



# PSB's Standards Advisory Committee Communications Plan

Final Version

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Professional Standards Board (PSB)

The Professional Standards Board (PSB) for the planning profession in Canada oversees the development, maintenance, and implementation of national standards for professional planners. It ensures consistency and excellence across the planning profession, collaborating with the Provincial and Territorial Institutes and Associations (PTIAs) and the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP).

The key functions of the PSB include certification of professional planners, accreditation of university planning programs, national standards development and maintenance, and supporting the portability and transferability of qualifications across Canada. The members of PSB are the PTIAs (API, APPI, MPPI, LPPANS, OPPI, PIBC, SPPI) and the CIP. Other organizations with an interest in the work of the PSB are l'Ordre des urbanistes du Quebec (OUQ) and the Association of Canadian University Planning Programs (ACUPP), but these groups are not members of the PSB.

The PSB operates through three committees including the Standards Advisory Committee (SAC), the Professional Education and Examination Committee (PEEC), and the Accreditation Program Committee (APC).

## 1.2 Standards Advisory Committee (SAC)

The SAC provides recommendations to the PSB on national standards, pathways, metrics, and codes for professional planners. These recommendations ensure consistency, professionalism, and ethical integrity across Canada, while accommodating regional legislative requirements.

The PSB Board is responsible for approving the recommendations developed by SAC.

## 1.3 SAC Mandate

The Standards Advisory Committee (SAC) mandate is to:

### 1. Develop and Recommend Standards:

- Propose national competency, ethical, and professional conduct standards for the profession;
- Recommend accreditation standards and metrics for planning programs; and,
- Establish standards for Continuous Professional Learning (CPL).

### 2. Support Certification Pathways:

- Review and update the Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) process; and,
- Develop qualification pathways for Registered Professional Planners.

### 3. Promote Portability:

- Ensure the standards and pathways are acceptable to the PTIAs so that they are transferable across jurisdiction in Canada, respecting provincial and territorial legislative requirements.

### 4. Provide Interpretive Advice:

- Offer guidance on the application of nationally adopted standards.

### 5. Advance Professional Practice:

- Refine planning functions and professional roles for clarity and consistency.

## 1.4 SAC Structure

The SAC operates with subcommittees and task forces to address specific areas, including:

- Communications & Outreach Subcommittee;
- Competencies Subcommittee;
- Definition of Planning Task Force;
- Ethical Standards Subcommittee;
- Membership Standards Policy Manual Subcommittee;
- PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Recognition) Task Force; and,
- Quebec Schools Task Force<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.5 PSB’s Decision-Making Role

The SAC has no decision-making powers. As a standing committee, the SAC acts as an advisory body and makes recommendations to the PSB Board.

**The PSB Board makes decisions on the standards, policies, and procedures.** The PSB members (PTIAs and CIP) are responsible for implementing those standards as a minimum, alongside the PSB which administers the certification/accreditation process.

# 2. Purpose and Objectives

## 2.1 Purpose

This Communications Plan provides a framework to:

- Share information from the SAC through the PSB to its members (PTIAs and CIP) and interested parties (OUQ and ACUPP);
- Ensure communication is clear, consistent, and targeted; and,
- Support the SAC 2024-2026 work plan.

The plan is managed by the SAC Communications & Outreach Subcommittee, with input from the other SAC Subcommittees and Task Forces.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Minutes of the SAC Meeting of July 5, 2025: “The MOU will likely be approved and signed during the CIP conference in July 2025. Once this is adopted, the future of the TF will be to maintain a relationship with OUQ and look for other opportunities to work together. The TF will remain in place.”

## 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the SAC Communications Plan are to:

1. Support the SAC and its subcommittees/task forces in sharing updates, gathering input, and promoting transparency;
2. Align communications with the SAC's mandate and the PSB's mission and strategic goals;
3. Clarify the communication protocols:
  - a. between the SAC and the PSB;
  - b. between the SAC and the PSB's members (CIP and PTIAs); and,
  - c. between the SAC and interested parties (OUQ and ACUPP);
4. Promote understanding of the SAC's role and outputs within the planning profession; and,
5. Instill confidence that the SAC's recommendations to the PSB Board have merit and should be approved by the PSB Board (see below).

