

Biologist

Registration Process



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Description of Occupation

Biologists research and learn about living organisms and ecosystems, manage natural resources and develop new practices and products in diverse fields. Their activities can include taking inventory of organisms (such as plants, animal or communities), organizing and conducting field studies to monitor biological systems (such as population dynamics, genetics or habitat), analyzing and interpreting data, writing scientific papers and reports and using statistics and mathematical models to estimate the number and kinds of organisms in a specific place. Biologists can work in many different specialities and they can work in offices, laboratories or in locations such as boats or in remote areas.

Obtaining Registration in Alberta

To practice in Alberta, Biologists may voluntarily register with the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (ASPB). To use the professional designation of Professional Biologist (P.Biol.), Biologists must be registered with the ASPB. Registration may also provide improved employment opportunities.

Internationally educated Biologists can begin the application process before they arrive in Alberta. You can apply online with the ASPB to become a Professional Biologist or a Biologist-in-Training. Apply online and provide detailed and accurate answers to all questions. When your application is complete send your documents to the ASPB.

Contact information and other resources are at the end of this document.

Residency Requirement

You must be a resident of Alberta in order to be registered with the ASPB as a Professional Biologist (however, you can start the application process before you arrive in Alberta).

Requirements

Internationally educated Biologists must meet the following requirements:

1. *Academic Credentials*

An undergraduate degree in the biological sciences or equivalent is the minimum requirement.

- Contact the school you graduated from and ask for official notarized copies of your university degree and academic transcripts. Transcripts should be sent directly from the school to the ASPB.
- The ASPB Registration Committee considers a university degree equivalent to a biology degree if it includes twenty-five (25) science courses, of which fifteen (15) are in the biological sciences, and where four (4) or more of the biological science courses are at a senior level (e.g., 300 or 400 level).
- If your documents are in a language other than English, you will need to have them translated by a certified translator.

2. *International Qualifications Assessment*

The APSB may require you to apply to the International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS, Basic Assessment) to have your education assessed and compared to educational credentials in Canada. This assessment can take up to six (6) weeks.

For details on how to obtain an IQAS assessment and to download an application, visit the IQAS website at the address provided at the end of this document.

3. Work Experience

To become registered with the ASPB you must have three (3) years of practice in biology after graduation. This experience must be within five (5) years of your application date. If you have a Masters or doctorate degree in biology from a recognized program, this may apply to one (1) year of practice depending on where you received your degree.

- Provide the ASPB with a resume that lists the dates, location of experience and details of your role as a biologist. The practice of biology is defined as:
 - Inventorying, surveying, sampling, interpreting, reporting, evaluating and advising on activities related to biological sciences
 - Preparing, administering and implementing plans or programs for managing biological resources
 - Conducting research activities related to biological sciences
 - Teaching biological sciences at a university, college or technical institute.
- You must include sufficient work experience references to support your work experience claims.

Note:

- Work experience can be international.
- If you hold an undergraduate and/or graduate degree in biological sciences or equivalent, but do not have the practical experience, you may apply to become a Biologist-in-Training (BIT) to gain Canadian work experience. Once you have the equivalent of three (3) years of practice that is equivalent to the type of work a Professional Biologist does, you will be able to become a Professional Biologist with the ASPB.

4. Good Character and Reputation

A biologist registered with the ASPB must be of good character and reputation.

Provide the names of three (3) references that are knowledgeable about your professional experience as a biologist. At least one (1) of these references should be a professional Biologist. If a professional Biologist is not available, a professional from another recognized professional organization will be accepted by the ASPB.

Preferred references include the applicant's current employer, previous employer or supervisor. Only two (2) letters of reference will be accepted from a current employer.

Payment

The following fees must be submitted during the registration process. Fees are in Canadian dollars.

ASPB Professional Biologist Annual Membership Fee	\$250
ASPB Biologist-in-Training Annual Membership Fee	\$50
IQAS Basic Assessment	\$100
*Fees are subject to change. See association for most up-to-date fees.	

Average Earnings

The overall average earnings for all Biologists, according to the Alberta 2009 Wage and Salary survey:

Average hours worked per week	38.1
Average wage per hour	\$36.18
Average salary per year	\$71,487

Employment Options

You can also consider working in Alberta in related occupations such as Biological Technician, Food Technologist, Hazardous Waste Management Technologist, Hydrometric Technician/Technologist, Medical Laboratory Technologist, Pollution Control Technologist and Water and Wastewater Operator.

For more information about additional employment options, go to the following website: [Alberta Learning Information Service \(ALIS\) Occupational Profiles —Biologist](http://www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo) (for information on all occupations see www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo).

Contact Information

Alberta Society of Professional Biologists
P.O. Box 21104
Edmonton, Alberta T6R 2V4
Telephone: (780) 434-5765
Fax: (780) 413-0076
Email: pbiol@aspb.ab.ca
Website: www.aspb.ab.ca

International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS)
9th Floor, 108 Street Building 9942 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J5
Phone: 780-427-2655 Fax: 780-422-9734
Website: www.employment.alberta.ca/iqas

Resources

This information is an overview of the registration process. For the most current information on Biologist certification visit the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists website at www.aspb.ab.ca.

Application Forms and Information

www.aspb.ab.ca/join
store.aspb.ab.ca/applicants/new