



# Guide to Assessment of Eligibility for CPSS Competency in Australian Soil Survey

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Revised January 2017



**CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL  
SOIL SCIENTIST**

**This guide is for persons seeking recognition in the Soil Science Australia Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) accreditation program as competent in Australian Soil Survey.**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Soil Science Australia provides suitably qualified members accreditation as Certified Professional Soil Scientists (CPSS). Accreditation as a CPSS requires applicants to satisfy the Standards for Professionals in Soil Science, comply with the Society's Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct, and demonstrate on-going professional development (OPD). The application process is rigorous with further details available in the Guide to Accreditation. The Standards for Professionals in Soil Science summarises the expectations for CPSS and can be found on the CPSS web url [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au).

The Federal Executive oversees the governance and operations of Soil Science Australia whilst the CPSS Board oversees the management of the certification programme. The CPSS board consists of between four and six members with backgrounds representing academia, consulting, research and government sectors. Soil Science Australia operates with a not-for-profit objective.

This guide is for persons seeking recognition as a Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) competent in Australian Soil Survey. Applicants should complete the CPSS Application form for Competency in Australian Soil Survey available from the downloads page of [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au) and ensure the application contains all of the required detail before it is submitted (including submission of a printed application form). Incomplete applications will not be assessed.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR CPSS COMPETENCY IN SOIL SURVEY

The CPSS Accreditation Board has developed specialized competencies that are only available to CPSS accredited Soil Scientists.

The specialized competency in Soil Survey is open to members of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. (Soil Science Australia) holding CPSS accreditation. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet the minimum competency requirements as outlined in the CPSS Recognised Competencies for Australian Soil Survey using narratives and supporting evidence.

## 3. THE COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Soil Science Australia publishes and maintains the CPSS Recognised Competencies for Australian Soil Survey. This document is available at [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au)

The CPSS Competencies for Australian Soil Survey recognise a level of ability in soil survey that involves a combination of core scientific knowledge and technical skills in soil survey. The Soil Survey Competency document contain two sections: 1) Core Knowledge for a Soil Surveyor and 2) the Practice of Soil Survey.

The first section, Core Knowledge for a Soil Surveyor, contains one skill set listing seven competencies. All applicants are expected to meet all of the knowledge requirements in this section.

The second section, Practice of Soil Survey, contains four skill sets; Planning, Investigation, Communication, and Land Evaluation and Interpretation. Each skill set comprises several competencies and applicants are required to satisfy a minimum of 80% of individual competencies within this section. Applicants are encouraged to provide evidence for every skill set in the Practice of for Soil Survey, and are required to satisfy a minimum of 80% of individual competencies.

## 4. PREPARING AN APPLICATION

### 4.1 Overall form of application

Your soil science qualifications and competencies can be assessed by preparing and submitting an application, which must include:

- a) Proof of identity including a passport style photograph.\*
- b) Documentation of all your qualification/s including the degree or diploma testamur/s or certificate/s, and academic transcript/s listing the courses, subjects or units studied and the results you gained in each subject.\*
- c) A Curriculum Vitae (CV) including an outline of any soil science employment history. This may include employment or contaminated land experience undertaken before, during and since your formal qualification/s. A chronological listing with employer and task is preferred to major project listing.\*
- d) Evidence of competency addressing the Recognised Competencies for Australian Soil Survey.
- e) Details of people that can provide a reference on your ability as a soil scientist competent in soil survey.
- f) Evidence of your English-language competency.\*
- g) A printed and signed declaration that the application is your own work and that the information it contains is true and correct, and that you agree to comply with the Code of Ethics and the Rules of Conduct, must be posted to the CPSS Federal Office.

\* This piece of evidence may be omitted if you have already supplied it for a recent CPSS accreditation. (Contact the CPSS Office if you are not certain about this).

All documents (except the hardcopy certification) must be submitted in A4 size electronically via the CPSS web site ([www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au)). Note that applications must be complete when lodged and not lodged in instalments. Further information and/or evidence may be required by the Board to support your application. Additional information may include but is not restricted to project reports and/or signed statements by supervisors. The following pages explain these requirements more fully.

