
N009: Sedimentology, Stratigraphy and Reservoir Geology of Deepwater Clastic Systems (*County Clare, Ireland*)

Format and Duration

Field - 5 Days

Low Physical Demand

Instructor(s): Andy Pulham and Martin Evans / Peter Haughton

Summary

The focus of this course is an outcrop examination of basin floor, slope and shelf margin architecture and stratigraphy. Controls on deepwater sedimentation are discussed in detail, specifically high amplitude sea level changes, sediment supply and the importance of varied gravity flow processes to reservoir elements and their distribution. Observations and interpretations are supported by lectures, case studies, analogues, and behind-outcrop core and wireline log data.

Business Impact: Participants on this course will learn to appreciate the **sedimentology** and **stratigraphy** of deepwater systems and apply this understanding to the **prediction** of **reservoir presence, quality, distribution, and architecture**. Participants will thus be equipped to add value to subsurface projects across the E&P life cycle.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will learn how to:

1. Validate the range of gravity flow processes and products, their recognition in the subsurface and reservoir implications.
2. Evaluate the temporal and spatial distribution of the key elements of sand-rich basin-floor turbidite and associated slope systems.
3. Characterise the stratigraphic architecture, scale and distribution of potential reservoir units in sand-rich turbidite systems.
4. Evaluate reservoir description tools and techniques; cores, logs and seismic, for the variety of depositional settings examined.
5. Assess the contrasting nature of internal reservoir characteristics through a variety of deepwater depositional elements and its implications for exploration and exploitation risks.
6. Assess the large-scale controls that can operate on deepwater depositional systems, with particular emphasis on high-resolution sequence stratigraphy in basin floor, slope and associated deltaic systems.
7. Evaluate regional scale links from basin margin to basin floor settings and make well constrained predictions of reservoir presence and potential quality.

Training Method

This is a field course, supported by classroom sessions in a 70:30 ratio. Classroom sessions will comprise presentations, case studies, and reviews of the fieldwork.

Physical Demand

The physical demands for this course are **LOW** according to the Tetra Tech RPS field course grading

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system; the course requires basic fitness levels. All outcrops are coastal and there will be multiple walks of up to 2 km (1 mi) most days, all at around sea level with no ascent or descent exceeding 50 m (160 ft). The longest walk on the class is approximately 5 km (3 mi). Transport will be by coach on paved roads. Weather dependent, there may be a three-hour boat trip.

Who Should Attend

The course is relevant to all subsurface Geoscientists who wish to broaden and deepen their knowledge of deep marine clastic plays. Non-geoscience staff will also benefit from participation. This field course is suitable for multi-disciplinary team attendance.

Course Content

Key themes of this course are:

1. Controls on deepwater depositional systems.
2. Deltaic sediment supply systems and evidence for high amplitude sea-level cycles. Contrasts between low stand shelf edge deltas and incised valleys and highstand and transgressive systems tracts. Implications for deepwater sedimentation.
3. Gravity flow processes and products; their recognition and implications.
4. Clastic slope systems. Zones of coarse sediment by-pass or significant exploration targets?
5. Basin floor fans. Simple piles of sand or complicated reservoir architectures?
6. Subsurface case studies.

Below is the planned itinerary for the course. Please note that the itinerary may vary due to weather and tides.

Day 0: Arrival

- Arrival and transfer to the small coastal community of Kilkee

Day 1: Lecture and Field

- Introduction to the Clare Basin stratigraphy and deepwater systems
- Uppermost slope and shelf margin architecture
- Deltaic sequence stratigraphy and implications to deepwater sedimentation

Day 2: Field

- Turbidite systems; sedimentology and stratigraphy
- Slumps, slides, debris flows and slope sands; including channels, growth faults and overbanks

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Day 3: Field

- Architecture of deep-water channels and related sheets
- Deepwater processes and products

Day 4: Lectures and Field

- Summary shelf margin to deep-water stratigraphy and models for deepwater sedimentation
- Inner fan sedimentology and stratigraphy; channel complexes, slumps and condensed sections
- Mid-fan sedimentology and stratigraphy; channels, sheets and sediment by-pass surfaces
- Fan fringe sedimentology and stratigraphy; deep basin mudrocks and distal fan elements

Day 5: Lectures and Field

- Synthesis of deepwater systems and key lessons from the Clare Basin
- Boat trip to view key cliff exposures
- Outer fan stratigraphy; sheets

Day 6: Departure

- Transfer to Shannon and departure