

Business Case and Implementation Plan of a Pan-Canadian Credential Assessment Centre for Internationally Educated Teachers

Tech Markets Inc.



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The Registrars for Teacher Certification Canada (RTCC) is a committee established in 1999, at the request of CMEC, to exchange information concerning the regulation of the teaching profession throughout Canada. Registrars also coordinate the implementation of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) for the teaching profession. The committee is composed of the registrars for teacher certification in all provinces and territories.

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The Pan-Canadian Qualification Assessment Centre Working Group (PQACWG) and the Language Competencies Working Group (LCWG) are time-limited working groups tasked with supporting the Pan-Canadian Assessment Centre (PAC) and Integration of Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) project, under the leadership of the RTCC.

Authors

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Disclaimer

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	1	Performance reporting and support.....	22
2. PQAC Business Model.....	2	Service interruptions	23
2.1 Approach to developing the PQAC business model	2	End-user support channels.....	23
2.2 PQAC Business Model Canvas.....	4	Prioritization of service interruptions.....	23
Value proposition	5	Change Management.....	25
Customer relationships	5	Proposed new services.....	25
Customer segments.....	5	Modification to existing services.....	26
Channels	6	Statement of Work (SOW)	26
Key activities	7		
Key resources	9	4. Legislative Review to Support PQAC Implementation.....	27
Key partners.....	10	4.1 Approach to the Legislative Review.....	28
Revenue streams and cost structure	10	4.2 Common issues for PQAC implementation ...	28
Sensitivity analysis	10	PQAC: a third-party service	28
3. PQAC Governance Model.....	11	Privacy and security	29
3.1 PQAC Consortium.....	11	Data location	29
PQAC Coordinator	12	Language-competency testing	29
PQAC Committee.....	12	4.3 Common approach to PQAC implementation.....	31
3.2 Vendor management.....	13	4.4 Differences in approach to PQAC implementation	32
3.3 Service Level Agreement (SLA).....	14	British Columbia.....	33
Key roles and responsibilities.....	15	Saskatchewan.....	33
Scope of services.....	15		

- 5. PQAC Implementation34**
 - 5.1 Objectives of the implementation plan34
 - 5.2 Assumptions for implementation35
 - 5.3 Implementation plan36
 - Procure.....37
 - Contract37
 - Build38
 - Launch.....40
 - Sustain41
 - 5.4 Project management approach.....41
 - Implementation project governance41
 - Key resources.....42
 - Communications and stakeholder management44
 - Change request process44
 - Risk and issue management45
- APPENDIX A - PQACWG Consensus.....47**
- APPENDIX B - LCWG Consensus51**
- APPENDIX C - Sample Project Charter53**
- APPENDIX D - Change requests55**
- APPENDIX E - Risk register.....57**

1. Executive Summary

During the course of 2020-21, under the leadership of the Registrars for Teacher Certification Canada (RTCC), the Pan-Canadian Qualification Assessment Centre Working Group (PQACWG) and the Language Competencies Working Group (LCWG), comprising members from participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for the teaching profession, met several times to develop a pan-Canadian approach for assessing the credentials and the language competency of internationally educated teachers (Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively). These discussions and pan-Canadian approaches served as the foundation for developing a business model that would sustainably support operations of the pan-Canadian qualifications assessment centre for internationally educated teachers (i.e., PQAC). The PQAC builds on agreements and work completed to date, including the 2014 feasibility study *Establishing a Pan-Canadian Credential Assessment Centre for Internationally Educated Teachers*. During that time several options were explored, all consistent with the original vision of the PQAC.

This process resulted in confirmation that the PQAC's operations will be housed within the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) as a consortium of participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for the teaching profession. Service delivery will be managed through outsourcing contracts in which third-party vendors will provide virtually all internationally educated teacher (IET) services. One vendor will provide credential assessment services in preparation for sending credential assessment reports to participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies; other vendors will provide language-competency assessment services in French and English.

This document outlines the following for PQAC implementation: a business model, a governance model, and legislative considerations.

