



Examination Board for Registered Graphic Designers

R.G.D.

Handbook for the
Registered Graphic Designers
Qualification Examination

Revised January 2010

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Introduction

This handbook is intended to help candidates prepare for the Registered Graphic Designers Qualification Examination.

The examination consists of three steps:

- the application to determine eligibility
- the written test
- the portfolio interview

The Examination Board does not aim to standardize designers or design programs in our broad and changing field. The purpose of the examination is to ensure that successful candidates fulfill the definition of a Registered Graphic Designer (R.G.D.):

- A An R.G.D. is professionally competent in areas of business, design principles, research and theory and ethics. He or she has also demonstrated the successful application of this knowledge to design problems, management and/or education.
- B An R.G.D. is prepared and capable to function as an effective ethical, professional, responsible practitioner, manager and/or educator.

A. Eligibility Requirements**1.1 Regular**

- 3-year or 4-year diploma or degree in graphic design
- 3 or 4 years of graphic design work experience
- graphic design education and work totals 7 years
- transcript verification

1.2 Atypical A

- 2-year diploma in graphic design acquired prior to 2005
- 6 years of graphic design work experience
- graphic design education and work totals 8 years
- transcript verification

1.3 Atypical B

- 3-year or 4-year non-graphic design diploma or degree
- 5 or 6 years of graphic design work experience
- education and graphic design work totals 9 years
- transcript verification

1.4 Seniority A

- 7 years of graphic design work experience prior to 2000
- continuous work in graphic design since 2000
- 2 industry sponsors

1.5 Seniority B

- 3-year or 4-year diploma or degree in graphic design prior to 2000
- graphic design work experience prior to 2000

- graphic design diploma or degree and work combined totals 7 years prior to 2000
- continuous work in graphic design since 2000
- transcript verification
- 2 industry sponsors

Seniority applicants A and B are exempt from all parts of the written test except the Rules of Professional Conduct section. All applicants must pass this section of the written test and the portfolio interview.

B. Examination Fees

The examination fees include an application registration fee (non-refundable) and a fee for the written test and portfolio interview sections.

C. Application Requirements

The application for the examination, which is submitted to the Examination Board for a review of the candidate's eligibility, must include:

- completed application form
- record of employment/professional experience. The Examination Board reserves the right to verify employment and professional experience information.
- sealed official transcript(s), if applicable
- payment of applicable fees
- completed R.G.D. / Industry sponsor forms if applicable.
- submission of written rationales

D. Written Rationales

Candidates must submit a written rationale for each of the six portfolio pieces that will be presented at the interview as part of their application.

Each of the six written rationales must include a visual reference to the portfolio piece in a high enough resolution that examiners can reasonably review it on a monitor. The following information must also be included (totaling 300-450 words):

- project objectives
- target audience
- concept
- design issues (brief overview)
- design process (brief overview)
- outcome/results
- date when produced

The six rationales must be consolidated into one PDF.

Candidates must use the following file naming convention: surname.first initial_portfolio.pdf. For example, if your name is Jane Smith, you would use the following: Smith.J_portfolio.pdf.

Candidates must upload their PDF file to www.rgdexamboard.com/applicant as part of the application process.

E. Criteria for Portfolio Piece Selection

Candidates should select pieces that demonstrate their range and quality of achievement in one or more of the following professional areas: (1) Design Practice (2) Design Education and (3) Design Management.

Candidates may include not more than one of the following:

- a pro bono project for which the design process was the same as if it had been paid professional work
- a project of personal work (personal expression).

All six portfolio pieces must have been created in a professional capacity or as a professional (not while a student) and may not be work created as part of an academic or curriculum requirement.

Candidates must state under which of these categories they are applying. At least half of their projects must be from the chosen category.

Half of the projects must have been completed within the last five years.

Please refer to page 11 for further guidelines on how these pieces will be evaluated as part of the interview process.

F. Notification of Eligibility

The Examination Board determines whether applicants are eligible. Confirmation of eligibility will be sent to applicants providing examination procedures, regulations and other details. The Board will inform ineligible applicants and will return any refundable portion of fees that may have been paid.

A. General Information

The written portion of the examination is held throughout the year in Toronto. Dates and locations are announced on the web at www.rgdexamboard.com. Special administrations of the written test may be arranged outside of Toronto. For more info, e-mail info@rgdexamboard.com or call 1 888 274 3668 x 22.

