



FAQ

Preamble

The College has succeeded in its goal of securing reserved practice (practice rights) for Registered Professional Biologists (RPBios) and Registered Biology Technologists (RBTechs). Reserved practice is scheduled to come into force on September 1, 2022, however ongoing work to implement [the amended Applied Biologists Regulation](#) will occur throughout 2022 and beyond. If you have any questions about reserved practice, [you can view the reserved practice FAQ](#).

In addition to implementing the new reserved practice, the College will continue to deliver on its other ongoing statutory mandates such as audit and practice review, credentialing and registration, and investigations, as well as an increased volume of interaction with the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG).

All told, these functions will require more capacity than the College currently has available.

The College and Its Operations

 *Where does the College get its authority to raise dues without a referendum?*

The [Professional Governance Act - Part 4, Division 2, 50 \(1\) \(a\)](#) - gives regulatory bodies the authority to set dues (fees) for registrants without a referendum. In order to ensure that the College has the capacity to continue to successfully deliver on its mandate the College's Council has made the decision to raise dues for the 2022 registration year.

 *Why does the College require more resources?*

The College requires more capacity to successfully continue to deliver on its regulatory mandate while also implementing reserved practice. The move to reserved practice on its own is a significant undertaking that requires considerable resources. Implementation will need to happen concurrently with the College's other statutory processes.

Second, the College will be working closely the OSPG, which in 2022 will continue the rollout of its own responsibilities under the Act. These responsibilities include information requests, audits and performance reviews of the College's functions and processes, and other collaborative efforts across all regulatory bodies under the PGA that are deemed necessary in maintaining the public interest under the Act.

Finally, the College also must continue to develop and implement other major requirements in the Act (some of which are not yet in force), such as:

- Mandatory Indigenous Reconciliation Training
- Regulation of firms
- Mandatory declarations of conflict of interest and of competency

This work will require time and resources.

 *Are there any other financial pressures facing the College?*

Overall the College is in a good financial position, however the above noted increased workload and expectations as a result of implementing the PGA - most notably reserved practice – are exacerbated by inflationary pressures. For instance the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 4.1% from August 2020, its highest point in nearly two decades.

 *When was the last time the College raised fees?*

The College raised fees in 2019 for the 2020 registration year with authority granted by the Professional Governance General Regulation. Dues were increased by \$75 for RPBios and \$25



each for RBTechs and Applied Biology Technicians. The additional revenue generated by the dues increase was used to continue to develop the scope of practice for Registered Biology Technologists and Applied Biology Technicians; to work with other regulators to develop reserved practice in applied biology and develop joint practice boards; to undertake more CPD and outreach activities; to work with OSPG, including on managing requests which have already become more frequent; to address an increased number of investigations; to process the increase in applications which requires more staff time; to develop and implement the new registrant database along with features for registrants including voting and CPD tracking; and to retain legal counsel that reviewed and advised on bylaws and increased disciplinary and investigations actions

 *Why would you raise dues again?*

With the Act implemented, there are new and expanded requirements for regulators which require attention. As detailed above, the College is now focused on implementing reserved practice, liaising with the OSPG and consolidating its activities under the Act. As much as we've been able to accomplish, it has put the College at maximum capacity. For example, with more registrants comes increased pressure on the registration team – both staff and volunteers – and the audit and practice review and investigations committees. The College will also need to develop a limited license program for practitioners who have a specialty but may not meet all requirements for entry as a practicing registrant. The College will need the resources to enforce reserved practice, ensuring that practitioners of applied biology are certified to practice and registered with the College. The College will also need resources to develop practice guidance for practitioners already working in the field.

 *I thought the College was financially stable?*

The College is in a stable financial position due to sound financial management practices, which included successfully incorporating the 2020 increase in dues into its PGA implementation through 2020 and 2021. The latest increase in dues follows a similar approach of ensuring the resources required to continue operations under the PGA, inclusive of new or expanded functions.

 *Registration is already too expensive, how can you possibly raise dues further?*

Registration to a regulated profession carries both privilege and responsibility. Applied biology professionals do important work in the province, but the public should be confident that the work is being done competently and accountably. The College exists to ensure that the public interest is protected, and the implementation of reserved practice is both a key element to safeguarding the public interest and major use of statutory and administrative resources. The PGA also legislates additional protections for the public, such as declarations of competency and regulation of firms, for which the College will be responsible. All of these programs require proper levels of resourcing, resources that the College does not currently have and cannot generate under the *status quo* of registration and dues.

The College works to find efficiencies in its operations to keep costs down. However, as a self-regulated professional, applied biology professionals have a responsibility to the public and payment of dues assures the public that the individual can be held to standards of competency, professionalism and accountability for the work they execute.