2. PQAC Business Model

The PQAC business model will be focused on delivering the following key items:

- Serving as a single-entry point for internationally educated teachers (IETs) applying for teacher certification in participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies, the PQAC will be responsible for:
 - providing pre-arrival/pre-application information;
 - application intake;
 - gathering, authenticating, validating, and storing documents supporting qualifications held by IETs;
 - issuing standardized bilingual credential assessment reports to provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for assessment and decision making;
 - bilingual customer care for IETs and participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.
- Providing bilingual (French and English) language-competency assessments, the PQAC will be responsible for:
 - registration and scheduling of IET test-takers;
 - evaluation of completed assessments;
 - reporting of assessment results;
 - maintenance of and updates to language-competency assessment tools.

The PQAC's key activities will be focused on stakeholder and vendor management, with assistance from a committee composed of members from participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies who will offer expertise and advice (see Section 3.1 — PQAC Committee).

Also proposed in this model are deliverable items that will be viable once the PQAC is operational for a period of time. These items have been captured under the heading Phase 2 and are noted in their respective sections of the business model in Section 2.2.

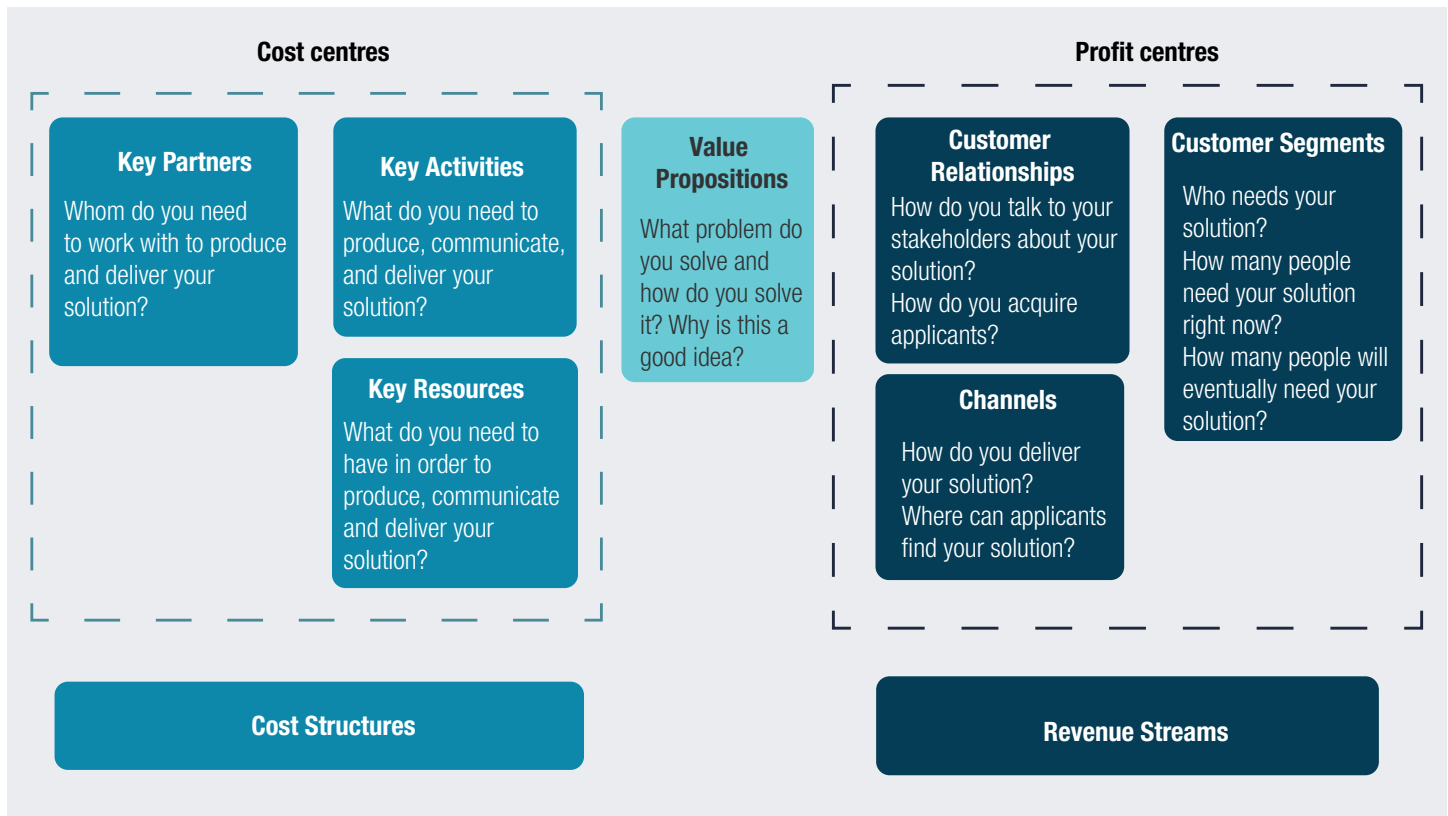
2.1 Approach to developing the PQAC business model

