



CANADIAN INSTITUTE
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*Shaping our Communities
Sustaining Canada's Future* || *Bâtir nos communautés
Pour un Canada viable*

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The planning profession is changing

New national standards demonstrate the planning profession's commitment to excellence, provide planning students with a foundation for success, and will benefit professionals at all stages of their careers.

This info sheet contains important information on the *Planning for the Future* project – a Canada-wide re-examination of what it requires to become and remain a professional planner.

We want you to be part of this important and far-reaching process. Your input is welcome and will be used to help determine future communications and next steps.

This fact sheet will be updated from time to time to keep you informed and we encourage members to keep in touch. Please send comments to: general@cip-icu.ca.



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Planning for the Future

Setting National Standards for Planners

The *Planning for the Future* project is a comprehensive review and revision of the membership standards and process used by CIP and its Affiliates across Canada. This exercise focuses on how planners are trained; how they become members; how planning education is structured; and what are appropriate standards of practice and ethics for planners in a diverse and globalized society.

What is “Planning for the Future” all about?

Following discussions at CIP Council, through the joint National/Affiliate Membership Committee, and in partnership with your provincial Affiliates, the project began in earnest in June 2006 with the release of a report entitled “New Horizons for the Profession.”

The membership standards and process used by CIP and its Affiliates have not been intensively reviewed since the mid-1980s. The planning profession has evolved and gained prominence over the years and, at the same time, external influences have affected the range of skills and competencies required to be a professional planner.

Among the many services provided by CIP and its Affiliates, the responsibility for setting, maintaining, and applying certification standards ranks among the most important. Our role in determining competencies and keeping them relevant as the profession moves forward is an important and challenging task, and a vital one for the future of the profession.

CIP and its Affiliates worked together to develop credentialing standards that will serve the profession and its future members, and carry the planning profession into the future.

Why are we doing this?

As the world gets more complex, more is demanded of planning professionals. Therefore, planners across Canada need to ensure that the training and certification process for becoming a planner remains relevant and adequately prepares planners to meet those new demands.

Planners are also more mobile. National standards will ensure planners can work in all provinces, to represent Canadian planning values abroad, and to comply with new national and international labour mobility agreements.

Finally, the recognition of planning as a profession by the public and by decision makers means that planners must uphold the highest standards and that those who carry a professional designation have a clearly specified minimum set of skills, knowledge, and experience.

What kinds of changes are involved?

Some of the innovations that are part of the project include:

- A review of the required skills and knowledge that planners need
- A more streamlined and efficient membership process
- A national examination body to certify new planners
- Revisions to the planning curriculum in planning schools
- A new accreditation process for planning schools
- Consistent codes of practice and ethical standards across the country
- Requirements for continuous professional learning

Who

. . . is involved?

The *Planning for the Future* project is being led by members of the Canadian Institute of Planners. A number of task forces and working groups were formed to bring together representatives of all the provincial Affiliates of CIP to analyze and make recommendations on policy for (1) ethical standards, (2) required competencies (skills, knowledge and attributes), and (3) certification standards.

The project also included consultation with planning schools, students, and stakeholders who use the services of planners, as well as with practising planners. Over 1,000 members have contributed to *Planning for the Future*.

. . . is affected?

Those most affected by these changes will be planners who enter the profession after the new requirements are in place, since the new approach will affect their training and the process of obtaining their national designation and Affiliate-level certification.

Post-secondary institutions will also be affected by any changes required as part of the accreditation of planning schools.

Planners who currently hold the designation will be expected to comply with any changes to current codes of practice, ethical standards, and lifelong learning requirements.

Planners who participate in the membership process as examiners, mentors, or sponsors, and those who provide continuous professional learning will need to understand the new requirements.

When is this happening?