# 3. Key Roles and Responsibilities

## 3.1 Professional Standards Board (PSB)

- Owns and approves all external communications;
- Provides feedback to the SAC, particularly regarding emerging issues and the PSB's needs;
- Ensures alignment with national strategies and consistency across members (PTIAs and CIP);
- Acts as the primary point of contact for the PTIAs, CIP, OUQ, and ACUPP; and,
- Supports a strong relationship with members (PTIAs and CIP) through two-way communications.

## 3.2 Standards Advisory Committee (SAC)


- Provides content and updates for PSB-led communications;
- Makes recommendations to the PSB;
- The SAC Chair liaises with subcommittees/task forces to gather information; and,
- The SAC Chair reports to the PSB Board on the work of the SAC.

### 3.3 SAC Subcommittees and Task Forces

- Identify key messages, updates, and outreach needs based on their specific work;
- Makes recommendations to the SAC based on the outcomes of their specific work; and,
- Communicates to the PSB Board through the SAC Chair to ensure timely and accurate communication.

#### ***Organization Chart and Flow of Information Chart***

Please refer to the organization chart on the following page.

The primary flow of information (shown with the blue arrow ), is from the SAC to the PSB Board. The SAC's recommendations are tabled at the PSB Board for decision/approval.

# Canadian Planning Ecosystem

## Members of PSB: CIP and Provincial and Territorial Institutions and Associations

- Responsible for Licensing, Regulation, National Advocacy, Professional Development
- Candidates & RPPs are members of these associations
- Awards the RPP to candidates that have gone through and been successful at the PSBs pathway to certification
- Adopts national standards for the planning profession recommended by PSB



Association of Canadian University Planning Programs (ACUPP) - Represents accredited planning schools  
*Not a member of PSB*

l'Ordre des urbanistes du Québec (OUQ) - Represents professional planners in Quebec  
*Not a member of PSB*

### Professional Standards Board



- CIP & PTIAs are members
- Operates under Shared Service Agreements with its members
- Administers the pathway to certification and accredits Canadian university planning programs
- Sets standards for the profession for adoption by its members

### Made Up of Three Committees



Decision-making authority for SAC recommendations

Decision-making authority for PEEC recommendations

Decision-making authority for APC recommendations

#### Standards Advisory Committee (SAC)

- The PSB Standards Advisory Committee (SAC) will develop consistent national pathways, standards, metrics, and codes.
- SAC will recommend these to the PSB Board for approval, then potential universal adoption by the PTIAs and CIP

#### Professional Education and Examination Committee (PEEC)

- Manages the certification process, by which candidates are recommended to PTIA for Full Membership



#### Accreditation Program Committee (APC)

- Accredits University planning programs



## 4. Key/Critical Messages

### 4.1 Key Messages

1. **Role of SAC:** Develop and recommend national standards and pathways to support the planning profession across Canada.
2. **Commitment to Transparency:** The SAC and the PSB prioritize transparent decision-making and meaningful engagement with the PSB's members (PTIAs and CIP) and interested parties (OUQ and ACUPP).
3. **Collaborative Processes:** The SAC subcommittees/task forces work collaboratively within the SAC, PSB, and with PSB's members (PTIAs and CIP) and interested parties (OUQ and ACUPP).
4. **Impact on the Profession:** The SAC's work enhances professionalism, portability, and credibility for planners across Canada.
5. **By Planners, for Planners:** The volunteer planners on SAC are helping to maintain the national standards for the profession.

### 4.2 SAC's Overall Key Message to the Board ("Hitting the Bullseye")



The Key Messages above support the Overall Key Message that the work of the SAC has "hit the bullseye".

The work of the SAC faces the following risks to ratification by the PSB Board:

- If the PSB Board believes that there was **insufficient consultation** then it might not ratify the SAC's recommendation;
- If the PSB Board **finds weakness** in the SAC's recommendation then it might not ratify it; and,
- If the PSB Board believes that the SAC's recommendation **advances a minimum standard too far beyond the comfort zone of the PSB's Members (PTIAs and CIP)** then it might not ratify it<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Reminder: The PSB's governance model is based on a majority vote to implement new standards, etc., whereas the previous model required all PTIAs to agree. Furthermore, the PSB sets minimum standards that all PTIAs will abide by; however, any PTIA can individually advance higher standards.