The following is a brief description of the methodology used to develop the PQAC business model. It is based upon Business Model Canvas methodology, which offers a visualization approach to defining the key components of an organization. The methodology itself was developed by Alex Osterwalder as part of his ongoing work in start-up development¹.

As per Figure 2.1, the heart of the business model is *Value Propositions*. The value proposition is the central theme that informs how to integrate services offered, revenue streams, and associated cost structures which in concert define how the PQAC will run.

¹ Osterwalder, A. (2005, November 5). What is a business model? Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20061213141941/http://business-model-design.blogspot.com/2005/11/what-is-business-model.html>

Figure 2.1. Business Model Canvas approach to business model development



The value proposition confirms the products and services the PQAC will offer and how this will assist key stakeholders.

Following the confirmation of the value proposition, key relationships with customers and the delivery channels through which customers are served are confirmed.

Next, the resources required to deliver the value proposition, customer relationships, and service delivery channels are defined by asking the following questions;

- **Key Activities**
 - What will be the key activities of the PQAC?
- **Key Resources**
 - What resources will be required to perform those activities?
 - How will these resources be maintained over time?
- **Key Partners**
 - What partnerships, suppliers, and or vendors will the PQAC use to deliver on the value proposition, when, and on what basis?

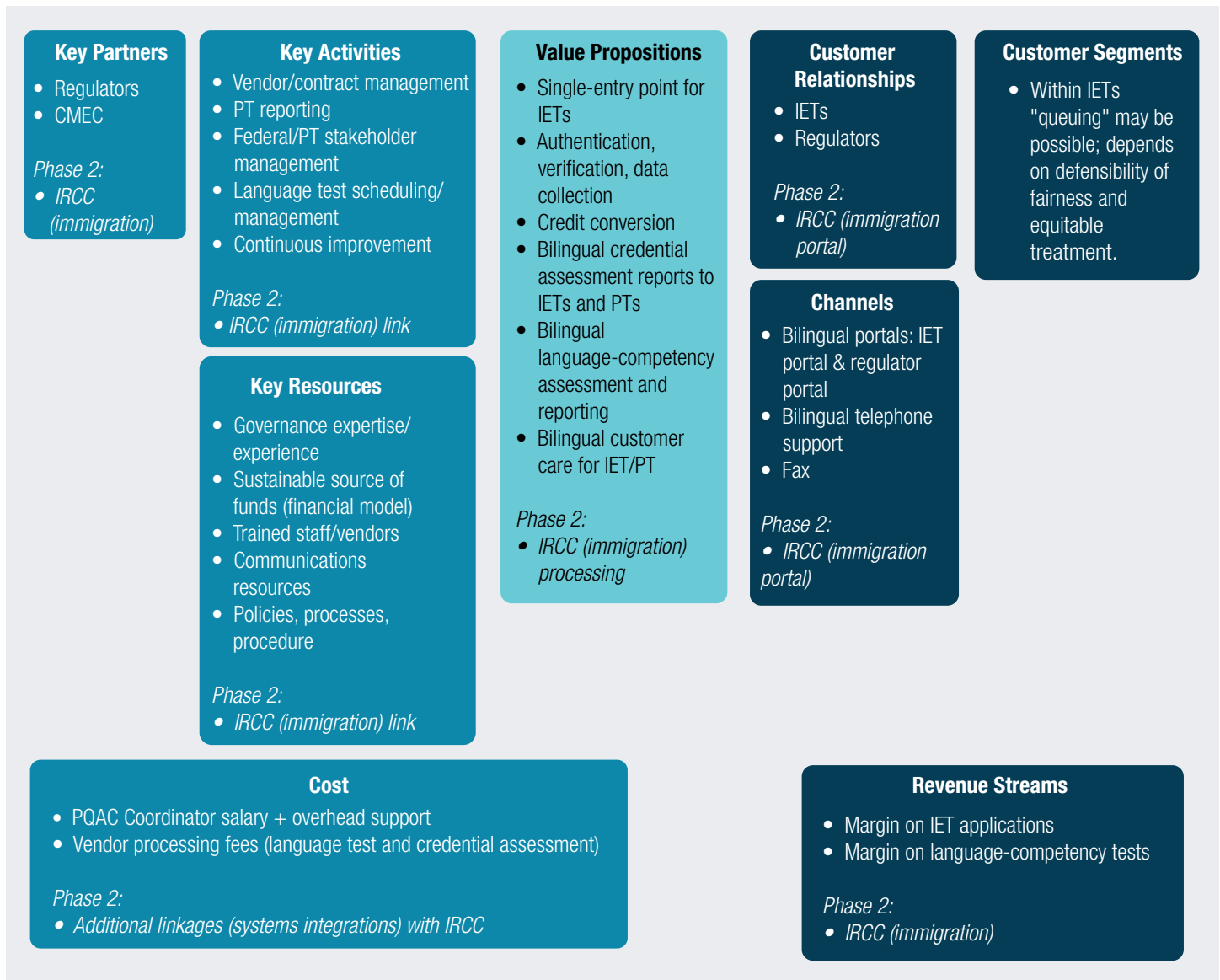
Completion of the business model canvas establishes the essential organization structure, revenues and expenses, and stakeholder and customer relationships required to establish and operate the PQAC on an ongoing, sustainable basis. A more detailed description of each of these key components is provided in Section 2.2.

