



International Relations Professional Learning Community (IR-PLC) Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)

Terms of Reference

International Relations Professional Learning Community (IR-PLC)

The Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) is the national voice advancing Canadian international education by creating and mobilizing expertise, knowledge, opportunities, and leadership. CBIE has a number of networks, called *Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)*, which are comprised of individuals with similar interests in international education who meet and communicate to enrich their knowledge of the sector by sharing insights, discussing issues, and informing CBIE's policies and procedures.

As international research and collaborations play an increasingly important role in Canadian higher education institutions (HEIs), the position of international relations officers (IROs) has emerged as a critical role to advance these efforts and build international bridges. Discussions around International Higher Education typically focus on other sectors, such as immigration advising, student mobility, student experience and student recruitment. After identifying a gap in opportunities for IROs across Canada to connect, the International Relations Professional Learning Community (IR-PLC) was established in 2018.

Purpose

The mandate of the IR-PLC is to create a space where IROs can share experiences with their colleagues across Canada, exchange and access information, opportunities and best practices, link in to the wider international relations community and work together to champion international collaboration in Canadian HEIs. The IR-PLC also enables Canadian IROs to connect with peers in areas of common interest and aspires to do this in ways that include its global community of practitioners.

Objectives

The goal of the IR-PLC is to foster a community of practitioners, which includes:

- Exchanging best practices across institutions;
- Building partnerships with key stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally;
- Promoting discussion and exchange of ideas of key issues impacting the sector;



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- Advancing the field of International Relations in Canada, particularly with regard to diversity, inclusion, and equity; and
- Advocating for shared issues of concern.

Key Activities

The diverse and continuously evolving internationalization ecosystem requires IROs to rapidly adapt and respond to challenges and opportunities. Within this context, activities of the IR-PLC may include but are not limited to:

- Holding the Annual General Meeting during the CBIE Conference;
- Facilitating discussions around key issues and trends in the field;
- Hosting events or webinars dedicated to ad hoc topics that may be of relevance to members as proposed by the membership;
- Planning in-person and/or virtual events focused on timely issues affecting the field;
- Sharing opportunities, information, and announcements for collaboration and funding;
- Hosting and/or recommending professional development opportunities;
- Creating space and opportunities to connect with peers both across and outside of Canada.

Emerging topics of relevance recognized by the IR community will be selected as “flagship” topics to serve as a guide to frame group discussions. Each “flagship” topic will be led by an ad-hoc group that includes at least one member from the Steering Committee and volunteers from the general membership. Discussions may take place in the CBIE Community Hub, webinars, and other events as appropriate.

Membership

Members of the IR-PLC are representatives of CBIE member institutions.

Leadership and Steering Committee

The IR-PLC is led by a Steering Committee consisting of:

- a. The **two Co-Chairs**, who serve for a 2-year term and begin their term in alternate years to ensure continuity. Co-chairs are members of the Steering Committee who are elected by the Steering Committee to serve as Chairs.
- b. The Co-Chairs will be supported by a Steering Committee, represented by **four to six International Relations leaders** in the Canadian HEIs. Steering committee members



serve a two-year term. There will be a call for expressions of interest, and if necessary, a voting process to identify new candidates for the Steering Committee. Co-Chairs will be elected from the Steering Committee.

The IR-PLC will seek to include Steering Committee members and Co-Chairs who represent diversity within the Canadian context, and strive to have a balance between experienced committee members and new members.

Members of the Steering Committee, including Co-Chairs, will not use their position on the committee to advance self-interests or gains, but to serve CBIE members, the institutions they represent, and the international community. Members will endeavor to be mindful of their position of privilege and exercise the highest level of discretion.

Roles and Responsibilities

Steering Committee Members:

- Attend at least 80% of Steering Committee meetings.
- Together with the Co-Chairs, act as a voice for the IR community and increase awareness of the IR community they represent.
- Actively lead, plan, coordinate, promote, and participate in IR-PLC meetings, events, and activities.
- Serve on one of the “flagship” topic groups, and take the lead on organizing at least one event per year, ensuring the activity undertaken is effective, well-received, and in line with the best interest of the members and stakeholders.
- Engage with members of the IR-PLC (i.e. via CBIE Community Hub) and facilitate deeper engagement among the membership and IR community.
- Liaise with members of their respective institutions and communities in order to effectively contribute to discussions, share best practices, trending topics and issues related to International Relations in HEIs.
- Disseminate IR-PLC information and events within their institution, community, and network as needed.
- Assist in identifying stakeholders and building strategic alliances and networks that would advance the field in Canada and connect with peers globally.

Co-Chairs:

- Adhere to all of the responsibilities identified for Steering Committee Members above.
- Represent the Steering Committee and act as a primary contact for IR-PLC in interactions with CBIE and external stakeholders.
- Provide leadership to the Steering Committee and, when appropriate, make final decisions on its direction, work plans, and strategies.



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- Call and coordinate regular Steering Committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduling, developing the agenda, recording and distributing minutes.
- Support the participation and engagement of both the Steering Committee members as well as general members.
- Produce and submit a final IR-PLC Activity Report to CBIE on an annual basis.