

Serving and protecting the public interest is at the very core of the mandate of the College and its Council, committees, and staff. While regulatory matters will be readily apparent in terms of the public interest, other issues stemming from the practice environment and other external pressures will require greater scrutiny to determine the public interest perspective. The policy will assist in making appropriate decisions.

**Public Interest Principles for the College are:**

1. In its decisions and actions the College is accountable to the public.
2. While the “public” includes members of the profession, the interests of the broader public are paramount.
3. The public deserves high-quality services from audiologists and speech-language pathologists.
4. The public must be protected from unqualified and incompetent audiologists and speech-language pathologists.
5. The College exists to ensure that persons who practice are registered members who are qualified, competent, and fit to practice.
6. The College does not exist to promote the economic interests or social status of the profession; however, it is in its mandate to communicate with the public on behalf of the members.
7. The standards of the College will respect the diversity of, and be sensitive to, the multicultural character of the province.
8. In all its activities the College must avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

**Assessing Public Interest**

1. What is the issue?
2. What authority does the College have to deal with the issue?
3. Does this issue fall within the objectives of the College?
4. What impact does this issue have on the public?
5. What impact does this issue have on the profession?
6. What impact does this issue have on other stakeholders?
7. What perspective would the public, the profession, and key stakeholders have on the issue?
8. What options would best address the issue?

### **Decision Making to Serve and Protect the Public Interest**

After assessing an issue or activity against the tools above, there are three courses of action available to the College:

1. If the primary and most likely outcome will serve and protect the public interest in accordance with the principles set out above, then the College should make that decision or carry out that activity.
2. If the primary and most likely outcome will promote the economic interest or social status of the profession, then the College should not make that decision or carry out that activity.
3. If the primary and most likely outcome will not only serve and protect the public interest in accordance with the principles set out above, but also will serve the profession, then the College should carefully weigh the balance in order to make that decision or carry out that activity.

There may be circumstances where the interest of the public and the members align, and in these circumstances, it would be appropriate for the College to take action. However, if the interest of the professions far outweigh the interests of the public, it probably should not.