Candidates are asked to bring:

- one piece of photo identification
- pens or pencils
- books or written notes (no laptops or other electronic hardware) for the open book portion on design history, principles and research only

The full examination, including the portfolio interview, must be completed within three years.

There are four sections of the written test:

- A design history, research and principles (open book)
- B business (closed book)
- C technology (closed book)
- D Rules of Professional Conduct (closed book)

With respect to evaluation, candidates receive an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses for each of section A, B, and C components. The analysis is given in the form of quintile rankings showing how candidates scored relative to others who have taken the test. For section D, Rules of Professional Conduct, the passing mark is 75%.

The written test consists of multiple choice questions. There are four choices per multiple choice question, one of which is the correct answer.

B. Content**2.1 Design History, Research and Principles**

As information processors, what do designers need to know? Design history, principles and research inform design practice, and are important in professionalizing the field. The aim of this section is not to train historians, researchers or critics, but to raise awareness of, and to expand, the body of knowledge available to designers. Investigating design history and principles enables us to:

- develop an understanding of the changing roles and responsibilities of designers in society
- evaluate our own design work and that of others
- advance the practice of design

2.1.1 Design History

Since design plays a key role in mass production and mass consumption in our society, this is the context within which the activity of design should be understood. Stylistic evolution should not be seen in isolation, but in relation to technological, economic and social requirements.

Printing and Design before the Industrial Revolution

- The development of printing and design before 1800

The Industrial Revolution

- Typography and type designers for an industrial age
- The impact of photography and new printing technologies
- Victorian graphics
- The Arts and Crafts Movement
- Art Nouveau and proto-modern design at the turn of the century
- Parallel Canadian developments

The Twentieth Century

- Bauhaus, Constructivism, De Stijl, the New Typography
- Pictorial Modernism
- The Modern movement in North America
- The International Typographic Style
- The New York School and its influence
- Corporate identity and visual systems
- Post-modernist and de-constructivist influences
- The impact of new technologies and media
- Parallel Canadian developments

2.1.2 Design Research*Research Terminology*

- Methods of Research
- Research Strategies and Tactics
- Types of research and their usefulness in the design process

2.1.3 Design Principles

This section looks at how allied disciplines such as systems analysis, communication models, research and theories of perception and learning contribute to the practice of design.

Design Process

- Elements and models of design processes
- Systems approach and relevant models

Perception and Cognition

- Elements of visual structure
- Relevant psychological theories and their relationship to design

Communication Theory

- Comparison of models of communication
- Semiotics in relation to design practice

Colour: Applied Theory

- Terminology
- Colour theories for pigments and light

2.2 Business

The purpose of the business section is to assess the ability of the candidate to function as an independent business person in the design field. This section tests the applicant's skill in making sound, legal and ethical judgments in areas of studio management and business practices. It also tests comprehension and communication skills.

2.2.1 Business Communication

- Business letters, memos and reports
- Design proposals

2.2.2 Studio Management

- Establishing ethical and sound business relationships with clients, peers, other professionals and suppliers
- Accounting – accounts payable and accounts receivable
- Collecting and paying taxes

2.2.3 Legal Issues

- Contracts with clients, employers/employees and suppliers
- Knowledge of basic labour regulations (e.g. minimum wage, insurance and workplace safety requirements, etc.)
- Canadian copyright law
- Canadian vs. American copyright law

2.3 Technology

Designers use technologies which change very rapidly. Therefore, the topical outlines here do not cover the minutiae of current use. The examination aims to test the applicant's knowledge and ability both to communicate with specialists and suppliers, and to use technology for design and production.

Because the field is so broad, the Technology section is divided into:

- a Basic Technology section to be answered by all candidates,
- three specialty subsections of which candidates must complete one.

The three specialty sub-section options (choose one only) are:

- 1 Print Technology
- 2 Electronic Media
- 3 Three-Dimensional Graphics consisting of:
 - Signage, Exhibit and Environmental Graphics
 - Packaging Graphics

2.3.1 Basic Section

(This section must be completed by all candidates.) This section tests general knowledge across a range of graphic design technologies.

2.3.2 Print

(Candidates may choose this as the one required sub-section option to be completed.)

- Paper and printing terminology
- Printing processes
- Colour systems
- Pre-press file preparation
- B&W and colour-proofing systems

2.3.3 Electronic Media

(Candidates may choose this as the one required sub-section option to be completed.)

