



Branch Evolution FAQs

This FAQs document is intended to address some of the most anticipated questions and concerns about BCIA's branch evolution and to provide as much detail as is available at this stage of the transition.

It is also intended to be a living document. As we hear additional questions or concerns that are not addressed here, we will add them. We will also update the FAQs as further implementation details become available.

Why this change and why now?

How was the decision to replace the branch structure made?

The decision was made by the BCIA Board following consideration of BCIA's regulatory responsibilities, the current branch structure, and feedback from branch executives, registrants, and staff.

The BCIA Board has determined that the current branch structure will end effective January 1, 2027, and be replaced with Regional Professional Development Working Groups supported by a Provincial Professional Development Advisory Group.

We recognize that, for some registrants, this may feel like the loss of something familiar and valued. Regional connection is one of the strengths BCIA heard consistently through its discussions with branch executives and registrants, and preserving that connection has been an important consideration in designing the new model.

What is changing is the removal of the formal governance structure around regional activity. What is being preserved is the regional knowledge, relationships, professional development, and opportunities for registrants to contribute.

While the decision to move away from branches has been made, there will be opportunities for registrants to help shape how the new model works in practice.

Why is BCIA making this change?

BCIA's current branch structure was developed during an earlier period when the organization operated with a stronger member-service orientation. BCIA now operates as a professional regulator under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA), and its governance structures, activities, decision-making, and use of registrant funds must align with its statutory mandate and public-interest responsibilities.

Through discussions with branch executives, registrants, staff, and the Board, BCIA also heard that the current structure creates significant governance and administrative requirements, places considerable demands on volunteers, and produces different experiences depending on the capacity and activity of individual regions. The current model can also create uncertainty around decision-making authority, financial accountability, and BCIA's oversight responsibilities.

The new model is intended to preserve meaningful regional input and connection while placing governance, accountability, and operational authority more clearly where they belong within BCIA.

Why now? BCIA has been under the PGA since 2021.

Organizational change under the PGA has been an evolution rather than a single event. BCIA has continued to review and modernize its governance, regulatory programs, policies, and operations as its role as a regulator has matured.

Branches have also not operated uniformly across the province. Some regions have had strong volunteer participation and regular activity, while others have had less capacity or more difficulty sustaining the administrative requirements of the model. That variability has resulted in different experiences for registrants and has made coordinated provincial planning more difficult.

This change is part of BCIA's evolution as a regulator and represents an effort to create a structure that is more effective and appropriate under that mandate.

Were their challenges with the branch model contributed to this change?

Branches have made meaningful contributions to BCIA over many years, particularly through regional connection, locally relevant professional development, networking, and support for emerging professionals.

At the same time, the experience has not been consistent over time and/or regions. In addition, the formal governance structures (AGMs, executives, etc) have created challenges related to volunteer sustainability, administration, consistency, authority, and accountability.

The purpose of this change is not reflective of individual branches or volunteers. It is to move to a structure that retains what has been valuable without continuing governance and administrative requirements that no longer fit BCIA's regulatory model.

Will regional connection disappear when branches end?

No. Maintaining regional connection is one of the central purposes of the Regional Professional Development Working Groups.

The groups will provide local practice insight, identify regional professional development needs and opportunities, support in-person regional events, and help maintain connections among registrants.

What changes is the formal branch governance structure around those activities.

It seems like BCIA is taking work away from the regions and centralizing it. Why?

BCIA is intentionally clarifying where authority and accountability sit as a regulator under the PGA.

Regional Working Groups will be advisory and collaborative. They will help identify needs, bring forward regional knowledge, suggest speakers and learning opportunities, support local events, and help maintain regional connections. They will not have separate governance authority, financial autonomy, or authority to commit BCIA to activities or expenditures.

Decisions about BCIA programs, funding, contracts, commitments, and regulatory priorities must ultimately remain with BCIA's Board or operations, depending on the nature of the decision.

This is an intentional feature of the new model rather than a limitation of it.

What if parts of the new model don't work as expected?

The new model is intended to be flexible.

BCIA has established the core principles: regional insight should continue to inform professional development; accountability and decision-making should sit clearly within BCIA; volunteer participation should be meaningful without recreating unnecessary governance structures; and registrants across the province should have access to a more coordinated range of professional development opportunities.

We do not expect to predict every operational issue before the model begins. BCIA will listen to feedback, monitor how the groups and provincial approach work in practice, and make adjustments where experience shows that something can work better.

The goal is to build a model that works — not to preserve a particular structure simply because it was designed that way at the outset.

How will the new groups work?

How will the Regional Professional Development Working Groups be structured?

The Regional Working Groups are intended to be flexible, volunteer-based groups focused on regional insight, engagement, and professional development rather than governance.

BCIA does not intend to recreate branch executives under a different name. The groups will therefore not require the same formal structures associated with branches, such as elected executive positions, AGMs, independent financial administration, or separate decision-making authority.

Some operational details will continue to be refined as the model is implemented. BCIA's guiding principle will be to keep participation meaningful, accessible, and proportionate rather than introducing unnecessary governance requirements.

What regions will the Regional Professional Development Working Groups represent?

