



INTERPRETIVE GUIDES

ASSOCIATION

PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER APPLICATION PACKAGE



Thank you for your interest in becoming certified as a Professional Interpreter with the Interpretive Guides Association.

The Professional Interpreter certification formally recognizes the knowledge, experience and interpretive skill of guides who have been in the profession for at least three years. Professional Interpretive Guides have demonstrated the ability to transform an average walk, tour or interpretive program into a memorable, meaningful, engaging and inspiring experience for their guests.

THE PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER COURSE

The Professional Interpreter Course is referred to as the Professional Interpreter Certification Program (PICP). This Canadian Rockies version of this program will provide you with an in-depth understanding of the geology, ecology, history and management of the Canadian Rocky Mountain National Parks. It will also help you gain insight into the communication techniques Professional Interpreters draw upon to create quality experiences for their clients.

Course Prerequisite: IGA Apprentice Interpreter Course or other thematic interpretation training or certification.

Course Components: The course is made up of the following elements

- **4 modules** - geology/ecology, parks management/history, Interpretive Specialist, PI Vignette Workshop
- **2 electives** - you get to choose the electives that fit your interests. These change from season to season. Examples: Geology/Ecology Field Trip, Impact Storytelling, Tricky Subjects, Climate Change.
- **1hr coaching session**
- **1 written exam**
- **1 oral exam**

YOUR EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

This course is geared toward individuals who have a minimum of three years of experience within this field and have taken the IGA's Apprentice Interpreter Course.

A points system has been devised to ensure you have the experience and expertise to become certified at the Professional Interpreter level. The following points chart explains how many points are awarded for:

- Courses you have taken
- Your educational background
- Your direct interpretive guiding experience
- Other interpretation experience that may be beneficial to you as an interpretive guide

120 points is required to complete both exams. A minimum of 60% of your points must come from direct work experience. If you have between 80 - 120 points you may take the written exam and continue working towards getting more experience and/or education.

All points must be backed up with documentation.

The chart below will help you with your PICP application.

Please note:

The chart is not exhaustive! If you have completed courses, certifications or work that don't fit the examples below but you feel are relevant, please email us and we will let you know if and how many points they are worth.

Type of Experience	Max Points Awarded
IGA Courses: - Basic Course (1 point) - Apprentice Course (5 points) - Completion of PI Course (10 points) 3 or 4 Season GM Course (5 points)	20
Other Certifications: - ACMG Mountain Guide (10 points) - Other ACMG Certifications (5 points) - Outdoor Council of Canada Cert (2 points) - Wilderness First Aid: 80 hour (7 points) 40 hour (5 points) - Other – Please List	10
Direct Guiding Work Experience (1 point for every 10 hours) Interpretive hiking guide, backpacking, bus tours, raft tours, biking, boat tours, climbing, snowshoeing, etc. This can be paid or volunteer work.	150
Direct Interpretation Experience (1 point for every 10 hours) Work related to being an interpreter, in a museum, at a zoo, a nature centre, in the classroom, in the field, as a writer, tour guide, city guide, etc. (different from above).	150
Formal Education - Post Secondary (5 points/semester for relevant courses) <u>Post Graduate</u> (10 points/semester for relevant courses)	50

Points Breakdown Other Information:

Other Relevant Experience

Working in other positions may give you experience that will make you a better interpretive guide. This work can give you up to 2 points per month of work and will be assessed based on relevance.

Some examples of relevant positions include:

- Parks Canada Wardens, Resource Conservation Specialists, Information Centre Attendants and Interpreters
- Similar positions in Provincial Parks
- Some teaching or instruction positions that are relevant to interpretive guiding

To apply for points in this area, we require background information about your position and an official letter from your employer indicating the number of months you were employed. If you have any questions regarding relevant work experience, please contact us.

Formal Education

We recognize relevant forms of formal post-secondary education towards this section of the accreditation. Degrees or diplomas in Natural Science, Biology, History, Anthropology, Native Studies, Recreation, Ecotourism, Ecology, Conservation Biology, Environmental Studies, Environmental Education, Drama, and education are all considered relevant.

We also recognize that many other degrees are also relevant to interpretive guiding so please contact us if you feel your degree is relevant and should be considered for points towards your accreditation.

We will award:

- 5 points per semester (full course load) for relevant courses such as Biology, Conservation, Environmental Education, Canadian Geography, Canadian History, Geology, Outdoor Leadership, Indigenous Studies, etc.
- 2.5 points per semester (full course load) for other courses such as General Education, General Geography, Theatre, Media Relations/Communication, etc.

to a maximum of 40 points. An additional 10 points will be awarded for relevant graduate or secondary degrees. A maximum of 50 points can be obtained from Formal Education.

Specialized outdoor schools such as Yamnuska Mountain School, NOLS, Outward Bound, COLT, and other relevant programs will be awarded five points per full-time semester. OCC leader and instructor certifications will give you 2 points. The suitability of a program remains the discretion of the Executive Director.

Official documentation from the educational institute showing the number of semesters you were enrolled must be provided. Transcripts, copies of diplomas/degrees/certificates or official letters of attendance are accepted.