- History and development of the www and Internet
- Different kinds of networks, servers, browsers, search engines and CGI scripting
- Intranet security, firewalls and language
- Appropriate selection, installation, setup and use of technology
- Issues in navigation interfaces
- Workstations
- Platform issues (Mac, DOS, UNIX, etc.)
- Issues of server-supplied files and applications and uniform and seamless distribution

2.3.4 Three-Dimensional Graphics

(Candidates may choose this as the one required sub-section option to be completed.) Candidates who choose this as their sub-section option must answer all questions in both parts (i.e., Signage, Exhibit and Environmental Graphics and Packaging Graphics), but may circle the sub-head title on their answer sheet to indicate which is their predominate area of specialty within Three-Dimensional Graphics.

2.3.4 a Signage, Exhibit and Environmental Graphics

- Terminology
- Architectural drawings (floor plans, elevations and perspectives)
- Technical, three-dimensional and fabrication drawings
- Visual effects created by commonly used fabrication technologies
- Specifications
- Characteristics of commonly used indoor and outdoor signage materials
- Characteristics of commonly used prefabricated

signage systems

- Characteristics of commonly used modular systems (structural and display)
- Accessibility issues and requirements

2.3.4 b Packaging Graphics

- Terminology
- Technical, three-dimensional and production drawings
- Packaging materials and their print characteristics
- Print technologies for packaging
- Packaging production methods
- Common shipping restrictions

2.4 Rules of Professional Conduct

This section tests comprehension of the Rules of Professional Conduct (By-Law #3) of the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario (included in the application package). The following categories are included:

- responsibility to the association and the profession
- responsibility to other members
- responsibility to clients and employers
- responsibility to society and the environment
- competitions and fees

C. Suggested Texts

The literature covering the theory and practice of graphic design is extensive. The following is a limited list of suggested basic texts which may assist candidates in preparing for the Registered Graphic Designers Qualification Examination. These books are available through Swipe Books on Advertising & Design, 477 Richmond St. West, Toronto. RGD Ontario members receive a 10% discount at the store. Swipe takes phone orders and ships across Canada. For more information or to order one of these items call 1 800 567 9473, in Toronto: 416 363 1332. Books may also be borrowed by applicants from RGD Ontario.

Ashworth, Hilary, ed. *The Business of Graphic Design: A Professional's Handbook*. Toronto: The Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario, 2004. (Also available through RGD Ontario)

Bowers, John. *Introduction to Two-Dimensional Design: Understanding Form & Function*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.

Visocky O'Grady, Jen and Ken. *A Designer's Research Manual: Succeed in Design by Knowing Your Clients and What They Really Need*. Rockport Publishers, 2006.

Dondis, Donis. *A Primer of Visual Literacy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973.

Meggs, Philip. *A History of Graphic Design*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.

Saldanha, Errol. *Canadian Icons*. Applied Arts Magazine, January-February, 2008.

(With permission of the author and publisher, download a PDF of the article at www.rgdexamboard.com/downloads.html)

D. Sample Questions

Design History

- 1) Which designer edited and designed the book, *The Isms of Art 1914–1924*?
 - a. Theo van Doesburg
 - b. Kasimir Malevich
 - c. El Lissitzky
 - d. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy
 Correct answer is: c.

- 2) Which magazine designer was responsible for the influential look of *Harper's Bazaar* from 1934-1958?
 - a. Lester Beall
 - b. Alexy Brodovitch
 - c. J. Müller-Brockmann
 - d. Herbert Matter
 Correct answer is: b.

Design Research

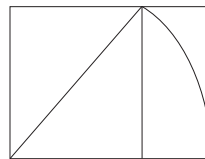
- 3) This form of research is built around numbers, logic and objective data:
 - a. formative research
 - b. exploratory research
 - c. quantitative research
 - d. qualitative research
 Correct answer is: c.

- 4) Ethnographic investigations that strive to analyze cultural phenomena through the perspective of one actively participating in the community under study are called:
 - a. emic
 - b. personal world-view
 - c. etic
 - d. internal vision
 Correct answer is: a.

Design Principles

- 5) In Gestalt theory, sharpening is defined as:
 - a. a heightening of grouping tendencies
 - b. an increase or exaggeration
 - c. greater alignment of elements
 - d. improvement of the edge definition of shapes
 Correct answer is: b.