Discussions and consultations have been underway for four years now, directly involving hundreds of members in task force work and surveys. The project activity will continue through the remainder of 2010 and the proposed new membership certification policies and procedures **will take effect only after members have ratified any necessary CIP and Affiliate bylaw revisions**. The new standards that are being developed will carry the profession into the second decade of the 21st century and beyond.

How much will this cost?

At present, the project is being carried out within existing CIP and Affiliate budgets. We will keep you informed of any proposed changes to fees, and we will make every effort to keep increases to a minimum. Philosophically, the project will result in continuation of the “user pay” approach, where those who use the certification process will be the ones who pay its costs. Both CIP and its Affiliates are mindful that the process must be affordable for applicants.

Where can I get more information?

The Planning for the Future website is the main source of information on this initiative, at <http://www.planningincanada.ca/>.

CIP and the Affiliates are committed to keeping all members informed through e-mail messages, websites, publications and sessions at conferences/events.

Now what?

The project task force reports which have received National/Affiliate Membership Committee, CIP and Affiliate endorsement are posted on the Planning in Canada website <http://www.planningincanada.ca/>.

Two new task forces will be established shortly. The Administrative Task Force will explore the use of new technologies and business arrangements to reduce the costs of serving members, assist to put the Professional Standards Board in place, contribute to communications that support ongoing operations of the PFF initiatives, and develop tools and protocols to strengthen operational activities. The Legislative Task Force will review issues around a common designation for the planning profession in Canada and related provincial legislation.

What national standards are being proposed for planners?

Each of the national task forces has submitted a report to CIP on its proposals for changes to standards in the profession.

You can read these reports at <http://www.planningincanada.ca/>.

The reports deal with:

Competency standards: defining skills & knowledge

Competency standards are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that individual planners require in order to practise the profession. The proposed standards will affect not only how planners are educated and certified, but also public expectations of professional planners. At present, competency standards are largely set by individual planning schools, and provincial Affiliates hold examinations to test whether incoming planners have the required competencies.

The task force proposes a framework of Functional Competencies, which represent required areas of knowledge and skills, and Enabling Competencies, which represent the capacities needed to practise effectively. Identifying and ensuring agreement on these competencies will allow for consistency in educational curricula, training programs, and continuous professional learning.

Ethical standards: developing a national Code of Ethics

The planning profession already recognizes a Statement of Values and a Code of Professional Practice.

The report of the Ethics task force builds on this foundation, and on the premise that ethical standards and integrity, along with competence, distinguish professionals from non-professionals. The report contains 10 recommendations that include a national Code of Ethics supported by provincial Codes of Practice, requirements for training in ethics, protocols for sharing information on breaches of ethics by planners, and provisions for planners coming from countries outside Canada.

Certification standards: reviewing the education, training & testing of planners

The Certification task force examined the process by which new planners are trained and certified. Recommendations are proposed in five areas: (1) the recognition of responsible professional planning experience; (2) the creation of a professional education program; (3) the assessment of prior learning by planners without a planning degree; (4) reciprocity among Affiliates and with planners from other countries; and (5) the examination process. Some of the changes proposed include developing a course in Professionalism and Ethics to be taken by all incoming planners and dropping the oral examination requirement in favour of a written examination delivered by a National Examination Body.

The written examination is intended to ensure consistency across all Affiliates, make good use of time and resources, and be more cost-effective than the oral examination process now in place.

Help shape the future of the profession!

Please send comments to: general@cip-icu.ca.

Certification policies and procedures

A Certification Operations Working Group developed policies and procedures to support the certification standards. The membership manual for certification has been updated accordingly. A proposal for the establishment of a Professional Standards Board for the Planning Profession in Canada was also developed.

Accreditation standards

The Accreditation Standards Task Force has built on its current recognition process and is putting in place a formal accreditation program. The program based on the planning profession's competency standards will continue to support the development of formal planning education in Canada.

Fellowship

The report of the Fellowship Task Force has reviewed the Nominations Criteria and Procedures for the naming of Fellows to the Institute as well as other membership issues and identified potential improvements.