

BCIA Professional Development Guidelines

Current as of Feb. 5, 2021

The British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA) is committed to Professional Development and Standards to assist registrants in maintaining professional knowledge, abilities and skills. Continuing competence through on-going professional development is critical in meeting the Agrologists' responsibility to **uphold the public interest**. Through lifelong learning, registrants remain up-to-date in their specialized areas of practice, and are informed about the current issues involving the profession of agrology.

Registrants of the BC Institute of Agrologists are required to complete and accurately record an ongoing record of participation in professional development activities.

Professional Development Requirements

Practicing (PAg, AAg, TAg, ATAg) registrants are required to complete and accurately report a minimum of 125 PDH over a three-year period (an average of 42 PDH per year), with no less than 30 PDH annually. On leave registrants are required to complete and accurately report PD hours but at a minimum of 50% of the PDH requirement, and the reduction is only during the time on leave. Registrants must declare their **areas of practice** annually.

Minimum Requirements

	Annual (hours)	Three Year Period (hours)
Continuing Education	10 PDH	50 PDH
Total PDHs (including Continuing Education)	30 PDH	125 PDH

Registrants must maintain an ongoing record of participation in professional development activities.

Continuing competence is demonstrated through recorded professional development. Regularly recording Professional Development in the online [PD Reports](#) under the Registrant profile allows registrants to track professional development under the categories of:

- 1. Professional Practice**
- 2. Continuing Education**
 - 2.1. General Professional Learning**
 - 2.1.1. Formal**
 - 2.1.2. Informal**
 - 2.2. Agrology Professional Learning**
 - 2.2.1. Formal**
 - 2.2.2. Informal**
- 3. Professional Contributions**
- 4. Professional Service**

Reporting Professional Development Hours (PDH)

It is the responsibility of each registrant to accurately record an ongoing record of participation in professional development activities in order to assure the public of their expertise in their declared areas of practice. Registrants can and should choose professional development activities that maintain, improve and expand their skills and knowledge, and are relevant to their area of practice or support the development of a new area of expertise.

The **PD Reports** section under the registrant profile section of the website allows registrants to report PD activities on an ongoing basis. In addition to reporting Professional Development activities under **PD Reports**, registrants are encouraged to maintain a personal detailed record of all professional development activities, including the dates, locations, subject material and a rationale on what was learned and how that relates to the registrant's area of practice.

Prior to payment of registrant fees, practicing and on leave registrants are required to:

- **record the reporting year's PDH online and**
- **declare their current areas of practice for the reporting year**

When Reporting PD, registrants should be sure to document:

- topic or title or article
- type of activity (ie. webinar, tour, seminar)
- date of activity
- length of activity
- area of practice / relevancy to profession

The information entered under **PD Reports** in the Registrants Profile will form the basis for the **BCIA PD Audit program**. During the PD Audit, the Audit Review committee may request additional information or proof to substantiate the declared PDH.

On Leave Registrants

Registrants who are temporarily on leave for education, parental, medical or other reasons are required to report no less than 50% (15 PDH) of the annual professional development minimum requirement for each year of leave. On leave registrants returning to regulated status should ensure that the 3-year professional development requirement is met within the following reporting year.

Retired Registrants

Registrants with PAg(Retired) status are not required to maintain PD records or report their PD activity. PAg(Retired) registrants remain bound by the provisions of the BCIA Agrologists Act and By-laws. PAg (Retired) registrants choosing to return to regulated status will be required to demonstrate on-going Professional Development.

Relevant Professional Development

The Practice of Agrology is defined under the Professional Governance Act (2018) as

a) Advice or services that are

- i) based on agricultural or natural sciences or agricultural or resource economics, and
- ii) relate to

(A) Cultivation, production, improvement, processing, marketing or management of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals,

(B) Classification, management, use, conservation, protection or enhancements of aquatic, terrestrial or atmospheric ecosystems that are affected by, sustain or have the potential to sustain the cultivation or production of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals, or

(C) Restoration, reclamation or remediation of aquatic, terrestrial or atmospheric ecosystems;

b) Advice or services that are ancillary to those described in paragraph (a).

The practice of agrology does not include the provision of advice or services within the reserved practice of a registrant of another regulatory body.