Therefore, when the SAC reports to the PSB Board for ratification, it is imperative that the SAC demonstrate: (1) how it has “hit the bullseye” through the work conducted; and (2) deliver the critical message that indeed it has “hit the bullseye”.

## 5. Communication Approach

### 5.1 Internal Communications

Activity	Intent	Frequency
SAC Subcommittee/Task Force Meetings	Facilitate collaboration and advance specific work areas (also see 5.3 Expected Liaison below).	Monthly/Bi-Monthly
SAC Committee Meetings	Ensure consistent reporting across the SAC. Review the work of the SAC Subcommittees and Task Forces, and when ready, provide recommendations to the PSB Board (via the SAC Chair).	Monthly

### 5.2 External Communications

All external communication is managed by the PSB. Recommended methods may include:

Activity	Intent	Frequency
PSB Website Updates	Foster transparency to all those interested in the SAC’s work. Publish the SAC background information, work plans, updates, and key deliverables.	Ongoing as work plan milestones are achieved
SAC Chair Reporting to PSB Board Members (PTIAs and CIP) and interested parties (OUQ and ACUPP)	Share updates and opportunities to participate. Summarize activities, milestones, and recommendations.	As per PSB Board meeting schedule
Direct Requests for Feedback	Gather input and share recommendations (also see 5.3 Expected Liaison below).	As needed

## 5.3 Expected Liaison

SAC's Liaison With	Intent	Frequency
<p>PSB's Professional Education &amp; Examination Committee</p> <p>(PEEC manages the certification process -- ethics course, professional exam, etc. – by which Candidates are recommended to their PTIA for Full Membership)</p>	<p>Foster exchange of information between the PEEC and the SAC on matters of mutual interest.</p>	<p>PEEC meets monthly.</p> <p>PSB Staff to insert a standing update on the PEEC agenda regarding the work of SAC, including any work that may have implications on the current certification process. This update will be presented by a SAC member if there is cross representation across both committees. Staff to pull these updates from the reports that are submitted for each SAC meeting and share this update in the absence of any SAC member representation on PEEC.</p>
<p>PSB's Accreditation Program Committee</p> <p>(APC accredits university planning programs and it advocates to PSB on issues impacting accreditation)</p>	<p>Foster exchange of information between the PEEC and the APC on matters of mutual interest</p>	<p>APC meets monthly.</p> <p>PSB Staff to insert a standing update on the APC agenda regarding the work of the SAC, including any work that may have implications on the current accreditation process. This update will be presented by a SAC member if there is cross representation across both committees. Staff to pull these updates from the reports that are submitted for each SAC meeting and share this update in the absence of any SAC member representation on APC.</p>

SAC's Liaison With	Intent	Frequency
<p>The Institutes/Associations: <i>API (PEIIPP, NBAB, NLAPP); APPI; CIP; MPPI; LPPANS; OPPI; PIBC; SPPI</i></p>	<p>⚠ See the note to the right.</p>	<p>⚠ The SAC does not have a mandate nor authority to liaise directly with the Institutes/Associations. All proposed external communications coming from a SAC Subcommittee or Task Force must be first ratified by the SAC, then approved by the Board, and then PSB staff will formally issue the communication.</p>
<p>Association of Canadian University Planning Programs (ACUPP)</p>	<p>Involve the ACUPP in specific work of the SAC</p> <p>⚠ See the note to the right.</p>	<p>(1) Input/feedback from the ACUPP representatives on the SAC and its Subcommittees/Task Forces will be encouraged during meetings. (2) Additional outreach to the ACUPP may occur as needed based on the work of a Subcommittee/Task Force. ⚠ Any formal communication to ACUPP must go through the PSB.</p>
<p>L'Ordre des urbanistes du Québec (OUQ)</p>	<p>Involve the OUQ in specific work of the SAC</p> <p>⚠ See the note to the right.</p>	<p>(1) Input/feedback from the OUQ representatives on the SAC and its Subcommittees/Task Forces will be encouraged during meetings. (2) Additional outreach to the OUQ may occur as-needed based on the work of a Subcommittee/Task Force. ⚠ Any formal communication to the OUQ must go through the PSB.</p>

