knowledge in a particular knowledge. The candidate has to be judged against what they know at the stage of their career at which they make the application for Chartership.

² Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies

5.4 Chartered Geologist

5.4.1 Criteria (i)

Understanding of the complexities of geology and of geological processes in space and time in relation to the Applicant's area of work.

The requirements that it will be necessary for the candidate to demonstrate are that they:

- know the fundamentals of Earth's history;
- understand the basic geological processes that take place in three and four dimensions. In doing so, they should be able to assess how these are inter-related and can evaluate and understand how these work in connection with their stated area of expertise;
- understand how the current geological conditions have been reached through an analysis of these processes;
- are able to take the above knowledge and be able to prepare maps and cross-sections to illustrate these processes; and
- are able to identify the geological challenges that would be anticipated in relation to their stated field of expertise in relation to the work being undertaken.

There are several ways in which this be demonstrated, and include the following examples:

- work and projects undertaken to illustrate a sound theoretical and practical application with regard to the geology encountered by using current industry standards;
- how they have gone about solving or mitigating the geological challenges with regard to the evidence available;
- why they have selected the procedures and methods used to undertake the geological tasks;
- undertaken appropriate study and research to enable them to understand and demonstrate their knowledge of the area being studied;
- demonstrate the effectiveness and relevance of the work undertaken to provide solutions or mitigations to the geological issues identified.

5.4.2 Criteria (ii)

Critical evaluation of geoscience information to generate predictive models.

The requirements that it will be necessary for the candidate to demonstrate are that they:

- are able to demonstrate how they have acquired, observed and recorded geological data;
- have an appreciation of the limitations that can be associated with the method of data collection used and the certainty/uncertainty that this can introduce when appraising the data; and
- understand the relative merits of the different ways that data is collected, be it from outcrop, intrusive forms of investigation, geophysical and other forms of survey such as geotechnics and geochemical.

There are several ways in which this be demonstrated, and include the following examples:

- examples of reports and publications written to evidence the work undertaken, data collected and interpretations made of that data;
- the provision of experimental data such as laboratory testing of samples and computer analysis/modelling, with supporting narrative to illustrate the requirements above; and
- examples of how they have developed solutions to the geological challenges identified.

The information presented for the above two criteria is not exhaustive. It is for the candidate to decide what information they consider appropriate and should provide and for the Assessor to judge if it is appropriate to demonstrate competence.

5.4.3 Criteria (iii)

Effective communication in writing and orally

It will be necessary for the candidate to demonstrate this through:

- The standard and command of written English through the provision of the application document, the Overview of Competencies, the Professional Report and the Supporting Documents.
- How the candidate deals with questions raised at interview to convey their command of spoken English in understanding the question and how they structure their response.

Where English is not the first language of the candidate due allowance for this may be made by the Assessor. Whilst this requirement is not an assessment of the candidate's knowledge of the English language, any candidate be they UK or overseas will be expected to have an acceptable working knowledge of English grammar in the documents provided.

Effective communication is broader than the language quality of the documentation provided. Assessors should also evaluate the competency of the candidate to convey information to a range of audiences encountered within their work e.g. technical or non-technical.

Whilst oral communication is typically assessed through the interview process, assessors can also explore whether the candidate has sought out opportunities to convey their work orally elsewhere as part of their work e.g. presenting at conferences, STEM workshops.

5.4.4 Criteria (iv)

Competency in the:

- ***knowledge and implementation of Health and Safety (H&S);***
- ***management of environmental and sustainability issues; and***
- ***knowledge and implementation of other statutory obligations applicable to the discipline or area of work.***

Due to the nature of the work undertaken and locations worked in by a geoscientist importance is placed on an adequate working knowledge of H&S, in particular and that they work to best practice.

There are several ways in which this be demonstrated, and include the following examples:

- Provision of documents to show Method Statements, Risk Assessments and “Tool Box talks” prepared by the candidate;
- A description of their role and management of H&S issues when supervising field works;
- Details of any incidents or near misses that may have occurred; and
- An acceptable knowledge of UK H&S regulations and how these apply.

With regard to environmental and sustainability this requires a knowledge of key environmental legislation, what is meant by environmental protection and sustainability in relation to, and effect on, the applicant’s main area of practice. Evidence of these from the project work being undertaken should be provided along with identification of where the applicant might require specialist guidance.

The benchmark for H&S will be the requirements that apply for work in the UK. For an overseas candidate the regulations that apply in their country should be confirmed. If these are below those of the UK it must be established that they meet as a minimum level the requirements of the United Nations. If work is being undertaken for international companies working in their country the standards of that company should be confirmed.