At the outset, BCIA will use the same eight geographic regions that currently exist under the branch structure. This provides continuity as the branches transition into the new Working Groups, allowing them to build on existing regional relationships and knowledge.

As the new model develops, BCIA will continue to assess whether the eight-region structure remains the most effective approach or whether there may be value in consolidating or adjusting regional boundaries over time. Any future changes would be what best supports meaningful regional input, volunteer capacity and effective professional development across the province.

Who will choose the members of the Regional Working Groups?

Any registrant who wishes to participate and contribute to the regional working group will be permitted to do so. While details are still being determined, there will be a mechanism to sign up through the BCIA website and/or at regional in-person events.

The intent is to create an open and accessible way for interested registrants to contribute and foster diverse regional and professional perspectives.

More information about how registrants can express interest will be shared before implementation.

Who will choose the Regional Lead? What will their role be?

While some implementation details are still being finalized, the intention is that each Regional Professional Development Working Group will identify its own Regional Lead.

The Regional Lead will act as the primary point of contact for the group, help coordinate meetings and participation, and serve as the region's representative on the Provincial Professional Development Advisory Group. They will also be a key contact for registrants in the region who wish to participate or bring forward professional development ideas.

The Regional Lead is a coordinating role, not a governance or decision-making position on behalf of BCIA.

Will there be terms, co-leads, or succession positions?

The Regional Lead is intended to be a simple coordinating role, not a formal governance position. In general, a registrant can continue in the role for as long as they are willing to serve and the Regional Working Group continues to support them in that role.

BCIA does not currently see a need to establish formal succession positions such as the previous Chair/Vice-Chair model. When a Regional Lead is ready to step away, another member of the Working Group can step into the role. If experience shows that additional structure would be helpful, BCIA can adjust the approach over time.

What time commitment will be expected?

The Regional Working Groups are deliberately intended to be lighter and more flexible than the existing branch executive structure.

Exact expectations will depend on how each group operates and the professional development opportunities being considered. BCIA will provide clearer information about expected commitments when participation opportunities are announced.

I don't want to join a Working Group, but I have a great idea for a speaker or PD opportunity. Can I still contribute?

Absolutely.

Registrants should not need to commit to ongoing volunteer participation simply to share an idea, recommend a speaker, identify an emerging issue, or suggest a learning opportunity.

The new model should make it easier for ideas and expertise to move between registrants, regions, the Provincial Advisory Group, and BCIA. Information about how to submit suggestions will be provided as the model is implemented.

Will volunteers receive PD credits for participating in the Working Groups?

BCIA is still considering how participation in the new groups will be recognized within the professional development program.

Any approach will need to be consistent with the purpose and requirements of BCIA's PD program rather than automatically treating all volunteer participation as professional development. Further guidance will be provided before implementation.

What happens if my region has very few volunteers — or no one wants to join the Working Group?

BCIA hopes registrants in every region will participate, but the success of BCIA's overall professional development program will not depend on every region maintaining a particular number of volunteers.

One of the benefits of the new model is that limited volunteer capacity in one region should not result in fewer opportunities for the registrants who live there. BCIA will continue to coordinate professional development provincially and can seek regional input in other ways when needed.

The Working Groups are intended to strengthen BCIA's PD program, not to become a structure BCIA cannot operate without.

How will the Provincial Professional Development Advisory Group work?

The Provincial Professional Development Advisory Group will bring regional perspectives together and work with BCIA to help inform professional development priorities and opportunities across the province.

Its role will include identifying common or emerging practice issues, connecting regional and provincial programming, reducing unnecessary duplication, and helping BCIA make better use of ideas, expertise, speakers, and learning opportunities that may have relevance beyond one region.

The group will be advisory to BCIA rather than a separate governing or decision-making body.

Who will sit on the Provincial Professional Development Advisory Group?

The current model anticipates the Lead from each Working Group will make up the Provincial PD Advisory Group. In addition, there may be considerations for others to be added to the Advisory Group to add complementary knowledge and insight.

What decision-making authority will the Regional Working Groups or Provincial Advisory Group have?

Neither group will have independent governance or financial authority on behalf of BCIA.

Their role is to provide advice, regional insight, ideas, connections, and practical support. BCIA will remain responsible for determining which activities proceed, approving expenditures and commitments, and ensuring professional development activities align with BCIA's regulatory mandate and priorities.

What happens to current branch structures and volunteers?

What happens to branch AGMs and elections?

Once the branch structure ends, formal branch AGMs and elections will no longer be required. However, during the transition in the fall of 2026 and under the new model, branches and Regional Professional Development Working Groups may choose to hold a yearly regional meeting.

These meetings would not include formal governance or decision-making processes. Instead, they would provide an opportunity for registrants to come together, hear about regional activities and professional development, receive updates from BCIA, and discuss the branch evolution and other matters of interest.

Details about any regional meetings will be shared as they are planned.

One of the purposes of the new model is to move away from the formal governance requirements associated with branches while retaining meaningful opportunities for regional involvement.

What happens to current branch executives?

Current branch volunteers will be invited to continue contributing through the Regional Professional Development Working Groups if they wish to do so.