## 4.2 Preliminary self-evaluation of competency

Before starting to prepare the application, you should read carefully the competency requirements and you should apply for assessment on the basis that you can satisfy them.

## 4.3 Personal identification and proof of identification

(REF:Application page 2: Applicant Details, Proof of Identification and Applicant Declaration)

Identification must include full name, date of birth and a passport-style photograph of the applicant. Preferred personal identification format is a certified true copy of your passport bio-data page, Australian driver's licence or Official Identity Document. Where these are not available, a certified copy of your Birth Certificate and a certified passport-style photograph may be accepted

## 4.4 Qualification details

(REF:Application page 3: Educational qualifications)

You must provide certified true copies of your original degree or diploma qualifications, together with the associated academic transcript/s showing courses, subjects or units studied and the results gained in each. If you have more than one qualification that you believe is relevant, please provide the above details for each one. Examples might be an undergraduate degree in a non-soil science (but soil science-related) field, plus a masters degree in soil science field/discipline; or an advanced diploma followed by a graduate diploma in soil science. If available, please provide extracts from university, college or other handbooks giving brief descriptions of the courses, subjects or units you have studied. Appendix C provides information on certification of copies of documents.

Where qualifications are not in the English language you must provide copies of both the original language document and a certified English-language translation. The name and contact details of the translator must be provided on the English-language version.

If your current name is not the same as on the original documents you must provide evidence of your name change.

## 4.5 Curriculum vitae and publications list

(REF:Application page 3: Curriculum vitae and publications list)

You must provide a Curriculum Vitae (CV) covering your employment experience since completing your undergraduate studies to date. The CV may also include contaminated site experience gained prior to your current qualification or concurrently with it. For each soil science appointment you have held, please include:

- the name, location and contact details of the employing organisation
- the dates and duration of your employment in this appointment
- the title of the position you held
- your defined role and responsibilities.

Publications included in your CV should be set out in Harvard Style.

## 4.6 Evidence of competencies

(REF:Application pages 3-5: Summary of competencies)

You must address the CPSS Recognised Competencies for Australian Soil Survey by providing documentation and supporting information demonstrating how you have satisfied each competency listed below. This can be a URL, reference or link to a document. Further instructions are in the application guide. Applicants need to satisfy all of the 7 skill sets listed in this section.

## 4.7 Details of referees

(REF:Application pages 5-6: Referees)

All applications must provide details of four professional referees. Prior to submitting your application please contact your referees and ensure they consent to completing a referee report for you. Referees are required to;

- –provide an objective evaluation of your skills and competency as a soil surveyor
- –respond to the request for a referee report in a timely manner, and
- –be working as a CPSS or an equivalent professional expertise level.

The CPSS Federal Office will contact the persons you nominate. No more than two referees should be from your workplace. You are required to supply four referees with at least two being CPSS accredited.

Documentation and supporting information demonstrating how you have satisfied the competency, and any relevant explanatory note.

**1. Core Knowledge for a Soil Surveyor** (applicants need to satisfy all of the 7 skills sets listed in this section)

<i>Example 1</i>	<i>N1 para 2, N3 para 3</i>
K-1	
K-2	
K-3	
K-4	
K-5	
K-6	
K-7	

**2. Practice of Soil Survey** (applicants need to satisfy 80%, or a minimum of 15, of the 19 skills sets listed in this section)

<b>2.1 Planning</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 2</i> )	
P-1	
P-2	
P-3	
<b>2.2 Investigation</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 6</i> )	
I-1	
I-2	
I-3	
I-4	
I-5	
I-6	
<b>2.3 Communication</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 5</i> )	
C-1	
C-2	
C-3	
C-4	
C-5	
C-6	
<b>2.4 Land Evaluation &amp; Technology</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 2</i> )	
LE-1	
LE-2	
LE-3	

**4.8 Application fees**

The schedule of fees for CPSS applications is available on the CPSS web site, [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au). Please note that the application fee for competency in soil survey must be paid prior to submitting the application and all applicants must be financial members of Soil Science Australia. No application will be assessed without payment, which can be arranged by request to [membership@soilscienceaustralia.org](mailto:membership@soilscienceaustralia.org). Please attach proof of payment by forwarding the receipt issued by the Society with your application. The application fee is non refundable.