5.4.5 Criteria (v)

Clear understanding of the meaning and needs of professionalism, including a clear understanding of the Code of Conduct and commitment to its implementation

It is necessary that candidates show through their responses to questioning that they have a clear understanding of the need to behave professionally and ethically at all times in their work and to act in accordance with the Society’s Code of Conduct (Regulation FP-07). In addition, they must show an understanding of Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) for all their activities in the workplace and by their actions. Candidates may provide examples within their application, for example, making use of the cover note for a Supporting Document to describe a relevant example in connection with the project.

The candidate should be questioned during interview if they have experienced unethical conduct or inappropriate EDI to themselves or others. It is acceptable to ask questions on hypothetical situations that could take place and how the candidate would deal with these.

5.4.6 Criteria (vi)

Commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) throughout the Applicant’s professional career

The applicant is required to provide CPD records for a minimum of the three years prior to submitting their application. It is necessary that the CPD should follow the [Society requirements](#) of using the Plan>Act>Reflect model. This can be done by using the Society online CPD recording systems or any other provided it follows the Society’s approach. It is necessary for the CPD to show that it is forward looking and supports the development of technical and professional skills. It should be balanced by containing

skills related to professional practice in addition to those of a technical nature. The range of such skills is very broad and reference should be made to the [Mind Map](#) to reflect this breadth.

The assessment should consider how relevant the recorded CPD is to the candidate's career development and how it has been incorporated into the work that the candidate undertakes.

5.4.7 Criteria (vii)

Competence in their area of expertise

This competence relates to the area of expertise stated in the application and not general Earth sciences' knowledge. It will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that they are able to undertake the work that they have been tasked to do without direct supervision and are able to direct the work of others.

There are several ways in which this be demonstrated, and include the following examples:

- From the descriptions of the work undertaken in the Professional Report, examples of contributions to the project work involved with at key stages of the project;
- Examples of project planning undertaken, the direct organisation of work to be undertaken, the management and use of staff and dealing with changing technical requirements during the project;
- Examples of preparing for, and implementation of, quality control methods and processes for the project; and
- Examples where they have been responsible of design that has been undertaken, the implementation of such design, the evaluation and interpretation of data and the presentation of such work and the conclusions that can be drawn.

5.4 Chartered Scientist

To follow – see Appendix B.

6.1 Introduction

The following sections provide guidance on aspects of the delivery of the assessment role in such a way to optimise the performance of the candidate both during and beyond the application review process. This makes an important contribution to upholding the professionalism and reputation of Chartership.

6.2 Interview style

6.2.1 Introduction

The following sections provide guidance on maximising the benefit of the interview within the assessment approach. These are not precise requirements but should be used to help develop the interviewing style.

6.2.2 Assessors' introduction

During introductions, it is important to engage in icebreaker conversations about to put the candidate at ease. Candidates are often very nervous about their Chartership interview, which marks a significant career milestone. Creating a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere can foster better communication and set a positive tone for the interview process to be conducive for candidates to speak freely and articulately. In an online setting, this is of particular importance and often overlooked. Some icebreaker topics could include:

- Assessor career experience summary and recent interesting work projects;
- Discussion of locations of participants – identification of local or favourite geology;
- Or, even, the weather....!

6.2.3 Active listening

Active listening goes beyond simply hearing the words spoken by the candidate; it involves preparing to listen, observing both verbal and non-verbal cues, and providing appropriate feedback to demonstrate attentiveness to the message being conveyed. As Assessors, it is expected that interview styles will vary, but genuine interest in what the candidate is saying can significantly impact their performance. When actively listening, refrain from distractions like checking your phone or not appear to be watching what the candidate is saying e.g. having online meeting software poorly set up, or making notes without advising the candidate of doing so. Otherwise, these actions may be interpreted by the candidate as disinterest and could potentially add stress to the interview.

If maintaining eye contact or focusing on the candidate improves the understanding of their answers by the Assessor, communicating this preference at the beginning of the interview can help to avoid miscommunication. Ultimately, active listening fosters a more engaging and productive interview environment, enabling Assessors to glean valuable insights from the candidate's responses.

6.2.4 Effective questioning

Effective questioning serves as a bridge to understanding the depth of a candidate's competence and professionalism. By skilfully blending a mix of open-ended and situational questions, Assessors can stimulate reflective and comprehensive responses that reveal the candidate's ability to think critically and adapt. Encouraging candidates to draw upon specific examples from their professional experiences that allows the Assessors to gauge their practical application of knowledge, their problem-solving abilities, and their approach to making informed, ethical decisions.

This method not only provides insight into the candidate's technical proficiency but also sheds light on their judgment, integrity, and the impact of their work on the broader professional and societal context. Through this dynamic questioning strategy, Assessors can effectively evaluate the candidate's readiness for Chartership, ensuring they embody the values and skills essential for their professional advancement and contribution to the field.