## 5.4 Additional Liaison via Bi-Monthly Bulletin

Liaison With	Intent	Frequency
All Members, interested parties, the Joint Administrator’s Group <sup>3</sup> , and Planning Alliance Forum <sup>4</sup>	Consistent messaging on the SAC’s progress	Bi-monthly, coordinated by the SAC Chair and the PSB’s Executive Director.

## 5.5 Feedback Mechanisms

The need to gather feedback and the mechanism to do so are expected to vary, based on the specific work of the SAC subcommittees/task forces. Examples may include:

- **Surveys:** Periodically gather feedback on the SAC outputs.
- **Dedicated SAC Contact Point (SAC Chair):** Use the PSB’s channels to receive questions and feedback.
- **Reports:** Prepare concise deliverable with clear requests for input (if required) for review.

## 5.6 External Communications Protocol

In alignment with the PSB’s commitment to maintaining a professional and consistent voice across all platforms, specific requirements for communications have been established. All Subcommittees/Task Forces intending to communicate externally must abide by the following protocol:

*(continued on next page)*

<sup>3</sup> Senior administrative staff from CIP/PTIAs; JAG is a collaborative advisory and coordinating group to share information and seek solutions to operational issues of mutual concern, with a view to better aligning and streamlining policies, practices, and procedures.

<sup>4</sup> PAF includes the Presidents and Chairs of CIP and the PTIAs; it is a communications conduit between the organizations, and not a decision-making body. Matters requiring decisions are referred to the specific institutes.

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1. A Subcommittee or Task Force intending to communicate externally is encouraged to liaise with the SAC’s Communications and Outreach Committee for advice on content and alignment to key messages (note: liaison with the SAC’s Communications and Outreach Committee provides feedback to refine the external communications which helps streamline ratification at Step 2 below);
2. The Subcommittee or Task Force is responsible for drafting the communications material and then **providing it to the SAC for discussion/ratification** during a meeting;
3. If ratified, the SAC Chair and PSB staff will include the communications material in the agenda of a future PSB Board meeting for review/discussion/revision/approval; and,
4. If approved by the PSB Board, PSB staff will issue the external communications material.



## 6. Implementation and Timing

Action	Purpose	Timeline	Roles & Responsibility	Status
Add SAC section to PSB website	Provide information on the SAC’s structure and mandate.	December 2024	PSB Staff	Complete
Finalize Communication Plan	Outline communications protocol for the SAC.	First draft January 2025; final draft September 2025; revised draft January 2026.	SAC; Communications & Outreach Subcommittee	Ongoing

Action	Purpose	Timeline	Roles & Responsibility	Status
Progress Updates <b>(Bi-Monthly Bulletin)</b>	Share progress with the PSB.	Starting January 2025	SAC Chair	Ongoing
Stakeholder Feedback Requests	Gather input for SAC work (see note below).	As needed to support the SAC's work plan	SAC's Subcommittees/ Task Forces	Ongoing

Note: Requests to gather feedback will be tracked by the SAC/Subcommittee/Task Force, along with feedback received and how it was used to inform the outcomes of the SAC's work. Note that gathering feedback is for the purposes of refining in-progress work and is separate from formal review and approval processes per the PSB bylaws.

## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring ensures effective communication and informs updates to this plan. Key questions include:

1. Did shared information align with key messages and resonate with the PSB and its members (PTIAs and CIP) and other interested parties (OUQ and ACUPP)?
2. Did the PSB, its members (PTIAs and CIP), and other interested parties (OUQ and ACUP) have opportunities to provide feedback? Was their feedback addressed?
3. Did the SAC achieve its mandate and work plan objectives?

Evaluation should occur at major milestones and annually by the SAC Communications & Outreach Subcommittee.

Given that this version of the Communications Plan supports the 2024-2026 SAC work plan, then it should be assessed/updated in conjunction with 2027 SAC work plan.