

## Professional Development Guidelines

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

Continuing competence will be demonstrated through recorded professional development. Regularly recording Professional Development in the [PD Reports](#) under your Member profile allows members to track professional development under the categories of:

- **Professional Practice**
- **Professional Contributions**
- **Continuing Education**
- **Professional Service**

*Review Examples of Professional Contributions (following pages) regarding activities reported only if they have taken place outside of your everyday, normal job duties.*

The **PD Reports** section under the member profile section of the website allows members to record activities as they occur and submit on a yearly basis prior to payment of dues. The information entered under **PD Reports** will form the basis for the BCIA audit program.

As members are required to have a **minimum of 125 PDH over a 3 year period** the **PD Reports filter** allows members to easily track the combined total of their past years of PDHs and produce a spreadsheet with this information.

The **Explanatory Notes** (next page) clarify the types of activities that could be recorded in the various categories and the number of Professional Development Hours (PDH) attributed to each. For Continuing Education, the numbers of direct contact hours are used as PDH.

Including Professional Practice, the minimum requirement is **30 hours of PDH per year**, and a minimum requirement of **125 hours over a three-year period** ending with the reporting year. A minimum of 10 PDH's per year and 50 PDH's over the three-year period should be in the Continuing Education category. A maximum 15 PDH may be claimed annually for self study under 2.2 Informal Continuing Education. As well, members are encouraged to be active in at least two categories in addition to Professional Practice. Members can and should choose professional development activities that maintain, improve and expand their skills and knowledge, and are relevant to their scope of practice or support the development of a new area of expertise.

To determine your number of PD hours in Continuing Education, Professional Contributions, and Professional Service, carry out a self-assessment of the number of hours during which you learned something new that has made you a better professional Agrologist. These decisions will be reviewed during the [professional audit process](#) so it will be useful to record and keep your rationale in your own files.

Retired Agrologists are not required to maintain PD records and report their PD activity. Retired Agrologists remain bound by the provisions of the BCIA Agrologists Act and By-laws. If these members resume the active practice of agrology, they will be required to demonstrate on-going Professional Development.

## *Explanatory Notes for Professional Development Reporting*

### **1. Professional Practice**

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

Actively working in the practice of agrology. Members who work part-time or who are not employed for a full year, should pro-rate their PDH. The definition of agrology is under the [Agrologists Act \(2003\)](#)

### **2. Continuing Education**

These activities generally have clear learning objectives to maintain and strengthen competency in the field of agrology and the member's scope of practice.

**2.1 Formal 1 Contact Hour = 1 PDH** – structured courses or formal training that involves formal assessment or credit, and that are provided through Universities, Colleges, Technical Institutions, industry and employers, including those by correspondence or the internet.

**2.2 Informal 1 Contact Hour = 1 PDH** - attending interactive short courses, workshops, seminars, webinars, field days, tours, clinics. Self-study through books, journals, electronic sources  
(on a separate entry a maximum 15 PDH may be claimed annually for self-study)

### **3. Professional Contributions**

Specific new activities or experiences (and thus learning opportunities) that generally reflect expansion or development of the member's technical knowledge base ***outside of everyday job activities***; examples on next page.

**3.1 Instructing courses, workshops, etc. 1 Unit = 5 PDH** – formal teaching of a course, workshop, seminar, webinar or similar event.

**3.2 Producing articles, position papers, refereed papers, training materials 1 Unit = 5 PDH** – publishing an 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** – technical, scientific or professional presentations.

**3.4 Consulting 1 Unit = 2 PDH** – acting as an expert witness, technical reviewer or similar.

**3.5 Community work 1 Unit = 2 PDH** – judging at Science fairs, contributing to school programs, or similar activities that develop you as a professional agrologist.

### **4. Professional Service**

Activities that 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 local, provincial, national or international level. This may include such things as being Chair of a major conference committee.

**4.2 Serving on professional committees 1 Unit = 5 PDH** – service on scientific or professional committees, on committees of technical or managerial societies, or serving on boards.

**4.3 Serving as a mentor to an A.Ag 1 Unit = 5 PDH** – serving as a mentor to an Articling Agrologist or other professional member.

**4.4 Attending professional meetings 1 Unit = 2 PDH** – attending local branch, provincial, national or international meetings of the BCIA or another professional or scientific organization.