6.3 Giving constructive feedback

6.3.1 Overview

The feedback by Assessors is not just part of the formal process: it plays a vital role in supporting candidates' professional development. Whether a candidate is Accepted or Deferred, these comments help them understand where they stand, what they did well, and where improvement is needed.

It is important to deliver feedback that is clear, balanced, and genuinely helpful, even when delivering a difficult message. The goal is to ensure that every candidate walks away with a sense of direction, not discouragement. Constructive feedback is one of the most valuable tools that Assessors can offer as part of the Chartership journey.

Constructive feedback is clear, evidence-based guidance that acknowledges a candidate's strengths, pinpoints a specific gap, and offers practical steps to close that gap, so the recipient knows exactly what to improve and how to do it. Giving constructive feedback is important because it turns an assessment moment into a development opportunity—for the individual, the organisation, and the profession. Here are ways that feedback can be constructive.

- **Purpose-driven:** aims to improve future performance, not just judge past work.
- **Evidence-based:** anchored in specific examples from the application or interview.
- **Balanced:** recognises strengths while identifying areas to develop.
- **Action-oriented:** offers clear, practical steps the candidate can take next.
- **Respectful & objective:** focuses on the submission or behaviour, never the person.

Feedback is sometimes treated as an after-thought, yet it is essential. It gives candidates a clear view of their strengths, highlights the areas they need to develop, and accelerates their professional growth. A discussion with two seasoned assessors—experts who have already navigated the pitfalls candidates are about to face—can be a remarkable catalyst. Because Assessors hold significant influence in these interactions, there is an associated responsibility to the candidate and to the profession: provide thoughtful, constructive guidance that genuinely supports their advancement.

Benefits of Constructive Feedback

Benefit	Why it matters (especially in Chartership assessments)
Drives improvement	Clear, evidence-based guidance shows candidates exactly what to strengthen, reducing guesswork and accelerating progress toward Chartership.
Protects fairness and transparency	Objective, well-reasoned comments demonstrate that every candidate is judged on the same published criteria—vital under the Freedom of Information Act and professional codes of conduct.
Boosts motivation and confidence	Balanced feedback highlights what is already working while outlining a feasible path forward, keeping candidates engaged rather than discouraged.
Reduces repeat work for assessors	When candidates know precisely how to address gaps, resubmissions are higher-quality, saving panel time on future reviews.
Strengthens the profession	Development-focused feedback helps create better-rounded Chartered members who, in turn, mentor others and raise overall standards.
Reinforces assessor credibility	Writing clear, actionable feedback showcases the assessor's expertise and professionalism, enhancing the reputation of the Chartership process itself.

6.3.2 Postpone outcome feedback

The comments should be treated much like post-interview feedback. Assessors should pinpoint the sections of the application that need further work, give concrete examples of how they could be strengthened, and also acknowledge the parts that already meet the standard. This balance helps the candidate see both the target and the gap.

Pre-Interview Feedback (Postpone vs Proceed)

Decision point: Postpone → candidate receives your collated comments; Proceed → candidate meets you at interview.

Focus on gaps, not faults: link comments directly to Chartership criteria.

Actionable pointers: “Provide two additional project risk analyses” instead of “Insufficient examples.”

Tone: supportive and objective—“You are nearly ready; here’s what will get you there.”

By connecting each observation to a specific Chartership competency, feedback remains objective. For example:

- Weak feedback: *“Technical section is poor.”*
- Strong feedback: *“Competency (iii) lacks evidence of risk-mitigation; include a quantified residual-risk table for Project X.”*

In this way, a Postpone recommendation can be phrased as a constructive pause, not a rejection.

6.3.3 Accept or Defer outcome feedback

Successful candidates still need development cues, so feedback does not end at *“well done”*. Meantime, for unsuccessful candidates, critiques should be anchored in the interview’s specific moments. For example, *“During Q4 on ethics...”*. It is worth considering the SBI model (Situation—Behaviour—Impact) which makes feedback clear, actionable, and less personal by focusing on facts and specific examples, and it can be used for both positive and constructive feedback. Lastly, Assessors should ensure that the feedback is aligned. For example, if a weakness is flagged *after* the interview but not *before*, explain why.

Post-Interview Feedback

- **If successful:** highlight strengths and suggest next-stage development (“Consider mentoring to build leadership skills”).
- **If unsuccessful:** explain what fell short, where in the interview/application, and how to fix it.
- ✓ Use the SBI model (Situation—Behaviour—Impact) to anchor comments in evidence.
- ✓ End with forward-looking advice: resources, training, or experiences to pursue.
- **Keep consistency:** echo pre-interview points—no surprises.

Consider the language used and structure the feedback constructively.

