

GISCI POLICY STATEMENT ON GIS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION (3/1/08)

It is the policy of the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI) that the fields of practice for geographic information systems (GIS) is a legitimate profession separate from other fields of practice that may define geospatial professions.

Certified Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Professionals (GISPs) must show proficiency in three areas; 1.) Educational Achievement, 2.) Professional Experience, and 3.) Contributions to the Profession. Achievement must be claimed and self-documented by the applicant in each of these areas.

Educational Achievement includes a degree, formal and informal coursework dedicated to geospatial technology as defined by the *Geographic Information Science and Technology Body of Knowledge*, and related conference attendance.

Professional Experience divides GIS work into primary, secondary, and tertiary duties. A composite of these duties is documented for all present and past positions involving GIS.

Contributions to the Profession are activities that benefit the larger profession and public. They must be earned outside of the employer-employee dynamic.

Additionally, applicants must sign and abide by the GISCI Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct and agree to follow a 5-year recertification cycle.

A GISP has met the minimum standards for ethical conduct and professional practice, as established by GISCI.

Although achievement areas may recognize activities from other professions, the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities they describe define a unique GIS profession and GIS professionals. The GIS profession is not defined as a collection tasks excluded from another profession.

It is further the policy of the GIS Certification Institute that certification, not registration and licensure, is the appropriate way to ensure competent and ethical practice of this profession by qualified persons.

Registration is a voluntary enrollment into an occupation by affidavit. GISCI feels registration lacks the rigor necessary to promote good practice and ethical conduct within the GIS profession.

Licensure is the granting of a license to practice a profession after meeting minimum competency requirements. Licensure is used to guard against incompetence or when consumers value a reduction in downside risk more than the benefits of a positive outcome. GISCI feel the downside risks of negligent and unethical GIS practice do not warrant the intense regulation and restriction brought on by mandatory licensure. GISPs are expected to work within jurisdictional law and the GISCI Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct.

Certification is a voluntary process by which individuals who have demonstrated a level of expertise in a profession are identified to the public and other stakeholders by a third party. Certification is designed to recognize expertise.

Due to the high rate of change in the methods and technology utilized in the GIS profession, the typical lifetime credential augmented by continuing education or licensure programs is inadequate to ensure continued competency over the time span of a professional career. Rather, a certification program emphasizing regular renewal intervals that require a combination of work experience, education, and contributions to the GIS profession is more appropriate. It is the role of the GIS Certification Institute to establish professional practice standards and competencies, certify those persons who have the competencies required, and ensure the ethical performance of certified GIS professionals. Professional GIS certification best fulfills GISCI's mission:

*To maintain the high standards and integrity of the
GIS profession and promote ethical conduct within it.*