Recording Professional Development Hours

Registrants are required to record their Professional Development hours under the following four categories.

1. Professional Practice

A registrant who is involved in agrology-related work, as defined above, either practicing actively or influencing how agrology is performed (supervision, administration, etc.). A minimum of 30 hours of work per week is defined as full time. Registrants who work part-time or who are not employed for a full year, should pro-rate their PDH.

Full Time 100% = 10 PDH Half Time 50% = 5 PDH

2. Continuing Education

Continuing Education activities have clear learning objectives to assist the registrant in maintaining their professional competence. Except for self-study, these learning activities may occur during or outside of work hours. ***A minimum of 50 PDH over a three-year period with no less than 10 PDH should be declared annually under the Continuing Education category.***

Self-Study is defined as non-interactive professional development activities which are conducted outside of regular work such as reading articles, journals, books, viewing podcasts, recorded webinars.

No more than 15 PDH can be claimed as self-study under 2.1.2 and 2.2.2 combined.

Contact Hours are limited to no more than **30 PDH** per course (based on 3 credit post-secondary course – in class or online). Homework is considered self-study.

2.1 General Professional Learning

This includes activities that assist a registrant in maintaining due diligence and aid the registrant in practicing as a professional but are not directly related to their declared areas of practice or agrology as defined. Examples include: report writing, business skills, ethics, and indigenous relations. Certifications (WHMIS, First Aid) required for employment should not be considered.

2.1.1 Formal General Professional Learning

1 Contact Hour = 1 PDH

Structured courses or formal training that involves formal assessment for credit or certification, and that are provided through Universities, Colleges, Technical Institutions, industry and employers, including those by correspondence or the internet. To be considered for this category, an examination or formal evaluation of participant learning is typically required.

2.1.2 Informal General Professional Learning

1 Contact Hour = 1 PDH

This includes learning activities with no formal assessment such as short courses, workshops, seminars, live webinars, field tours, or clinics. Additional sources can also include self-study through books, journals, recorded webinars and other electronic sources.

2.2 Agrology Professional Learning

This includes activities that assist a registrant in maintaining competence in their declared areas of practice or to develop competence in new agrology-related areas of practice.

2.2.1 Formal Agrology Professional Learning

1 Contact Hour = 1 PDH

Structured courses or formal training that involves formal assessment for credit or certification, and that are provided through Universities, Colleges, Technical Institutions, industry and employers, including those by correspondence or the internet. To be considered for this category, an examination is typically required.

2.2.2 Informal Agrology Professional Learning

1 Contact Hour = 1 PDH

This includes learning activities with no formal assessment such as short courses, workshops, seminars, live webinars, field tours, clinics. Includes most BCIA branch and conference PD activities, tours, etc. Additional sources can also include self-study through books, journals, webinars and other electronic sources.

3. Professional Contributions

Activities which provide a service or learning opportunity to the community or other professionals and increase the registrant's knowledge base outside of regular work activities.

3.1 Formal Instruction

1 Unit = 5 PDH

Formal instruction of an agrology-related course, workshop or training provided outside of the registrant's regular work. Usually requires an assessment of the participants.

3.2 Publications

1 Unit = 5 PDH

Publishing a profession-related article, position paper or similar publication in a trade journal, magazine, bulletin, conference proceedings or on the internet; publishing a refereed paper or book; writing and /or producing training materials in various media (print, video, CD, etc).

3.3 Presentations

1 Unit = 2 PDH

Conducting technical, scientific or professional presentations as a guest speaker or presenter at a conference, meeting, seminar, field tour, webinar, etc.

3.4 Advising

1 Unit = 2 PDH

Acting as an expert witness, reviewing work of other professionals, peer review of scientific papers, preparing and administering evaluations of other professionals, and other advising or assessment activities outside of regular work duties.

3.5 Community scientific work

1 Unit = 2 PDH

Judging at science fairs, contributing expertise to school or community programs, technical advisor to a community group, participating in community science initiatives.

4. Professional Service

Professional service activities within the BCIA, or equivalent professional/scientific organization which promote peer interaction and thus exposure to new ideas.

4.1 Holding a professional office

1 Unit = 10 PDH

Holding an office in a professional or scientific organization at the provincial, national or international level. This includes sitting on BCIA Council and being Chair of a committee where a level of organizational policy decision-making is expected.