Applications must be lodged in the calendar year the payment is made, or the payment may be forfeited.

If the application is successful you will be listed as competent in soil survey on the CPSS register of professionals. There is no *pro rata* payment of the accreditation fee.

**4.9 Lodgement of a completed CPSS application**

(REF:Application page 6)

Two separate lodgements (one through website, other as hard copy) are required with every application for competency in soil survey. The electronic copy of the application form along with all supporting documentation should be submitted online via the CPSS application system available on the web site at [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au). Please note that all files must be uploaded in PDF format. A printed copy of pages 2 and 3 providing your personal details and proof of identification (photograph), certified academic statements and a signed declaration that the report submitted is entirely your own work and that all the information it contains is true and correct to the best of your knowledge must be sent as a hard copy to Soil Science Australia, PO Box 737 PROSPECT EAST, SA 5083.

## 5. CHECKLIST OF MATERIAL TO BE SUBMITTED

Please ensure that you have completed the application form and provided all documentary evidence required. The list below provides numbers in parentheses that refer to the relevant Section of this Guide.

- Completed application form including
  - signed declaration (4.1)
  - personal identification including a passport style photograph (4.3)
  - evidence of competencies (4.6)
  - contact details of your referees (4.7)
  - statement or evidence of English-language competency (4.9)
- Certified true copies of academic testamur/s or certificate/s (4.4)
- Certified true copies of academic transcripts, showing courses, subjects or units studied and results gained in each (4.4)
- Curriculum vitae and publications list (4.5)
- Proof of payment of the CPSS fees (4.9)

## 6. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND CPSS SOIL SURVEY ASSESSMENT PANEL

Assessment will be made by the CPSS Soil Survey Assessment Panel which will review the application and recommend to the CPSS Board whether you have demonstrated competency and eligibility in soil survey. Recommendations from the Soil Survey Assessment Panel will be considered by the CPSS Board.

Candidates may occasionally be asked to provide more information or to attend an interview with one or more assessors. In the great majority of cases, assessment is based on the report as submitted. Soil Science Australia reserves the right to seek confirmation of particular information. It may, for example, seek confirmation from your university, college or other educational institution, that the details of your qualification/s are correct. Soil Science Australia will not approach your employers or other third parties without first seeking your permission.

You will be advised of the outcome that your application has been assessed as demonstrating, or not demonstrating, competency and eligibility for soil survey by the Soil Science Australia CPSS accreditation board. If your application is unsuccessful you will be provided with feedback on the areas where you have failed to demonstrate competency at the required level.

## 7. REVIEW OF DECISION

If you believe you have been unfairly treated in the assessment of your application then you may appeal the decision. Your appeal should be addressed in writing to the Chair of the CPSS Board and submitted to the federal office of Soil Science Australia. All appeals will be considered in accordance with the Rules of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated and are summarised below.

If you appeal the assessment decision you should understand that all necessary documentation from your file will be copied and forwarded to an Appeals Committee. Under Australian Privacy Legislation your permission is required for this to happen. Your signature on your letter appealing the assessment decision will be taken as denoting your consent for your file documents to be forwarded to the Appeals Committee.

The CPSS Appeals Committee will comprise the Federal President, the Chair of the CPSS Board, and an accredited CPSS selected by the President. The Appeals Committee will be constituted when an appeal is lodged with the CPSS Board and disbanded after the Appeal is heard. The CPSS Appeals Committee meeting must give due consideration to any written or oral representations submitted to the Board by that Member at or prior to the meeting and determine whether to confirm or to revoke the action of the CPSS Board.

The CPSS Administrator will, by notice in writing, inform the CPSS Member of the decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee. The decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee shall be final.

## 8. ONGOING CERTIFICATION

CPSS are recognised by their professional body as professionals who continually expand their knowledge and skills throughout their career by seeking professional development opportunities. As such, scientists with CPSS-Soil Survey accreditation are required to demonstrate they have undertaken an average annual minimum of 75 hours of on-going professional development over a three-year period, and spread across the various competencies and skill sets. Fifty of the 75 hours OPD must relate to your competency in Soil Survey.