THE WRITTEN EXAM

The Professional Interpreter written exam will evaluate your knowledge of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site, or Waterton Lakes National Park (depending which PI exam you are taking). Knowledge standards have been established requiring interpreters and guides to have both general and specific knowledge of the following topics:

- History (environmental and cultural) of the Rocky Mountains
- Geology, Geography and Climate of the Rocky Mountains
- Ecology of the Rocky Mountains
- Park History and Management Issues
- Interpretation

The written exam takes between 3-4 hours and consists primarily of short answer and fill in the blank questions. The exam also requires you to examine pictures or objects and to interpret specific aspects of those pictures and objects. The exam is offered in English, Japanese and French.

Written exams are scheduled after the Professional Interpreter Course is complete, based on the needs of the group. Please visit our website for dates and exam registration. The exam is offered virtually and may also be offered in person.

The IGA handbooks are a great resource for studying for the test. There are knowledge standards at the back of the handbook as a guide. We highly recommend you take lots of notes during the courses, and spend time studying as this is considered a serious certification, so you must show you have the knowledge required to be successful.

Passing the Written Exam

You must score 70% or higher on each section of the written exam to pass. If you fail, you may pay the retest fee and re-write the exam. If you do not pass on your second attempt, you will be asked to retake the applicable sections of the Professional Interpreter Course.

You have 6 months to complete and pass the exams after completing all components of the Professional Interpreter Course. If you do not pass within that time period, you will be required to retake the course.

The Interpretive Guides Association currently has two Professional Interpreter certifications: one that applies to Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay national parks, and one that applies to Waterton Lakes National Park. To hold certifications in both areas, you must write the Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay test as well as the Waterton Lakes test.

THE ORAL EXAM

You will be tested on your ability to develop and deliver a high quality interpretive vignette in 5 minutes, using the 4 Qualities of Interpretation that is taught during the Interpretive Specialist and PI Vignette Workshop.

This is a professional level exam and it is important to take it seriously. It will take time, dedication and practice to pass.

You chose the topic and we highly recommend you chose something you are passionate about, enjoy sharing with others, know and understand well.

You will deliver your program over Zoom to a 3-4 person group of evaluators.

They will be expecting your best, and will be examining your ability to show that you understand the 4 qualities of interpretation, and how to work them into everything you communicate with your guests.

Planning for Your Oral Exam

The IGA will set up several oral examination dates to choose from after your course is complete. You can pick the date that works best for you by [registering on the IGA website](#).

Be sure to review all the information and attachments you receive when you register. We have included lots of tools to help you prepare.

Coaching Session

Your course fees also cover the cost for a one hour, one on one coaching session with a professional or master interpreter. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn, and grow as an interpreter. You can sign up for this session online and your coach will reach out to set up a time to meet that works for both of you.

You must be prepared for this session with a program outline and developed program. You will be required to send our outline to your coach before the session and come prepared to deliver your program and work on improvements..

Passing The Oral Exam

Remember, this is a professional course, and we expect a professional level of interpretive delivery shown.! Think of this certification like a university degree. The program you prepare and deliver for your exam should showcase you at your very best as a professional in this field.

Make sure you take your time, review your material, and ensure you cover all four qualities of interpretation. You must come to your Zoom exam time prepared to deliver your program as if you were on-site with guests. Bring props, images, demos, stories, questions, etc. and involve the evaluators as your guests.

Be sure to have a Zoom account, a good internet connection and a camera. We recommend practicing your program on Zoom with a friend before your presentation date. Your time slot is set for 15 minutes and you will need to introduce yourself, deliver you 5 minute (max) vignette, and be available to answer any questions after this. You will not be given more time. If you miss your time slot or use it up dealing with technical difficulties, you will have to rebook.

You will be contacted several days after you deliver your program with your grade.

If you do not pass, you may pay the retake fee and apply to retake the exam. If you do not pass on your second attempt, you will be asked to retake the interpretation sections of the Professional Interpreter course.

After completing the Professional Interpreter course, you have six months to complete and pass the oral exam. You must retake the course if you do not complete and pass it within that period.

REQUIREMENTS TO TAKE THE EXAMS

- You have taken and passed the IGA's Apprentice Interpreter course.
- You must have completed all modules and electives that are part of the Professional Interpreter course.
- You must be an IGA member in good standing (this means your membership fee and PD hours are up to date)
- You must have a combination of experience and education that adds up to a minimum of 80 points for the written exam, and 120 points for the oral exam. A minimum of 60% of your points must come from direct work experience.
- You must submit [the application form](#) with acceptable documentation no less than two weeks prior to your exam.
- You have six months to complete both exams after completing the course.
- You must register and pay for both exams on our website prior to submitting this documentation. If there are no dates scheduled, you may contact us to request one, but please note that dates requested outside of the scheduled ones are subject to additional fees and examiner/evaluator availability.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: interpretiveguides.org

Main contact: executivedirector@interpretiveguides.org

THE APPLICATION

Please take your time filling in the application form to the best of your ability and submit it as soon as possible.

[The Application Form](#)