4.2 Serving on professional groups

1 Unit = 5 PDH

Service on scientific or professional, technical or managerial societies, committees or boards. Includes serving on a BCIA branch executive or committees.

4.3 Serving as a mentor

1 Unit = 5 PDH

Serving as a mentor to an Articling Registrant or another registrant of a professional organization.

4.4 Attending professional AGMs

1 Unit = 2 PDH

Attending Annual General Meetings of a professional or scientific organization. Includes BCIA AGMs and branch AGMs. (Attending a branch executive meeting is not eligible for PDH)

Completion Declarations

Articling Registrants and expedited PAgS are required to complete specific program elements. These elements can be reported as PD hours under the Completion Declarations in PD Reports.

- 2.5 PD hours for the A.Ag workshop “The Profession of Agrology”
 - OR 1.5 + 1 PD hours for combination of Profession of Agrology webinar and Orientation to BCIA webinar
- 8 PD hours for the BCIA Ethics for Professionals workshop or 5 PD hours for Ethics Refresher
- 2 PD hours for the BCIA AGM
- 2 PD hours for a Branch AGM
- 1.5 PD hours for the Professional Liability online webinar
- At least 6 PDH for Indigenous Training

If you require additional clarification interpreting the Professional Development guidelines, please contact the Provincial Professional Development Coordinator at admin@bcia.com or by phone toll free 1-877-855-9291.

Examples of Professional Contributions – When to and not to Claim PDH

All activities which are considered part of regular job responsibilities should be claimed only under the Professional Practice category.

1. An Agrologist whose main job function is to train farmers in new environmental management techniques, can not report this work as PD under the category of “instructing courses, workshops”.

However, if the Agrologist conducted a workshop on how to train farmers for fellow Agrologists outside of their regular workplace, then this could be considered PD because the workshop would be a new activity and learning experience, involving preparation for a different audience, responding to their questions and feedback, etc.

2. An Agrologist who is an instructor in a college or university cannot claim PDH under the category of “formal instruction” unless they develop and/or teach a course or workshop as a one-time event not part of their regular instructional tasks. The key is that it be unique and separate from the instructor’s regular teaching.

The instructor could count PDH for acting as an expert witness or making a presentation at a conference, producing articles and papers would also count. If producing training materials, course materials or guides for students is part of the instructor’s routine work responsibilities, these cannot be included under PDH.

3. An Agrologist who works in “extension” for the Provincial Government might routinely make presentations to producers as part of their job responsibilities. These presentations would therefore not be considered PDH.

Giving an invited lecture in a course at a college or university can be considered PDH under Professional Contribution.

4. An Agrologist employed full-time with a company and in addition provides consulting as a side-business cannot claim PDH for their consulting work. Work outside of regular consulting tasks such as an expert witness, or contributing an article about a particular issue, or making a presentation at a conference can be considered for PDH.

5. A research scientist cannot claim PDH authoring refereed papers in scientific journals if these are a routine job expectation.

6. An Agrologist who works for government might be asked by a producer group or agency to help evaluate candidates for an executive director position with the organization. This professional contribution falls somewhere between what we might think of as consulting or community work but clearly is a Professional Contribution that could be counted.

Professional Development Guidelines – Case Studies

The following case studies are meant to further illustrate what constitutes PDH along with the “Examples of Professional Contributions”. A table showing what would be reported follows these case studies. Reference pages 3 & 4 for Categories numbering.

