



**International Relations Professional Learning Community (IR-PLC)
Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)
Terms of Reference (TOR)**

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 into 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 by creating safe spaces for communications and meaningful engagement;
- Increasing and diversifying membership in the IR-PLC
- 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 in the fall;
- Facilitating discussions around key issues and trends in the field;
- 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; and
- Creating space and opportunities to connect with peers both across and outside of Canada.

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 (SC) consisting of:

- a. **Two co-chairs**, who each serve a 2-year term are members of the steering committee who are elected by the steering committee to serve as a co-chair.
 - i. Co-chairs must first serve on the steering committee for a minimum of 1 year before they are eligible to run for co-chair.
 - ii. Co-chairs are appointed in November (announced during the Annual General Meeting) in alternate years to ensure continuity.
 - iii. Co-chair elects are recruited 6-12 months prior to appointment to ensure shadowing and transition.
 - iv. Should there be no volunteers for co-chairs, then the incumbent co-chairs could extend their terms (for maximum of additional 2 years) with the agreement of the SC.
 - v. Once the terms of the co-chairs come to an end, they will no longer be a member of the SC and will need a period of 3 years before they can re-apply to be a SC member.
- b. The co-chairs will be supported by a steering committee, represented by **six to eight international relations leaders** in Canadian HEIs. Steering committee members serve a two-year term with the opportunity to extend for an additional two (2) years, should the co-chairs be in agreement. CBIE will issue a call for expressions of interest (EOI) annually in fall, and if necessary, current steering committee members will vote to identify new members. 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. 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.
- Take turns recording and distributing monthly meeting minutes.
- Play an active role on one of the Steering Sub-Committees.
- Take the lead on organizing at least one event or activity per year, ensuring that it is effective, well-received, and in line with the best interest of the members and stakeholders.
- Support on the back end of at least one event or activity per year.
- 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, composition, and strategies.
- Call and coordinate regular Steering Committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduling, developing the agenda, recording and distributing minutes and chairing meetings.
- Support the participation and engagement of both the Steering Committee members as well as general members.
- Provide summary information on IR-PLC activities to CBIE for inclusion in CBIE's Annual Report.



Termination or Leave

Steering Committee members are expected to be active participants in committee activities. Members will be required, to the best of their ability, to provide feedback and input into various documents, positions and briefings and take the lead in planning at least one event or activity throughout their term as a member.

Should a committee member fail to review and “sign-off” on documents, support with one event or activity and take the lead in planning another event of activity this would be recorded by the co-chairs, and could, if frequently taking place, result in a termination of membership.

Should a Steering Committee member be required to go on leave (i.e. parental or sick leave, etc.), they should inform the co-chairs as soon as possible. The committee will then schedule a meeting to make a decision regarding the individual’s committee membership status on a case-by-case basis.

Potential decisions may include but are not limited to: terminating their membership and leaving the position empty until regularly scheduled, allowing their position to remain vacant until they return, nominating an interim replacement from their institution or sector, and fill the position permanently via an interim call.

Steering Committee members must sign a welcome package indicating they have read and agreed to the Terms of Reference (TOR) at the beginning of their term. Should the TOR change, Steering Committee members must sign off on the new TOR.

Appointment of Steering Committee Members

After CBIE has coordinated annual calls for expressions of interest (EOIs) for all PLCs, the current SC works together to review new EOIs and applications for renewal of membership and appoints committee members. Interviews with co-chairs may be scheduled as part of the review process.

New SC members will commence as of January each year, with a 2-year term.

CBIE Staff

- Provides support and liaises between this community, CBIE senior administration and the CBIE Board’s Membership Relations Committee.
- Facilitates the annual recruitment of new Steering Committee members by issuing calls for EOIs.

Community Resources

The IR-PLC receives direct and organizational support from CBIE.

Direct Support: The IR-PLC may submit a formal request for funds to pilot or undertake activities. Requests will be considered by CBIE staff and forwarded to the Board's Membership Relations Committee as needed. Requests may be supported pending review and the availability of funds.



Organizational support: The IR-PLC will receive support as follows:

1) CBIE will provide organizational resources to the community, including:

- CBIE Liaison support (and other personnel as needed).
- CBIE membership platform, technology and brand.
- CBIE translation services for TORs and any other formal or official documents.
- Access to CBIE's HUB, a communication channel for members only.
- Opportunity to submit occasional e-blasts to CBIE membership and blog posts.
- Space and logistical support at annual CBIE Conference for community meeting and promotion/presentations for CBIE Regional Conference PLC meetings and sessions.
- Other resources as requested by the core community and as approved by CBIE.

2) Sponsorship development:

CBIE may support PLCs in seeking sponsorship for key projects and community programs on an as-requested basis.

The PLC may occasionally wish to seek separate sponsorship for a specific activity. The PLC will discuss this with the CBIE Liaison before seeking sponsorship to ensure no conflict with CBIE efforts in support of the membership in general.