Their knowledge and experience will be valuable during the transition, but participation in the new model will not require continuing the same executive positions or governance responsibilities.

There will also be opportunities for registrants who have not previously served on a branch executive to become involved.

How will this affect professional development opportunities?

Will everything now be provincial or virtual?

No. BCIA intends to support both provincial and regional professional development.

The Regional Working Groups will continue to help identify and support locally relevant and in-person opportunities, while the Provincial Professional Development Advisory Group will help connect regional ideas and emerging issues across BC. BCIA will also coordinate province-wide and virtual programming where that makes sense.

The goal is not to replace regional programming with provincial programming. It is to connect the two more effectively.

Is networking and local connection still considered valuable, or is the focus only on formal education?

Yes, regional relationships, professional connection, and the exchange of local practice knowledge remain valuable.

Professional development can take many forms, and the new model is intended to support meaningful learning and professional connection. Not every social activity will necessarily qualify as professional development, but opportunities that facilitate relevant knowledge-sharing, professional discussion, and connection can continue to form part of regional activities.

Will I lose professional development opportunities?

The intention is the opposite.

One of the opportunities created by the new model is to bring regional knowledge, ideas, relationships, and expertise into a broader provincial approach. Rather than regions largely developing programming independently, BCIA will be better positioned to identify opportunities that can be shared or adapted across the province.

The goal is a more coordinated, diverse, and accessible range of professional development while continuing to support regionally relevant and in-person opportunities.

Will PD continue to operate on a cost-recovery basis?

BCIA expects cost, accessibility, regulatory relevance, and available resources to continue to inform decisions about how individual professional development offerings are funded.

The exact approach may vary depending on the nature of the event. Further guidance will be provided as BCIA develops its provincial PD planning and funding approach under the new model.

Does this mean BCIA will offer free PD?

Not necessarily.

Moving away from branch budgets does not mean that all professional development will become free. Some opportunities may be provided without additional cost, while others may require participant fees or operate on a cost-recovery basis depending on the event, available resources, and BCIA's priorities.

What about the operational impacts and considerations?

What does BCIA mean when it talks about reducing “duplication”?

Duplication does not mean that branches were unnecessarily offering identical events.

Under the current structure, eight separate regional groups may independently identify topics, find speakers, work through logistics and funding, communicate with BCIA staff, or develop similar opportunities without necessarily knowing what is happening elsewhere.

A provincial approach makes it easier to share ideas, speakers, resources, and successful programming rather than repeatedly starting from the beginning in each region.

Will BCIA staff now have to do all the work previously done by branch volunteers?

BCIA will take greater responsibility for the administration, funding, coordination, communications, and oversight associated with professional development. Regional volunteers will focus more on identifying needs and opportunities, providing professional and regional insight, making connections, and helping shape meaningful programming.

The change also removes significant staff work associated with supporting eight separate formal branch structures, including governance, financial administration, reporting, and related processes.

The intention is therefore to redirect effort toward delivering and coordinating professional development rather than administering branch governance.

Does this mean registrant fees will increase because BCIA is taking on more work?

BCIA will continue to consider staffing and professional development costs through its normal budgeting processes.

The new model is not simply adding the work previously done by branches on top of BCIA's existing workload. It also removes substantial administrative work associated with supporting multiple separate branch governance and financial structures.

BCIA will monitor the operational and financial impact of the new model as it is implemented and adjust its approach where necessary.

What happens to branch budgets and money?

Over the past several years, BCIA has progressively moved away from branch-managed funds. This began with the removal of separate branch bank accounts and continued through to the 2026 budget, when branch-specific budgets were replaced with a single provincial branch budget line. As a result, there are no longer any BCIA funds specifically allocated to individual branches.

BCIA will take responsibility for funding decisions and financial oversight related to professional development and regional activities. This provides clearer accountability for the use of registrant funds and ensures that commitments are made through the appropriate BCIA processes.

What does this mean for articling and registration requirements?

I'm an AAg. Can I participate in these new groups?

Absolutely. BCIA encourages a diverse range of professionals to participate in the Working Groups in order to contribute to a broad range of ideas and insight.

I'm an articling registrant. What happens to requirements that currently involve branches?

BCIA knows that some current articling requirements are connected to branch participation.

Those requirements are being considered as part of the broader review of the articling program, and further information will be provided in the coming weeks.

BCIA will ensure that the transition away from branches does not create an unreasonable delay for articling registrants progressing toward registration.

My only outstanding articling requirements are branch-related. Does this mean I can certify immediately?

Not automatically.

The end of the branch structure does not, on its own, waive current registration requirements. BCIA is reviewing how branch-related requirements will transition and will provide specific direction shortly.

The guiding principle is that registrants should neither be unfairly delayed by the structural change nor automatically be considered to have completed requirements that remain part of the registration pathway.

I have branch-related requirements through the expedited or LLAg registration pathway. How does this affect me?

BCIA is reviewing all registration pathways that currently include branch-related requirements so that they can be appropriately updated as the branch structure changes.

Specific transition information will be provided in the coming weeks. In the meantime, registrants should continue following their current registration requirements unless BCIA advises them otherwise.
