

November 29, 2008

Brief for Registered Graphic Designers Qualification Examination

This brief puts in writing the reason(s) for the accreditation assessment process in order to help the RGD Ontario Board of Directors and the Examination Board with decision-making. It will help explain to future boards the decisions made. It can also work as a base from which to make necessary informed changes (both to the exam and the brief).

Deadline:

Ongoing

Client:

The standards for the qualifications assessment are determined by the Examination Board for Registered Graphic Designers and the founding member of the board, RGD Ontario.

Target:

Professional graphic design practitioners, educators and managers.

Goals:

1. Create an assessment process, backed by research, aimed at ensuring that in time all qualified graphic designers in Ontario will apply to become accredited as a matter of course.
2. Encourage improvement in graphic design education to prepare students to meet the standards of the Association as they are tied to the requirements of the industry, business and government.
3. In Ontario the R.G.D. designation becomes the recognized basic requirement for professional graphic designers hired by industry and government.
4. The general public understands that R.G.D. and accredited, qualified, professional graphic designer are synonymous.
5. Large numbers of R.G.D.s and their competency enhance the image of graphic design in Ontario.
6. When the exam process and its value are entrenched, the Examination Board and RGD Ontario can export it to other jurisdictions, making the exam and accreditation the accepted norm for graphic design professionals in Canada and around the world. (Note Nov '08 the GDC has offered to work with us on the exam.)

Objectives:

1. Administer an assessment that is professionally credible, administratively feasible, publicly acceptable, legally defensible and economically affordable. (This kind of testing is known as high stakes testing because those being tested are already working professionals.)
2. Establish and update as required an eligibility process for determining which candidates are qualified to take the exam (based on education, experience etc).
3. Create a method for testing these candidates that ensures they meet the standards required to be accredited as a Registered Graphic Designer (R.G.D.) (The objective is NOT to standardize designers or design programs in our broad and changing field.)

Definition of a Registered Graphic Designer (R.G.D.):

An R.G.D. is a graphic design professional who has been assessed to meet the standards of competency that demonstrate he/she is educated and/or knowledgeable in areas of business, design principles, research and theory, plus

ethics, and is also able to demonstrate the successful application of this knowledge to design problems, management or education. He or she will also have been prepared and capable to function effectively as an ethical, professional, responsible practitioner and/or manager and/or educator.

Methods of Assessment:

The assessment content is directed to an *established benchmark for achieving professional standards that fit the definition of a Registered Graphic Designer. The assessment process entails a combination of a written test and a standardized portfolio interview.

The Examination Board has determined that the RGD Ontario Rules of Professional Conduct are best tested in a multiple choice written test. Other written test content is to be reviewed, modified and/or developed where necessary.

Quality Control:

Quality control is to be accomplished by means of candidate feedback and annual or more frequent reviews of the assessment tools, content and processes. Quality control will be carried out by design professionals.

Strategic Intent:

Ensure that the R.G.D Qualification Examination is kept up to date and relevant. Ensure the process is enriching, satisfying, stimulating, and inviting for all qualified graphic design practitioners, educators and managers and that the whole process provides a positive experience for the graphic design professionals who meet the exam eligibility requirements and take the exam.

Tone and Manner:

Highly professional, practical and pragmatic (rather than theoretical).

Approvals and Review:

The Examination Board for Registered Graphic Designers and RGD Ontario (the founding member of the board) are responsible for approval of the R.G.D. qualification assessment process. Because accreditation for graphic designers is still a novel concept it will take time to firmly entrench the process and its value.

And also, due of the changing nature of graphic design, the assessment process will likely remain an ongoing and evolving (rather than static) process.