

Classification Questions

Without a doubt, the most popular topic of conversation about ISTO is our Classification program. Does it exist? What is it all about?

Yes Virginia, the ISTO Classification program does exist and has been around since January 1991.

What follows are some of the most frequently asked questions about the program as well as the appropriate answers.

Q. What is Classification?

A. Classification is the program the Institute uses to test and evaluate survey technicians and technologists at various levels. Within each skill level, a candidate for classification is expected to demonstrate a solid understanding of a number of concepts and how those concepts are applied on the job.

Q. What is the purpose of Classification?

A. The Institute of Survey Technology of Ontario established the Ontario Survey Assistant/Technician/Technologist Classification Program to officially recognize those persons who have demonstrated their competence to perform surveying tasks at a specified level.

Classification provides individuals with a sense of achievement since it reflects in the field of surveying.

It also provides employers with a method of determining job assignments and advancement since it is an indication of one's ability to perform specific job tasks.

Q. How do I get classified?

A. A person starts the classification process by submitting the application form and any supporting documentation to the ISTO office. Once an application is submitted, it is reviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

Q. Where do I get an application form?

A. An application form is available from ISTO by calling (416) 491-9020 or 1-800-268-0718, or writing to ISTO, 1043 McNicoll Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario. M1W 3W6.

There are six parts to the application form: academic history, occupa-

tional history, experience and responsibilities, memberships and affiliations, self-evaluation, and employers' statements of reference.

The Classification Committee uses the application form to determine the candidate's (the person who has applied) suitability for a particular level.

Q. Do I have to be employed to apply for classification?

A. No. It is not necessary to be employed when applying for classification. However, your application should have a statement of reference from your previous O.L.S. or supervisor.

Q. How much does classification cost?

A. When you apply for classification, you must submit a cheque for \$21.40 (\$20.00 plus \$1.40 G.S.T.). This is the only cost ISTO charges. The price may change; please ensure that it is current before applying.

Q. What are the classification levels?

A. There are nine classification levels. There are four FIELD categories and five OFFICE categories.

FIELD

Survey Assistant
Technician I
Technologist I
Technologist II

OFFICE

Survey Assistant
Technician I
Technician II
Technologist I
Technologist II

The highest level is Office Technologist II which is really a combination of field and office skills for the person who receives this designation must be just as knowledgeable about field procedures and crews as office matters (drafting, research). At this level, great emphasis is placed on interpersonal skills and problem solving ability.

Q. What level should I apply for?

A. The decision is up to you. The brochures we provide list the minimum experience in surveying you must have as well as the education requirements (ie: knowledge of title searching, survey

standards, or basic calculations) to be successful at that level. The nine levels were designed to correspond roughly with accepted job titles. For example, Field Technologist I was designed to be the approximate equivalent of a Junior Party Chief and Office Technician Two was designed to be the approximate equivalent of a draftsman.

Please note that these are approximate equivalents only. Depending on a candidate's area of expertise and experience, it may be more appropriate for a person to apply for the level above or below the approximate equivalent of their job title.

Q. How is my application evaluated?

A. The application is reviewed by the Evaluation Committee, consisting of both O.L.S.'s and technologists who sit on the ISTO Board. They look at the application to ensure that the applicant has the required amount of experience. They review the application to see if there are any overt weaknesses in the applicant's experience. They look at letters of reference and the applicant's own self-assessment.

The purpose of the evaluation is to pre-screen applicant's in advance of writing the exam. If the candidate is apparently weak in an area, then the Evaluation Committee may recommend that the candidate write an exam at the next lowest level. Sometimes, a candidate is over-qualified at the level applied for and the committee will recommend that the person write at the next highest level.

All decisions made by the committee can be appealed in writing to the ISTO Board of Directors.

Q. Will I have to write an exam?

A. In many cases you will be asked to write an examination. There are exceptions, however. Occasionally, a candidate shows a tremendous amount of experience at the level applied for and will not be required to write an exam. At the highest levels, an exam may not be required but instead the candidate could be asked to attend an interview.