- 6) This rectangle is an example of:



- a. a root rectangle
 - b. a Golden Rectangle
 - c. a Pentagon Page Rectangle
 - d. Le Corbusier's Rectangle
- Correct answer is: a

Printing

- 7) Colour management systems rely on the device-independent nature of which colour model?
 - a. RGB
 - b. CMYK
 - c. CIE LAB
 - d. Pantone®
 Correct answer is: c.

- 8) Stochastic printing consists of:
 - a. a random pattern of dots varied by frequency
 - b. a regular pattern of dots varied by frequency
 - c. a random pattern of dots varied by amplitude
 - d. a regular pattern of dots varied by amplitude
 Correct answer is: a.

Technology

9) 3 Dimensional software creates objects that are:

- a. in raster format
- b. in RAW format
- c. in vector format
- d. in CMYK format

Correct answer is: c.

10) Open Type refers to:

- a. typefaces that are open faced
- b. script faces based on handwriting ligatures
- c. type designed for multiple platforms
- d. type that is converted to outlines in Illustrator

Correct answer is: c.

Electronic Media

11) What type of compression does a tiff format typically use?

- a. LZW
- b. JPG
- c. Baseline
- d. Optimized

Correct answer is: a.

12) What CSS property is used to set leading in HTML text?

- a) line-space
- b) line-height
- c) leading
- d) baseline

Correct answer is: b

Studio Management

13) You are thinking of starting your own design practice. Experts say:

- a. you need 2 good design projects in the works before starting your own business.
- b. you will need a minimum of six months salary to get your business off the ground.
- c. that a diversified design portfolio is a guarantee of success.
- d. you will need a partner with a separate income.

Correct answer is: b.

14) Some Ontario graphic designers conduct business in other Canadian provinces including Québec. If this is the case:

- a. PST or its equivalent will apply in all other provinces.
- b. PST or its equivalent will not apply in any other province.
- c. A person conducting business in Québec cannot recover the QST paid on expenses.
- d. A person conducting business in Québec can generally recover the QST paid on expenses.

Correct answer is: d.

Legal Issues

15) To register a trade mark, you must file an application with the Canadian Trade Marks Office

- a. in Ottawa
- b. in the capital city of the province of original registration
- c. in all provinces other than Québec
- d. in Gatineau, Québec

Correct answer is: d.

Rules of Professional Conduct

16) You are an R.G.D. freelance graphic designer offered a paid assignment by a large architectural firm, where the practice of speculative (spec) presentations is considered to be a convention of the trade. The paid assignment would require you to work as part of a multidisciplinary team on a speculative architectural design. The firm will enter it into a competition for a multimillion-dollar museum project. As an R.G.D. subject to the Rules of Professional Conduct are you allowed to accept the assignment?

- a. No, because you are prohibited from taking part in spec design work no matter what the situation may be.
- b. No, because graphic design work forms a part of the project.

- c. Yes, because the strictures against engaging in spec work do not apply when it is a convention of the trade primarily responsible for the project to compete for contracts on spec.
- d. No, because the architectural firm is not a non-profit organization.

Correct answer is: c.

- 17) A client hired a design firm headed by an R.G.D. to create an identity. The client is unhappy with the design but likes the concept. The client wants you to take over the project and redesign it using the same concept. According to the Rules of Professional Conduct, can you take the job in this situation?
- a. Yes, you can take on this assignment as offered.
 - b. No, not under any circumstances.
 - c. Yes, but only if you are certain that the client has properly terminated the other design firm and confirmed that all materials, concepts and copyright belong to the client.
 - d. No, not unless you can convince the client to use your own concept.

Correct answer is c.

E. Typical Timetable

9:00-9:25 a.m.

Identification verification, confidentiality agreement, introduction and instructions

9:30-11:15 a.m.

Examination Book 1

Multiple choice questions – open book

- Design History (50 questions)
- Design Research (22 questions)
- Design Principles (24 questions)

11:15-12:00 p.m. – Break

12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Examination Books 2a & 2b

Multiple choice questions – closed book

- Business: Business Communications, Studio Management, Legal Issues (33 questions)
- Technology: Basic (24 questions)
- Technology: Subsections (*Options - choose 1 of 3*)
 - Option 1 – Technology: Print (36 questions)
 - Option 2 – Electronic Media (39 questions)
 - Option 3 – Three-Dimensional Graphics (complete both (a) and (b), indicate which of the two is your strength):
 - (a) Signage, Exhibit and Environmental Graphics (25 questions)
 - (b) Packaging Graphics (13 questions)
- Rules of Professional Conduct (16 questions)

Please note that there is an average of 45 seconds for each multiple-choice question. Some questions require first reading a scenario or situation and then answering questions about it. The extra time required to read these questions has been factored into the total time allowed.

