

Introducing the Online Ethics Course

The College of Applied Biology is a regulated, self-governing body with a *Code of Ethics* to clearly identify what is expected of its members. All College members are required to abide by the *Code of Ethics* and uphold the *Principles of Stewardship* in their work.

The College currently requires registered members to complete training in professional ethics within three years of being registered. This has the unintended consequence that some members could potentially be registered in the College for up to nine years before taking ethics training (e.g., six years as an “in training” member, with a three year grace period to complete ethics training as a registered member). Through the *College’s Audit Program*, it has also become evident that many members are not familiar with our *Code of Ethics*; this is of particular concern, because the *Code* was updated in 2012. To address this gap, the College Council will be considering a change to the requirements, such that applicants to the College may be required to take training in ethics prior to becoming a registered member.

Historically, the College has offered ethics training delivered in-person through a partnership with the Association of Professional Biology (APB). Recently, the College has attempted to increase the availability of in-person ethics training, but many members continue to experience difficulty meeting this training requirement in a timely manner. The College has also received requests to offer more online learning opportunities: to meet this need, the College committed to developing an online ethics course and recently hired Udu Learning Systems Inc. to create a course in a Learning Management System (LMS) capable of recording module progress. Successful completion of the course will require completion of a due diligence exam designed to assess familiarity with the *Code of Ethics*. This exam will also be offered online.

Learning objectives for the new online ethics course include an understanding of what it means to be a professional and the elements of professional practice. The course has seven modules which address the following areas of professional responsibility:

- > Competence
- > Professional Independence
- > Integrity and Professional Regard
- > Due Diligence
- > Signing and Sealing Work
- > Assessing and Managing Risk
- > Principles of Stewardship

The online ethics course will be fully implemented by the end of 2015. All applicants to the College will be required to complete the College’s online ethics course and exam prior to being granted membership in registered categories (e.g., RPBios, RBTechs). The College also encourages all existing members to stay current with their ethics training by completing this course.

We believe this new online ethics course will greatly enhance the accessibility of this training for new and existing College members. 

Steve Gordon, RPBio, Chair, Ethics Committee