## **9. COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCT REVIEW PROCEDURE**

Soil Science Australia requires CPSS to conduct their activities according to the Society's Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct. Instances where practitioners may have contravened the code or rules may be reported to the CPSS board, which will coordinate an investigation in accordance with the Rules of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated and summarised below.

### **9.1 Notification**

Notification of a complaint should be made by providing a confidential written submission outlining the name of the CPSS and sufficient details of the complaint to enable a thorough investigation.

### **9.2 Initial review**

Where the CPSS Board is of the opinion that a Member has refused or neglected to comply with a provision of the CPSS accreditation program or has acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the CPSS accreditation program, the Board may revoke the accreditation or suspend the Member from such rights and privileges of CPSS accreditation as the Board may determine.

Where the Board approves action the Secretary of the Board shall, as soon as practicable, cause a notice in writing to be served on the Member setting out the action of the CPSS Board and the grounds on which it is based; and informing the Member that the Member may either attend and speak, or submit written representation at a CPSS Appeals Committee meeting relating to the action taken by the Board.

### **9.3 Further review**

The CPSS Appeals Committee will comprise the Federal President, the Chair of the CPSS Board and an accredited CPSS selected by the President.

The Appeals Committee will be constituted when an appeal is lodged with the CPSS Board and disbanded after the Appeal is heard. The CPSS Appeals Committee meeting must give due consideration to any written or oral representations submitted to the Board by that Member at or prior to the meeting and determine whether to confirm or to revoke the action of the CPSS Board.

### **9.4 Communication of outcome**

The Secretary to the CPSS Board will, by notice in writing, inform the Member of the decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee. The decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee shall be final. The CPSS Board will also provide notification of termination of CSAM accreditation of the practitioner to state Regulators.

The CPSS board will prepare an annual statement of the reviews conducted and the outcomes, for publication on the program's website. The annual summary will provide summary information only and will not include the names of individuals or organisations.

### **9.5 Reporting**

The CPSS board will maintain a confidential register of all notifications and their outcomes and will provide an annual report to Soil Science Australia Federal Executive.

## Appendix A: Examples of evidence to support your competency claims

Competency	Assessment criteria	Examples of evidence
<b>Knowledge</b> ( <i>demonstrate all</i> )		
K-1 K-2	Provision of evidence that applicant: K-1: understands the relationship between geology and soils K-2: has an understanding of pedogenesis and landscape evolution.	This may be in the form of map legends, technical reports, published papers or presentations. Example material should include description of actual relationships between soils and geology, soil formation, or production of soil/land systems maps that have a geomorphic construct in a map legend.
K-3 K-4	Demonstration of an understanding of the principals and methods of description of soils and landscapes and soil classification in Australia.	Reports, documents, published papers, that include discussion of soil and landscape description and classification methods and their application. Publications/reports related to specific geographic areas.
K-5	Evidence of designing/conducting surveys.	Copies of completed projects/surveys including the sampling strategies and discussion of the logic of the strategy.
K-6	Evidence of appropriate use of remote sensing in a survey.	Technical reports, survey reports and papers that demonstrate the use of aerial photos, satellite imagery, DEMs, geophysics or other remote sensing techniques in soil survey. Similar documents that review/analyse/propose different methods and approaches.
K-7	Evidence of an understanding of soil and land use limitations and their relationships. Knowledge of land evaluation techniques.	Documents, reports, guidelines, papers or similar that review, describe or analyse land use limitations in the context of land evaluation methods used in Australia.
<b>Planning</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 2</i> )		
P-1 P-2 P-3	Evidence of design/conduct of surveys for specific purposes.	Copies of contractual documents, tenders, project proposals, , client referees, survey reports and survey data, for example, ASS, SCL, EIS, pipeline corridors etc in the context relevant to each State's legislation.
<b>Investigation</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 6</i> )		
I-1-7	Demonstrated practice of survey and profile description including ability to select, locate, describe, sample, photograph and classify profiles.	Copies of survey reports and maps, field sheets and laboratory data used in survey reports. Examples should include photographic evidence of soil profiles profile descriptions and classification, sampling strategies and data analysis. Description of survey method rationale.
<b>Communication</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 5</i> )		
C-1 C-2	Demonstrated soil-related data analysis and interpretation. Presentation/communication of data and information via different methods.	Results/discussion/interpretation of soils and their properties including soil analytical data and interpretation within published reports, presentations, summary notes including analysis of soil analytical data. Survey reports, published papers, technical notes, field day handouts, presentations or similar with examples of data interpretation and presentation.
C-3 C-4 C-5	Preparation of maps and associated material (graphs, tables, illustrations) that accurately and appropriately communicate soil survey data.	Reports, documents, technical notes, conference presentations, workshop material, lecture notes, maps or similar material.
C-6	Evidence of effective communication	Published reports, documents, maps and possibly clients as referees.
<b>Land Evaluation and Interpretation</b> ( <i>demonstrate all if possible or a minimum of 2</i> )		
LE-1 -LE-2 LE-3	Demonstration of an understanding of land use/management constraints, methods for land evaluation and management in the context of soil/land constraints	Published reports, documents and maps demonstrating an appropriate application of constraints in context of land evaluation and land management.