A. General Information

Portfolio interview sessions occur monthly and may be arranged in person or by phone at a specially-designated location. The portfolio interview takes 25 minutes. Candidates are informed of the outcome (assessed as a pass or fail) by e-mail and will be sent Notification of Eligibility for Registered Graphic Designer (R.G.D.) Status,* if they have passed the interview.

** The Notification of Eligibility for R.G.D. Status is valid for three months from the date of issue, unless there is a request for an extension based on hardship or other reasonable grounds. After its expiration, applicants must requalify for R.G.D. membership by retaking the examination.*

All Candidates will be assessed on their ability to articulate their role in the projects presented, and the processes used to establish goals and to arrive at the creative solution that was approved by the client and produced as a final marketing / communications piece.

Designers agree on the need for effective design education and design management. The Examination Board recognizes the high level of design and professional skills required for curriculum and project design in graphic design programs. The Board also recognizes the important role and experience of design managers in the graphic design profession. In the portfolio interviews, projects from the design education and management fields are recognized as valid and equivalent evidence of professional attainment, demonstrating the application of design knowledge and abilities.

B. Interview Procedures

Candidates must bring to the interview one piece of photo identification.

Candidates must bring to the interview a total of six pieces of work (original medium, if feasible). Projects should be selected to demonstrate your range and quality of achievement in one or more of the following professional areas: (1) Design Practice (2) Design Education and (3) Design Management.

Four hard copies of the written rationales must be provided to the examiners at the portfolio interview.

3.1 Design Practitioner Submissions

Projects should demonstrate the applicant's ability to develop and implement solutions to complex problems encountered in all phases of the design process.

3.2 Design Educator Submissions

Projects submitted in the design educator category should focus on teaching and research, demonstrating the applicant's ability to develop and implement effective strategies for design education. Each project should include pertinent documentation and, where appropriate, relevant visual examples, such as student work. Submissions should demonstrate:

- curriculum/course design teaching practice including project and assessment methods design
- course management and administration
- research, publications and lectures
- liaison with industry

3.3 Design Manager Submissions

Projects should demonstrate applicant's ability to develop and implement effective strategies for design management. Each project should include appropriate documentation and relevant visual support. Submissions should demonstrate:

- design standards and company policy management
- job assignment and management of internal and external designers
- design process, time and budget management

C. Evaluation Process

The Portfolio Interview is a standardized assessment designed to be administered under specific, standard conditions, resulting in a uniformity in testing environment and administration procedures.

Each portfolio interview will be conducted by three R.G.D. examiners, who make their assessment by referencing the criteria outlined further below.

A total of 25 minutes is allocated for the Portfolio Interview. Candidates are asked to give a brief oral overview of their six portfolio pieces, and then to select one piece to demonstrate in detail how it fulfills the criteria for design practitioner, educator or manager as detailed in the next sections.

Candidates should not expect examiners to give feedback or comment on the merits of the work presented. The Portfolio Interview is not the same process as it might be for a portfolio presentation made to obtain a job or a client. Candidates are expected to present their work with reference to the criteria spelled out below for the respective design practitioner, educator and manager categories. In some cases, if it is not obvious in the work as presented or if something is not clear to them, the examiners may ask questions for clarification. Candidates should view the Portfolio Interview as a presentation to the examiners of their work in a way that demonstrates a command of the criteria in their chosen category. As the presenter, candidates should expect to be doing most of the talking.

Examiners will assess the professional competence of the candidates on a Pass/Fail basis for the portfolio interview.

4.1 Design Practitioner Evaluation Criteria

Applicant must be able to clearly and competently articulate and demonstrate:

- his/her role in the projects, verbally and in written submission
- the project brief, including assignment background, design objectives and special or unique circumstances and/or challenges
- his/her approach to design process, including research, analysis or other information gathering and investigation
- the design process, from initial concept exploration and presentation through to acceptance by client
- how the design solution and deliverables satisfied project goals and objectives
- appropriate handling of special or unique circumstances and/or challenges (if presented in the interview)
- an ability to develop ideas that communicate solutions to a client's objectives

Work presented must consistently demonstrate applicant's command of basic principles of:

- usability (e.g. ease of use, choice of media, readability, adequately informative, target audience accuracy)
- composition (e.g. use of grids, visual hierarchy, balance and contrast, visual impact, fluid flow of information)
- typography (e.g. readability and legibility, kerning, choice of typeface, typographic craftsmanship and best practices)
- imagery (e.g. scaling and cropping, reproduction quality, choice, photography/illustration art direction quality, photo/image editing)
- colour (e.g. strategic use of colour, understanding of colour theory)

Applicant demonstrates reasonable technical understanding of production process / media.