- A. An Agrologist is a full-time Government Licensed Scientific Officer working 35 hours per week. (10 PDH - Professional Practice) They have attended their annual BCIA branch AGM (2 PDH – Professional Service – 4.4) and the annual BCIA AGM (not the associated conference) (2 PDH – Professional Service – 4.4). As part of employee training and development, paid by the employer, they attended a two day (15 hour) hydrology course and successfully completed the course exam. One day was on work time, the second fell on an unpaid Saturday. (15 PDH –Continuing Education – 2.2.1). They attended two one hour workshops, on agrology topics. Both were free, one on work time, the other on own time. (2PDH – Continuing Education – 2.2.2) This person is also an engineer and holds a committee position with that association. (5 PDH – Professional Service- 4.2) This person made an hour long presentation to other government bodies / industry on policy changes (during paid time). As the registrant’s job typically resides with making permitting decisions, presenting on the policy change was both beyond their usual duties and provided a growth opportunity. (2 PDH – Professional Contributions- 3.3) **Total= 38 PDH**
- B. This Agrologist is employed 4 days a week (24 hours) by a land appraisal company where they work in appraising mainly agricultural land.(8 PDH- Professional Practice) They have managed to obtain company sponsorship for a distance education university course in soil science (a two credit course) course which was completed on their own time. The registrant added up the time for assigned readings which totaled 22 hours. Of these 22 hours, the registrant was able to claim 15 PDHs for self-study. (30 PDH – Continuing Education – 2.2.1; and 15 PDH – Continuing Education – 2.2.2)They also took a 6 hours report writing course to improve on skills needed for their job. (6 PDH- Continuing Education – 2.1.2) They have attended a couple of branch networking events with short presentations (each an hour long, both somewhat linked with agrology).(2 PDH – Continuing Education – 2.2.2) They are acting as a mentor for an Articling Registrant.(5 PDH – Professional Service) **Total = 66 PDH**
- C. This Agrologist is a self employed consultant (full time) (10 PDH – Professional Practice) They have attended two 7 hour conferences as an observer, one in Edmonton, AB, the other in Vancouver. (14 PDH – Continuing Education – 2.1.2) This person also volunteers in a scientific capacity with a community watershed organization and has participated at 3 different events in the reporting year.(6 PDH – Professional Contributions- 3.5) They were contracted (paid) to perform a teaching function at a workshop which took considerable preparation time and provided a growth opportunity.(5 PDH- Professional Contribution- 3.1) They are the treasurer with their local branch(5 PDH- Professional Service- 4.2)**Total = 40 PDH**
- D. This Agrologist is a university professor. They lecture 10 hours a week over a 30 hour per week time period. (10 PDH – Professional Practice) They have presented at two conferences - one in BC, the other in the States (4 PDH- Professional Contributions – 3.3),at which they also attended other presentations for a total of 10 hours.(10 PDH – Continuing Education – 2.1.2)They have produced an article for a peer reviewed research journal. (5 PDH – Professional Contribution – 3.2) They have

attended the BCIA AGM (2 PDH – Professional Service- 4.4)and associated conference (4 +hours long)(4 PDH- Continuing Education – 2.2.2). They hold the position of Chair of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada,(10 PDH – Professional Service – 4.1)and attended the Soil Conservation Council AGM(2 PDH- Professional Service – 4.4). They followed a documented self study program which exceeds 40 hours of study time over the year. (15 PDH – Continuing Education – 2.2.2) They also provided scientific advice to a local environmental non-profit.(2 PDH – Professional Contribution – 3.4) **Total = 64 PDH**

Case Studies Chart

		Case study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Case Study D
1. Professional Practice		10	8	10	10
2. Continuing Education <i>10 hours minimum annually, 50 hours minimum over 3 years</i>	2.1 General Professional Learning				
	2.1.1 Formal				
	2.1.2. Informal		6	14	10
	2.2 Agrology Professional Learning				
	2.2.1 Formal	15	30		
	2.2.2 Informal	2	17		19
	Total(no less than 10 PDH)	17	53	14	29
3. Professional Contributions	3.1 Formal Instruction			5	
	3.2 Publications				5
	3.3 Presentations	2			4
	3.4 Consulting				2
	3.5 Community Scientific Work			6	
	Total	2	0	11	11
4. Professional Service	4.1 Holding a professional Office				10
	4.2 Serving on professional group	5		5	
	4.3 Serving as a mentor to an A.Ag		5		
	4.4 Attending professional AGMs	4			4
	Total(max 15 PDH)	9	5	5	12
Total		38	66	40	64

Case Studies - Concluding remarks

All of the above case studies exceed the required minimum of 30 PDH per year.

Case Study A may want to consider completing more PDH in the following two years to reach the 125 PDH required target over the three years.

All case studies meet the recommended 10 PDH in the Continuing Education category. **Case Study C** may wish to increase the hours in under the Continuing Education categories over the next two years to meet the 50 PDH recommended target level over the three years.

Case Study D had over 40 hours of self study but could only claim the maximum of 15 PDH under the Professional Services category.