



## **Identifying Perceived Skills Impacting the Hiring of Nigerian-Trained Geoscience Graduates and Exploring Remedial Management Options**

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A 2010–2012 study solicited in Nigeria, from both academic and industry groups, has identified areas that could improve the competitive skills of in-country educated geoscientists. Information from surveys, wherein 52 responses were obtained from 60 requests (87% return), were invaluable assets to this study. Although the results indicate “average” rating of Nigerian-trained geoscience graduates thus impacting their successful outcome in the hiring process by major oil and gas companies, the feedback identified several avenues available that would nurture the talent of in-country geoscience candidates.

The study found Nigerian-trained graduates have an “average” grasp of core geosciences technical skills of about 2.7 on a scale of 5.0. They are, thus, often unable to meet minimum geoscience test scores used in recruitment. Respondents provided a variety of comments on improving graduates’ technical skills, mostly addressing basic geoscience knowledge and experience with modern instrumentation and computers. Curricula also needed to emphasize non-technical skill building such as understanding of business, communication, leadership, and entrepreneurship skills.

Several approaches addressing these deficiencies are identified and discussed. Expanding geoscience students’ understanding of industry expectations is emphasized through such vehicles as industry internships (to acquaint students with modern geosciences technology), on-campus professional technical meetings (to provide direct contact with industry professionals), awards for students’ technical papers, and on campus lectures/seminars by industry professionals. Coordination with Nigerian authorities through the National Universities Commission (NUC) and collaboration with relevant Nigerian higher education institutions, oil and gas companies, and the Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE) is essential.

Industry and academic collaboration in recent years have led to the establishment of geosciences centers of excellence in selected universities with focus on training qualified graduates in oil and gas business and practices delivered in modules and which will lead to the award of a Master’s degree. These graduates are expected to become more competitive for hiring by the oil and gas companies. This is a major step forward, and opportunities should be provided to have a wider review of the geoscience curriculum in all universities through active collaboration with National University Commission. Education is a commodity that must give value to the buyer. Otherwise it becomes an inflated well-crafted piece of paper with a person’s name inscribed on it, but without value and recognition whether it is awarded in Nigeria or in the U.K. or somewhere else.