Overall assessment

The applicant has demonstrated that he/she has competently practised graphic design through presentation of professional design assignments conducted and completed meeting or exceeding the above benchmark for professional standards that fit a Registered Graphic Designer and will be a fitting representative of the R.G.D. designation.

4.2 Design Educator Evaluation Criteria

Applicant must be able to clearly and competently articulate and demonstrate:

- his/her understanding of teaching issues in design education
- his/her understanding of theoretical, technical and practical knowledge in design practice, design education and design research
- his/her role in curriculum content design and course implementation
- effective and innovative solutions to educational problems, meeting the needs of students and industry
- design skills and knowledge of design principles in development and evaluation of visual communication
- contribution to the advancement of design through papers, publications, exhibitions and teaching materials

Case studies presented consistently demonstrate applicant's command of design education principles and best practices of:

- curriculum design and teaching delivery (e.g. understanding of course objectives and learning outcomes, grading criteria/assignments/project development)
- appropriateness of the recommended readings and assignment (e.g. courseware)

- development of new knowledge and/or skills in the course (e.g. relationship to current industry needs (design and business), promotion of creative thinking and hands-on skills)
- requirements for creative thinking and design process

Overall assessment

The applicant has demonstrated that he/she has competently practised graphic design education through presentation of professional design assignments conducted and completed meeting or exceeding the above benchmark for professional standards that fit a Registered Graphic Designer and will be a fitting representative of the R.G.D. designation.

4.3 Design Manager Evaluation Criteria

Applicant must be able to clearly and competently articulate and demonstrate:

- his/her role in the projects, verbally and in written submission
- the project background and brief, engagement with client, budgeting, scheduling, team building and management of Internal and external resources
- the handling of any special circumstances and/or challenges
- his/her approach to management of the design process, from research and concept design through to final acceptance by client
- how the design solution and implementation satisfied project goals and objectives
- an ability to develop ideas that communicate solutions to a client's objectives

Case studies presented consistently demonstrate applicant's command of basic principles and best practices:

- project management (e.g. writing of brief/ marketing plan/proposal, management of deadline/ budget/ human resources)

- client relationship management (e.g. information flow)
- business communications (e.g. management of client agreements/copyright issues)
- design and relevant production processes (e.g. design and production budgeting, commissioning production suppliers, media buying, use of media)

Applicant must demonstrate reasonable technical understanding of production processes/media.

Overall assessment

The applicant has demonstrated that he/she has competently practised graphic design management through presentation of professional design assignments conducted and completed meeting or exceeding the above benchmark for professional standards that fit a Registered Graphic Designer and will be a fitting representative of the R.G.D. designation.

E. Appeal Policy and Procedure

A candidate who fails the examination on the basis of the portfolio interview will be issued a registered letter informing him or her of the results.

A candidate who fails is permitted one appeal only.

A candidate's notification of intention to appeal must be made in writing within 30 days of receipt of the registered letter informing him or her of the fail result.

The appeal portfolio interview must take place within one year following the appeal request.

Upon receipt of notification of intention to appeal, a form will be sent to the candidate which must be filled out and accompanied by \$75 plus applicable taxes before an appeal is granted and scheduled. Appeal fee is subject to change without notice.

The form must include reasons for the appeal (for information only), and requires the appeal candidate's signature of understanding of the conditions of the appeal.

The appeal candidate agrees:

- to submit the same six portfolio pieces used in the first interview
- to be examined by a new team of three R.G.D. interviewers employing the standard, published assessment criteria
- to be prepared for the appeal portfolio interview to take place at the next scheduled series of interviews
- that there is no guarantee that the results will necessarily be different from the previous portfolio interview

A candidate who has failed a second time or who wishes to re-do the portfolio interview with six different portfolio pieces must wait two years before he/she is permitted to apply for a new (non-appeal) portfolio interview.