## *Examples of Professional Contributions*

1. An agrologist whose main job function is to train farmers in new environmental management techniques, could not count this work in “instructing courses, workshops”. However, if the agrologist conducted a workshop for fellow agrologists on this program or on how to train farmers, then it would count because the “special” workshop would be a new activity and learning experience, involving preparation for the different audience, responding to their questions and feedback, etc.
2. An agrologist who is an instructor in a college or university cannot count “instructing courses, workshops” unless they have developed and taught something as a special one-time event, such as creating an on-line course. The key is that it be unique and separate from the instructor’s regular teaching.

Of course, the instructor could count things like acting as an expert witness or making a presentation at a conference. Producing articles and papers would also count. Producing training materials may not count, however, if producing course materials or guides for students is part of the instructor’s routine responsibilities.

3. An agrologist who works in “extension” for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands might routinely make presentations to producers as part of their job responsibilities, so these wouldn’t count. Giving an invited lecture in a course at a college or university would count as a Professional Contribution.
4. A consultant in the area of land management wouldn’t count consulting work but certainly would get PD credit for unusual work as an expert witness, or contributing an article about a particular issue to Country Life in BC for instance, or making a presentation at a conference.
5. A research scientist couldn’t count authoring refereed papers in scientific journals because these are a routine job expectation but could likely count things like offering a workshop or a small consulting contract.
6. An agrologist who worked 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.*

- A. This person is a Government Licensed Scientific Officer. They have attended their annual BCIA branch AGM and the annual BCIA AGM (though not the associated conference). As part of employee training and development they attended a two day (15 hour) hydrology course. Paid by their employer. One day was on work time, the second fell on an unpaid Saturday. They attended two one hour workshops, on agrology topics. Both were free, one on work time, the other on own time. This person is also an engineer and holds a committee position with that association, though doesn't have any other involvement with it. This person made an hour long presentation to other government bodies / industry on policy changes (during paid time), though usually deals with permitting decisions. It is this person's opinion that the presentation provided a growth opportunity.
- B. This person is employed by a land appraisal company where they work in appraising mainly agricultural land. This person had managed to obtain company sponsorship for a distance education university course in soil science (a two credit course) which, in the opinion of this person, provided 4 PDH per week over 13 weeks), which they pursued on their own time. They have attended a couple of dinner and talk appraisal institute events (each an hour long, both somewhat linked with agrology). They have also attended a couple of branch level BCIA meetings. They are acting as a mentor for an articling agrologist.
- C. This person is a self employed consultant (full time). They have attended a couple of conferences, one in Edmonton, AB, the other in Vancouver, BC both as an observer, both 7 hours long. This person also volunteers with a community watershed organization in a scientific capacity and has attended 3 events in the reporting year. They were contracted (paid) to perform a teaching function at a workshop which took considerable preparation time and, in this person's opinion, provided a growth opportunity. They are the treasurer with their local branch and attended 2 branch meetings during the reporting period.
- D. This person is a university professor. They lecture 10 hours a week over a 30 week time period and have presented at two conferences. One in BC, the other in the States (at which they also observed other presenters for a total of 10 hours). They have also produced an article for a peer reviewed research journal. They have attended the BCIA AGM and associated conference (4 hours long). They hold the position of President at their branch, with which there has been 3 meetings. They followed a documented self study program which exceeds 40 hours of study time over the year. They also performed a small consulting contract outside of their normal job description.

## Case Studies Chart of PD hour

		Case study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Case Study D
<b>Professional Practice</b>		10	10	10	10
<b>Continuing Education</b>	Formal	15	52		
	Informal	2	2	14	29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Professional Contributions</b>	Instructing courses, workshops, etc.			5	
	Producing articles, papers, training materials				5
	Presentations	2			4
	Consulting				2
	Community Scientific Work			6	
<b>Professional Service</b>	Holding a professional Office			5	5
	Serving on professional Committees	5			
	Serving as a mentor to an A.Ag		5		
	Attending professional meetings	4	4	4	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>63</b>

## Case Studies - Concluding remarks

All of the above case studies exceed the required minimum of 30 PDH per year. However, **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 also meet the recommended 10 PDH in the continuing education field. However, **Case Study C** may wish to increase the hours in these categories over the next two years to meet the 50 PDH recommended target level over the three years.