Writing Actionable, Constructive Feedback

- **Specific** – cite exact evidence (page, competency, interview question).
- **Balanced** – note at least one strength for every key improvement area.
- **Action-oriented** – “Demonstrate depth by...” instead of “Lacks depth.”
- **Clear language** – avoid jargon; aim for grade-12 reading level.
- **Respectful & neutral** – assess the work, not the person.

6.3.4 Records and Transparency

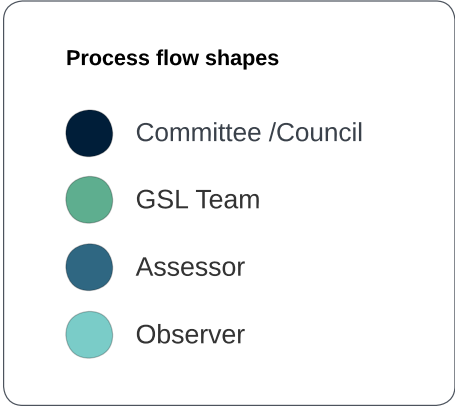
Whilst the Assessor reporting forms have been designed to set out which comments are made as part of the review process and which are to be provided to the candidate, the Freedom of Information Act (2000) nonetheless means any candidate can request the recorded feedback associated with their application.

Therefore, reports should be written with disclosure in mind. Assume comments may be released verbatim and avoid informal notes or subjective remarks that would look unprofessional if shared publicly. For data protection purposes, feedback and reporting should exclude personal or confidential third-party details. Chartership Office data storage guidelines should be followed for secure retention of any forms or interview recordings.

Appendix A – Assessment flowchart

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This flowchart sets out the sequence of tasks and roles for those involved in the Chartership application review process.

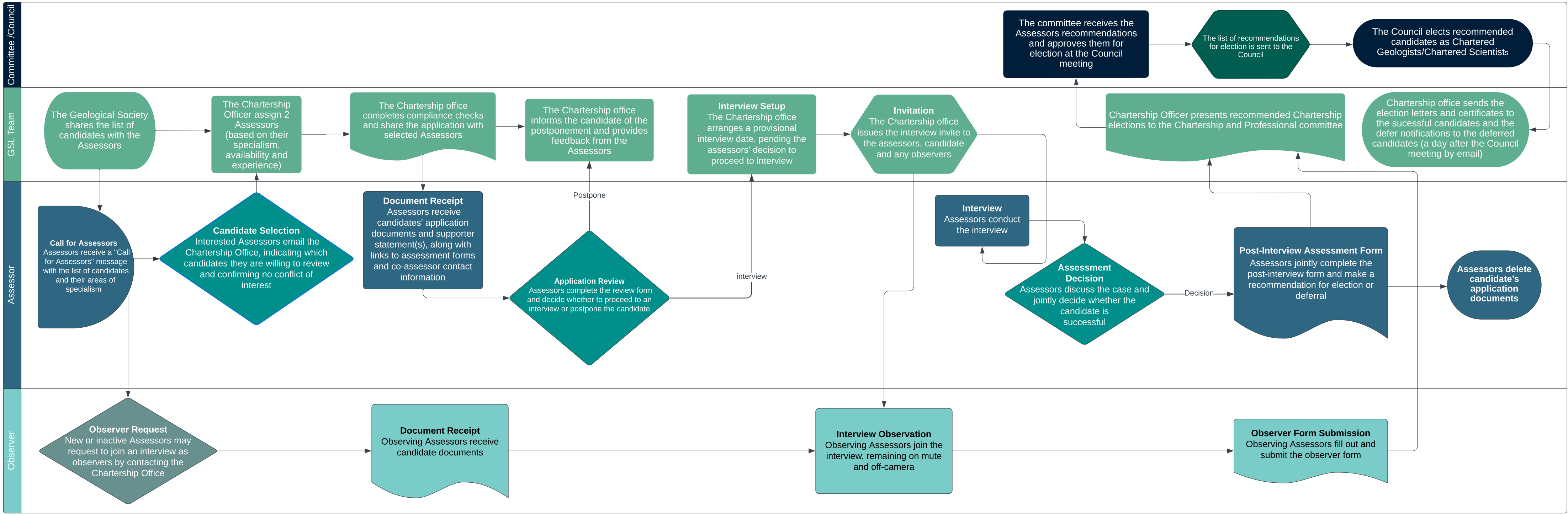


Geological Society Chartership Application Assessment Process

The Geological Society | October 30, 2025



The Geological Society



This document is undergoing continuing development. It will evolve in order to provide a best practice guidance document to Chartership Assessors in fulfilling their role for the Society. Topic areas identified for future updates include:

- Chartered Scientist competency criteria
- Evaluating areas of expertise

This list is not exhaustive and will be updated as needed.