A. Applying for R.G.D. Membership

To be eligible to apply for Registered membership in the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario (RGD Ontario), Regular and Atypical candidates must have successfully completed both the written and portfolio interview sections of the examination and be employed full-time in the practice, education or management of graphic design. Seniority applicants must undergo the Rules of Professional Conduct section of the written test only, and achieve the required 75% passing mark. Seniority candidates must also successfully complete the portfolio interview section of the examination, and be employed full-time in the practice, education or management of graphic design. Upon completion, applicants will be sent an application package for Registered membership from the Association. Successful candidates may not use the R.G.D. designation or hold themselves out to be Registered Graphic Designers until they have applied for and have been accepted as Registered members in the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario.

B. Frequently Asked Questions

Q *What is involved in writing the Registered Graphic Designers Qualification Examination?*

A The content of the examination is directed to the knowledge and skills currently needed to practise graphic design professionally. There are two parts, a written test consisting of multiple choice questions and a portfolio interview, to take place on a separate day sometime after the written test has been passed. In the written section there are four topics:

- Business
- Technology
- Design Principles, Research and History (this part is an open-book test)
- Rules of Professional Conduct

Q *I have a design degree and over 20 years experience as a Senior Graphic Designer. My partner has many years of experience as a graphic designer but no diploma or degree in graphic design. Do we still have to write the Registered Graphic Designers Qualification Examination if we want to become R.G.D.s?*

A Currently, no-one may become an R.G.D. without successfully completing the portfolio interview portion of the Registered Graphic Designers Qualification Examination. Seniority applicants must also complete the Rules of Professional Conduct section of the written test.

If you have seven years graphic design experience, or seven years of design education and experience combined, prior to the year 2000 and have been working continuously since then, you are exempt from the balance of the written test.

- Q *I have worked as a graphic designer for over 20 years, and have a degree in fine art. Am I eligible to write the exam?*
- A Graphic designers who have a fine art degree or related education, and who can demonstrate years of graphic design work experience, such that education and relevant work experience total at least nine years, may be eligible to write the examination. Such applicants must also supply references who support their application.
- Q *If I am unsure whether I am eligible, may I still apply to write the examination?*
- A Yes. The Examination Eligibility Review Committee reviews each application on a case by case basis. It is up to the Committee to determine eligibility but there is no restriction to who may apply. If you are not deemed eligible, the portfolio and examination fees will be refunded to you. (The application fee is non-refundable.)
- Q *When is the next examination?*
- A The written test is usually held twice a year in Toronto in May and November, and twice a year in Ottawa in February and August. Dates and locations are announced on the web site at www.rgdexamboard.com. Special administrations of the examination may take place in Toronto and locations more than three hours travel time from Toronto where there are five or more approved candidates. Email info@rgdexamboard.com to discuss further options.
- Q *If I apply now, when will I find out if I am eligible to write the next examination?*
- A If you apply before the application deadline, it is likely that your application will be reviewed before the deadline and you will be notified as soon as a decision has been made. Applications received after the application deadline are reviewed within approximately 1 to 3 weeks and you will be notified as soon as a decision has been made.
- Q *I am a professional member of the Manitoba Chapter of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada (GDC). May I transfer my membership to RGD Ontario?*
- A Your professional membership in the GDC is not transferable to RGD Ontario. RGD Ontario is an independent Ontario corporation. MGDC and R.G.D. are not equivalent. To obtain the R.G.D. designation you must follow the procedures outlined in this Handbook.
- Q *Is there a limit to the number of books that I can bring to the open book section of the written test?*
- A No, there is no limit.
- Q *Can I bring handwritten notes to use for the open book section of the written test?*
- A Yes, you may, but no electronic notebooks.
- Q *What happens if I apply and then I am unable to write the next test?*
- A You may defer both the written test and portfolio interviews to a future date.
- Q *What is the cost of writing the test?*
- A The application fee, which is non-refundable, is \$50. The fee for the written test is \$100. The fee for persons exempt from the written test is \$75 for the mandatory portfolio interview. Fees are subject to change without notice. Fees for the written test and portfolio interview are refundable if they are not attempted. GST is applicable to all fees.
- Q *Do I need to read all of the suggested texts?*
- A You may choose to study all or some of the books on this list.

C. Examination Feedback

The Examination Board asked successful candidates to relate their experiences preparing/studying for the written test. Here are some responses.

