

Frequently Asked Questions – What’s the difference between a Regulatory College and a Professional Association?

There is often some confusion between professional associations and regulatory colleges, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Occasionally, we receive requests or suggestions that fall outside the scope of College of Dietitians of Prince Edward Island’s regulatory mandate. To help clarify the role of the College, we’ve outlined below the key differences between regulatory colleges and professional associations.

	REGULATORY COLLEGES	PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects the public by ensuring that professionals meet specific standards of practice, ethics, and competency. Enforces regulations, licensing, and discipline within a profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represents the interests of professionals within a specific field. Promotes the profession, provides networking opportunities, and supports professional development.
RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing/Certification: Grants licenses or certifications to qualified individuals. Setting Standards: Establishes professional practice standards, codes of ethics, and continuing education requirements. Complaints & Discipline: Investigates complaints from the public and takes disciplinary action if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy: Advocates for the profession and its members, often influencing policy and public opinion. Education & Training: Provides resources, workshops, and conferences to help members advance their skills. Networking: Offers opportunities for professionals to connect, share knowledge, and collaborate. Job Opportunities: Share job postings
WHO THEY SERVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Focus: The general public, by ensuring safe, competent, and ethical professional services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Focus: The professionals within the field, supporting their growth, development, and recognition.
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College of Nurses College of Dietitians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dietitians of Canada