## Appendix B: Certification of copies of documents

Applicants should note the following points concerning certification of documents:

- 1) Certified copies of previously certified copies will not be accepted. You must provide a properly certified copy of the original document.
- 2) Proper certification will appear on each page to be certified and should show:
  - a) the signature of the person certifying the document.
  - b) the name of the person certifying the document. This should be clearly printed or evident in the official stamp.
  - c) the address of the person certifying the document.
  - d) the phone number and if possible the email address of the person certifying the document.
  - e) where possible an official stamp indicating the status of the person certifying the document, i.e. Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Oaths, Notary Public, or indicating the name of the law firm.
- 3) The following classes of persons are authorised to certify copies of documents:
  - a) Certified Professional Soil Scientists.
  - b) Other persons:
    - Agent of the Australian Postal Corporation who is in charge of an office supplying postal services to the public;
    - Australian Consular Officer, or Australian Diplomatic Officer, (within the meaning of the Consular Fees Act 1955);
    - Bailiff;
    - Bank Officer with 5 or more continuous years of service;
    - Fellow of the National Tax Accounts Association;
    - Finance company officer with 5 or more years of continuous service;
    - Holder of a statutory office not specified in another item in this Part;
    - Judge, or Master, of a court;
    - Justice of the Peace;
    - Magistrate;
    - Member of the Association of Taxation and Management Accountants;
    - Member of the Australian Defence Force who is an officer, or a non-commissioned officer within the meaning of the Defence Forces Discipline Act 1982 with 5 or more years of continuous service, or a warrant officer within the meaning of this act;
    - Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants of the National Institute of Accountants;
    - Member of the Institute of Corporate Managers Secretaries and Administrators;
    - Member of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, or the Parliament of a State, or a Territory legislature, or a local government authority of a State or Territory;
    - Minister of Religion registered under Division 1 of Part IV of the Marriage Act 1961;
    - Notary public;
    - Permanent employee of a Commonwealth or of a Commonwealth Authority, or a State or Territory or of a State or Territory Authority, or a local government authority, with 5 or more years of continuous service who is not specified in another item in this Part;
    - Police Officer;
    - Permanent employee of the Australian Postal Corporation with 5 or more years of continuous service who is employed in an office supplying postal services to the public;
    - Person before whom a statutory declaration may be made under the law of the State or Territory, or of a Commonwealth, State or Territory Authority;
    - Sheriff or Sheriff's officer; or
    - Teacher employed on a full-time basis at a school or tertiary education institution.
  - c) Persons Authorised Overseas
    - An officer of an Australian Diplomatic Post;
    - A Notary Public authorised in the country of application;
    - A Commissioner for Oaths (Declarations) authorised in the country of application;
    - A Solicitor, Barrister or Judge authorised in Australia or in the country of application; or
    - A Justice of the Peace authorised in Australia or in the country of application.