 *How sure are you that you reserved practice is coming?*

The reserved practice for applied biology [has been approved by government to come into effect on September 1, 2022.](#)

 *Isn't a vote by registrants required to increase dues?*



No, a referendum is no longer required for regulators to increase registrant dues; the PGA - Part 4, Division 2, 50 (1) (a) - grants regulators authority to increase registrant dues.

Doesn't the Superintendent of Professional Governance have to approve bylaw changes?

Section 1.9(1) of the Professional Governance General Regulation exempts fees and special assessments from having to be approved by the Superintendent.

How will the College use the additional revenue from dues?

The additional revenue is required to support the College current statutory obligations and the development of other statutory and governance processes and programs as listed above.

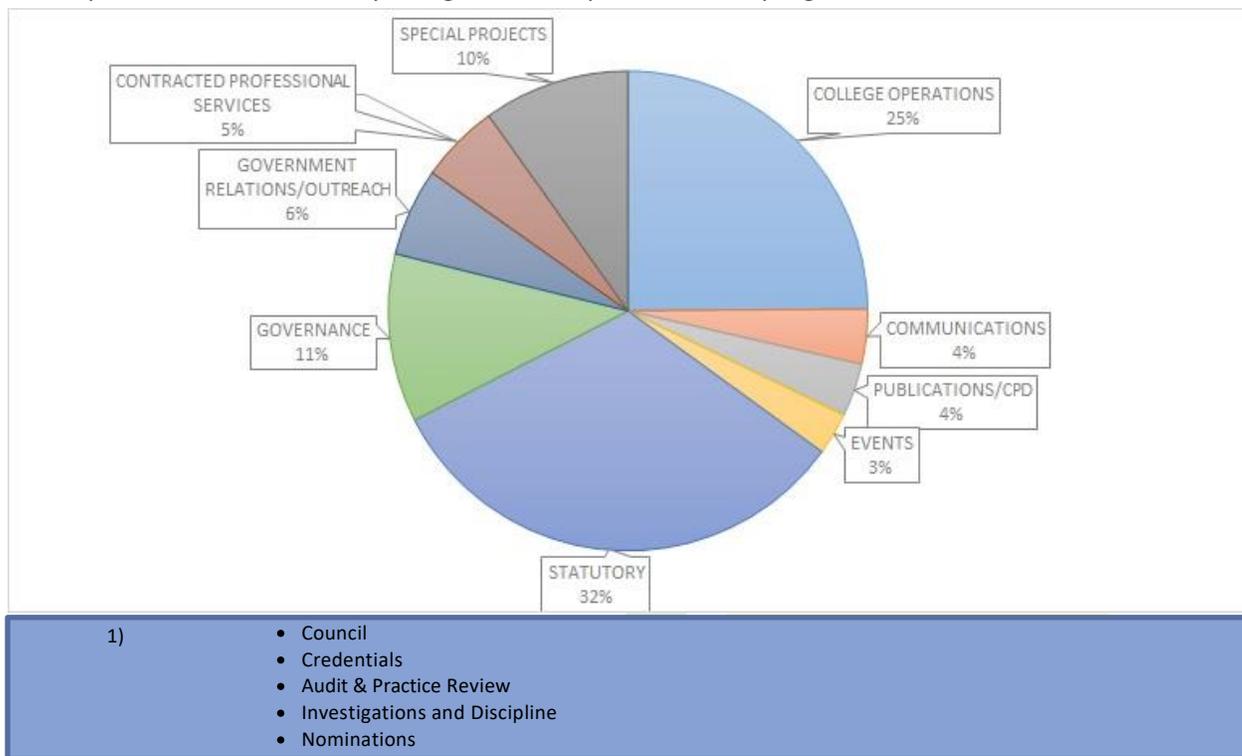


Figure 1 – College of Applied Biology 2021 budget (projected)

I just wanted a professional designation for my job, why do I now have to pay more for it?

With reserved practice enabled for RPBio and RBTech applied biology professionals, registration with the College will become compulsory for practicing applied biology in BC as of September 1, 2022 as per the reserved practice definition.

Why does applied biology need to be regulated at all?

Regulation of the practice of applied biology is predicated on the idea that applied biology professionals must be full partners in the practice of resource management in order to protect the public interest. The College itself was the result of professional biologists advocating for self-regulation throughout the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the College of Applied Biology Act in 2003. The government of BC has built on this foundation of self-regulation through the Professional Reliance Review in 2017 and development of the Professional Governance Act in 2018 which enabled not only reserved titles, but also reserved practice for applied biology professionals.