Q. Will I have to study?

A. Some candidates already feel comfortable with the material because they

INSTITUTE OF SURVEY TECHNOLOGY OF ONTARIO

work with it everyday. Others require time to review; they want to brush up on certain details found in the *Guidelines for Surveys* or study basic equations.

If you feel you wish to study certain aspects of surveying or require an up-to-date copy of particular publications, materials are available from ISTO and the AOLS. You are able to study at your own pace since there are no set examination dates.

Q. Do I have to come to Toronto to write the exam?

A. No. Arrangements can usually be made to write the exam at the candidate's office if the O.L.S. or supervisor is willing to invigilate. ISTO will send the examination directly to the O.L.S. and ask the O.L.S. to certify that the examination was carried out in accordance with our rules and regulations.

If an interview is required, it can usually be arranged to hold it at the candidates office too.

Q. What kind of questions will I have to answer?

A. There are four types of questions. There are a number of true/false and multiple choice questions. They are designed to test particular aspects of surveying and hopefully, get a candidate off to a good start. There are specific questions in which we do not give you a choice. These questions may include how many feet are there in 69 metres or list five things which must be shown on a plan.

Finally, there are short-answer questions (a sentence or a paragraph at most) in which we ask you what you would do if you encountered a particular situation.

Q. How long will the process take?

A. Once the application has been received, it will take approximately one month to evaluate the application and another month to mark the examination. The process may take longer. Applications for the higher levels usually require more time and effort on the part of the Evaluation Committee. If an interview is required, then arrangements must be made to have someone visit the office to conduct the interview.

If you are wondering what stage your application is at, do not hesitate to contact the ISTO office.

Q. What happens if I pass?

A. A passing mark is 65% for the written exams. If the candidate earns 65% or better, then a motion is put before the Board of Directors saying that the candidate has passed all the requirements set down by the Classification Committee. When passed by the Board of Directors, the candidate will have earned the designation, Ontario Survey Assistant, Ontario Survey Technician or Ontario Survey Technologist and receive a certificate from us and a letter from the President of the Board.

Q. What happens if I fail?

A. If a candidate fails an examination (does not earn 65%), then the candidate will be informed in writing of the results. The Classification Committee may point out areas of particular weakness as shown in the examination and suggest ways of overcoming the problem. The candidate is encouraged to continue to participate in ISTO and reapply at a different level or at a future date.

Q. Do I have to be a member of ISTO to be classified?

A. Yes, you must be a member in good standing.

Q. What do I get for my classification?

A. No matter how much we would like to think differently, earning your classification does not entitle you to a raise or guarantee you a job.

Earning your classification means that you have demonstrated to us a certain level of skill, ability and knowledge necessary for surveying today. It should bring together all the separate pieces of experience you have had into a coherent form.

It gives the O.L.S. confidence in your abilities and the opportunity to promote the business as employing 'competent' well-trained staff.

It gives technicians/technologists confidence in their own abilities. More importantly, should the person be laid-off, the ISTO designations are a demonstration to prospective employers of the persons skills at a particular level.

Be proud of the designation you have earned but do not wear it on your sleeve. Your success as a technician/technologist will come not from having the designation but from what you learn by earning it. Your value to an O.L.S. will come from learning to estimate a job better, or to conduct a more thorough title search, or to spend less time in the field. This is the true value in the ISTO Classification Program.

Q. How do I find out more?

A. If you have any other questions about ISTO, feel free to contact Brian Munday at ISTO by calling (416) 491-9020 or 1-800-268-0718, or writing to ISTO, 1043 McNicoll Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario. M1W 3W6.

You can find many answers about specific classification questions by referring to the series of nine brochures available free from ISTO.



TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS

Have you been laid off? Do you know of someone who has?

The ISTO Registry Referral Program can help you get back in the surveying business.

If you are interested in positions on a part-time, full-time or contract basis, fill in an information sheet (on the back of the December issue of ISTO Info) and return it to the ISTO office.

Submit your 1-page resume and join the Royal Resume Service. There may be a job waiting for you!