

Richard Simpson, Outdoor Education Advisor

**Royal
Geographical
Society**
with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning



Richard Simpson is an Outdoor Education Advisor for Service Children's Education in Germany. In December 2006 he was awarded Chartered Geographer status. Here's what he says about being a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)....

Why did you decide to apply to become a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)?

Chartered Geographer adds status to the subject and to me as an individual. I am no longer just the person who teaches and promotes Geography, but I can demonstrate recognition of being good at it, and having being so for a significant period of time. As a Geographer I can now demonstrate that my competence and professionalism is commensurate with those of other professions.

As an Outdoor Education Adviser it feels good to also have status and recognition that will be understood by those who work in schools, colleges and universities.

Also, if Chartered Geographer is to have status and meaning, I believe it is incumbent upon Geographers to apply for accreditation. The more of us there are then the greater the expectation that to be Chartered represents the level of professionalism that Geographers should operate at. As a Chartered Geographer I can readily indicate that I am not simply 'doing' but am committed to my professional development, think carefully about my work and seek to learn from experiences in order to develop further.

How did you find the application process?

I found the application process straightforward. The example professional reports on the RGS website were very helpful in terms of content but perhaps lacked (for me) a sense of enthusiasm for Geography and I think that I reflected this in the tone of my own report.

The process itself took several hours, mainly thinking and reflecting on my work past and present. I found that a very worthwhile experience in itself, not only in that it helped me to recognise achievements, but also how I have grown and developed through them and how these experiences can aid my future professional development.

What sort of experience and activities did you include in your professional self evaluation report?

A key area of evidence in my report was my work in the development of the geography curriculum and of fieldwork. I also sought to demonstrate that I have endeavoured to make Geography relevant to everyday life both from a classroom and from an outdoor activities perspective. I tried to show how, when leading groups on mountains, rivers, lakes and the sea; I have found it impossible not to demonstrate the usefulness of Geography both to the activity and to understanding the environments that we were in.

How have you benefited personally from gaining the accreditation?

So far only the personal satisfaction of having being accredited. As C Geog becomes more widely known I expect a wider recognition in all areas where Geographers work.

How have your Agency and schools benefited from you gaining the accreditation?

Perhaps only that I have been prompted to raise further the profile of national initiatives for the promotion of Geography.

How has your line manager and senior management team responded to you gaining the accreditation?

I think that my immediate line manager has little understanding of just what C Geog means. Other colleagues who know that I have been accredited have been generous in their congratulations. To be fair though, I have not been good at blowing my own trumpet with regard to C Geog

As the CGeog (Teacher) network grows, what would you like to see happen / be available to you?

CPD that will enable us all to be at the cutting edge of geography in education. The opportunity to meet other C Geogs. An increase in regional as well as national events.

Any words of advice for aspiring Chartered Geographer (Teachers)?

Be a reflective learner. If you always review and reflect on your work then not only will you see professional development but an application for C Geog accreditation will be a straightforward exercise