- I read and made notes on the recommended materials; searched the Internet for further resources; studied with colleagues and made full use of the RGD handbook.
- Studying for the test was not too difficult, I suppose it depends on how long you have been out of school. The most challenging aspect was finding out about Canadian design work.
- Unfortunately, I did not prepare as well as I should have, as a recent heavy workload cut into my prep time.
- I bought *The Business of Graphic Design. A Professional's Handbook* and found this book informative in all areas of the graphic design business.
- I visited the Reference Library where I found some of the recommended books. I organized my schedule to have more time for studying and reading.
- I not only brushed up on my existing knowledge, but also learned new facts in history and business relations. I now have a “wider angle view” on the design process as a business, not only as a visual and communication art.
- I studied from most of the books on the reading list provided and some other design books I had. I found some information was a refresher but I did learn some new things. A main challenge was finding enough time to study, given that I have a very hectic work schedule.
- I started to prepare for the exam in February, creating notes while reviewing the material. The material was extensive. There were so many sources to choose from – not only did I use books graduated from but also used books listed with RGD Ontario.
- The most rewarding part of preparing for the exam was that I found myself implementing the information I was studying into design situations at work. Refreshing my knowledge of design principles and even design history enhanced the way I approached a project. Another reward was going through the RGD Professional Handbook. It gave me more insight into the business aspect of graphic design which I did not realize was so extensive and I became more appreciative of my employer's responsibilities.
- Studying was interesting – to say the least. It had been a while since the last time I cracked open the books and I worked hard for a test. I would say the biggest challenge was finding the time. I was commuting 3 or so hours a day to work, putting in a solid day, and then coming home to study. The rewards however were great. It has been few years since I opened up the Meggs book (*The History of Graphic Design*). It was great review. Learning the business practices in a more detailed way was great – especially for someone interested in starting a business in the next few years.
- I was very happy to hear that the questions were multiple choice. This way of testing made us all equal. Either you knew the information (or could look it up) or you did not. Short answers or essay questions would be affected by how nervous and intimidated the applicants were and an applicant could misunderstand the question and not find out until he/she sees the results.
- The written test was well-ordered and thoroughly (yet succinctly) explained by supervisors.
- I was nervous before the test. I did not know how difficult the questions would be, but, once I started and was going through the questions, my spirits lifted and I was able to focus on completing the test. I found I was happier with my performance

on the closed book part of the test than the open book part.

- The booklets, answer sheet and instructions were all straightforward and easily understood.
- The individuals presiding over the test were very helpful and thoughtful of the applicants' needs.
- A test is a test, is a test; absorb everything possible prior to writing.
- Locate relevant texts early. Buying on-line is workable, but shipping does not guarantee timely arrival.
- Make sure you have enough time to fully prepare.
- Plan your test and your time. Find extra time for preparation, use every minute. Use different sources such as magazines, web, libraries.
- I encourage everyone to take the test.
- Study everything you can get your hands on especially the books listed on the web site. Even though only part of the information will be on the test, you and your design work will benefit from learning all of it. I believe that history was the most important learning experience from my studying.
- I would suggest that you start a month or so early, just reading the books. Marking all of the important topics/events/concepts/ideas as you go. Once you've marked, it's really easy to go back and study each section. After all the books are marked, or notes are taken, I would recommend concentrating on the topics in the closed book section. If you can't get through all of the open book section material too thoroughly, you'll at least have them well noted.
- It is not as intimidating as it all sounds.

D.A Note on Professional Accreditation

The Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario (RGD Ontario) was created on April 25, 1996 by an Act of the Ontario Legislature. The Act gives the association the right to set standards and criteria for the Registered Graphic Designer and R.G.D. designation, and to grant this exclusive title to graphic design practitioners, managers and educators who qualify. The act sets out the objectives of the organization as follows:

- A to establish, promote and regulate uniform province-wide standards of knowledge, skill and ethics for all persons engaged in the practice of graphic design
- B to provide a unified voice for those engaged in the practice of graphic design
- C to advise its members of developments in the laws and practices related to graphic design
- D to promote and advance liaison with other individuals, associations and groups engaged in similar or related fields of activity
- E to provide formal training and continuing education for its members
- F to furnish means and facilities by which members of the association and graphic design students may increase their knowledge and skill in all things related to the practice of graphic design
- G to promote public education programs on the benefits of graphic design
- H to provide a forum for the exchange of information relevant to the practice of graphic design.

E. Contact Information**Examination Board for Registered Graphic Designers**

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