The College pursues its mandate to protect the public interest by ensuring that the professionals whom registers are competent, accountable and held to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Therefore, any registration granted by the College comes with responsibilities to the public. In order to ensure the ongoing competency and accountability of registrants – through



programs like audits, continuing professional development, investigations and practice review – the College must be funded to a level that allows it to successfully fulfil its mandate.

 *Can I defer payment for a few months?*

Registrants are obligated to pay their dues by the dues deadline in order to avoid losing their status in good-standing and to avoid risk of removal from the register. The College begins taking dues payment in October and payments made after December 31 are considered late; the College does not have a mechanism to allow for payment plans.

While a registrant can choose to “defer” payment until later, what they would be doing is choosing to pay their dues late, and they would then be subject to a late fee and to the risks mentioned above.

 *What happens if I do not pay?*

Failure to pay the annual dues by March 31 will result in a registrant being listed as removed from the register according to [College bylaw Part 5, Division 5, 5-15 and Part 12, 12-2](#) which means that the registrant is not in good standing and not authorized to practice applied biology. The registrant must apply for reinstatement according to [College bylaw Part 5, 5-11 and Part 12, 12- 4.](#)

The Registrant Dues Increase

 *How did you determine the amount of the dues increase?*

A thorough analysis of projected revenues and costs was executed to estimate the required financial resources needed for the College to continue to successfully deliver on its statutory obligations over the coming years, inclusive of both its ongoing mandate and the implementation of specific elements of the *Professional Governance Act*. This includes implementing reserved practice, mandatory training in Indigenous Reconciliation and increased volume of interaction with the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG)

 *What’s your authority to do this?*

The PGA grants regulators authority to increase registrant dues - [Part 4, Division 2, 50 \(1\) \(a\).](#)

 *Why couldn’t fees increase incrementally over time?*

The amount of the increase to dues in 2022 was determined based on the resources required for the College to successfully fulfil its mandate under the *Professional Governance Act*. Smaller, incremental increase to dues would be insufficient at this time, however the College is currently working on a longer-range plan that – barring any extraordinary circumstances – should eliminate the need for large increases in the future.

 *Won’t reserved practice result in more registrants – and more revenue – which would eliminate the need for a dues increase?*

It is likely that the move to reserved practice will cause an increase in registrations to the College. However, there are factors that mitigate how this increase will affect the College’s budget. For example, it is unclear how much registration will increase as compared to current trends; at current levels, the College would not have the budget to deliver its mandate under the Act. Moreover, a large increase in registrations demands more administrative resources as it would generate more work in applications and registrations, increases the total requirement for audits, and puts pressure on other statutory functions such as credentialing and investigations, all of which affect the College’s resources.

 *I am retired from the College, are my dues going up?*

College Council approved changes to Group I of Schedule 2 of the College bylaws for practicing and in-training designations only: Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) and Biologist In-



training; Registered Biology Technologist (RBTEch) and Technologists in Training, and Applied Biology Technician (ABT) and Technicians in Training.

If I am on leave, do I have to pay more?

As stated above, the dues increase only applies to practicing and in-training registrants. Nevertheless, an on-leave member will have to pay the current dues upon reinstatement – whenever that reinstatement occurs – along with any other fees owing.

Will the College be raising dues in the future?

The College Council will always have to review the annual budget and the possibility of increasing dues in the context of fulfilling its mandate. The College is currently working on a longer-range plan that – barring any extraordinary circumstances – should eliminate the need for large increases in the future.

The PGA grants to the College Council the authority to raise dues without referendum – other organizations like the ABCFP and EGBC already have this authority. Even with the authority to raise dues, the College will continue to demonstrate prudent fiscal management with oversight from the OSPG and independent financial auditors.

How much do other professionals pay under the PGA?

Other professionals under the Professional Governance Act paid more for 2021 dues – sometimes substantially more – than did applied biology professionals.

| Org. | ABCFP | | AIBC* | | BCIA | | EGBC | | ASTTBC | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
| Title | RPF | | AIBC | | PAg | | PEng/PGeo | | AScT | |
| Dues | 2019 | 2021 | 2019 | 2021 | 2019 | 2021 | 2019 | 2021 | 2019 | 2021 |
| | \$582 | \$593 | \$989 | \$1049 | \$475 | \$475 | \$436 | \$473 | \$354 | \$399 |

*Currently transitioning to the PGA

Even with the increase, RPBios and RBTEchs will still pay about the same in dues as other professionals under the Act who also have reserved practice: Only Applied Science Technologists (AScT), for whom reserved practice has not been developed, pay less. It should also be noted that all regulators who are under or will come under the Act except for the agrologists have increased their dues since 2019.

Are other regulators implementing a dues increase?

All regulators under the PGA are evaluating their current capacity and what more resources may be required to ensure that they can continue to fulfill their obligations under the PGA.