2.2 PQAC Business Model Canvas

Figure 2.2 is a high-level representation of the PQAC business model. It is based on the workshops conducted with the PQACWG and the Business Model Canvas approach described in Section 2.1.

For each business model component, a potential Phase 2 is sometimes provided indicating items which may be added to the business model once the PQAC has been established and been operational for a period of time. Phase 2 items are not within scope of the initial business model, nor will they be included in the initial implementation of the PQAC; however, they are noted for consideration as possible additions in the future.

Figure 2.2. PQAC Business Model Canvas



Value proposition

The heart of the business model is the value proposition. It is the central theme that informs how the PQAC will operate. The core value propositions of the PQAC will be as follows.

- The PQAC is to be the single-entry point for IETs applying for teacher certification to participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies in Canada and will be responsible for:
 - providing pre-arrival/pre-application information;
 - application intake;
 - document intake and authentication of required documents;
 - verification of documents for validity/fraud and comprehensiveness of information required;
 - conversion of IET study units into a Canadian context;
 - issuing standardized bilingual credential assessment reports to provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for assessment and decision making;
 - bilingual customer care for IETs, and participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.
- Bilingual language-competency assessment and reporting:
 - registration and scheduling of IET test-takers;
 - evaluation of completed assessments;
 - reporting of assessment results;
 - maintenance of and updates to language-competency assessment tools.

Phase 2

The PQAC has the potential to conduct credential assessment for IETs on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) immigration. Note: currently internationally educated professionals are often subject to multiple similar credential assessments for immigration and licensure. This addition to the value proposition would allow for the consolidation of credential assessment for immigration and licensure into a single process, streamlining the recognition of foreign credentials for qualifying IETs.

Customer relationships

Key customer relationships for the PQAC would comprise the following groups:

- IETs applying for credential assessment towards obtaining licensure with a participating provincial or territorial regulatory body for teaching;
- regulatory bodies for the teaching profession in participating provinces and territories.

Phase 2

IETs wishing to immigrate to Canada, redirected to the PQAC by IRCC, may be a potential customer relationship should the PQAC be in a position to work with IRCC in future. As noted, this group would be composed of those applying for licensure and immigration at the same time.

Customer segments

Customers within each of the groups with which the PQAC has relationships – IETs and regulatory bodies in participating provinces and territories – may be further segmented into more specific groups. Customer segmentation would establish separate service delivery standards, policies, processes, and procedures

for specific groups. Within the IET group for example, more straightforward applications could be processed with fewer resources and in a shorter period of time if they were batched and sent through separate processing streams.

Customer segmentation has not been considered in the initial business model of the PQAC. However, upon further evaluation it may be deemed to be appropriate from both a fairness and efficiency perspective and implemented at a later date. If segmentation were to occur, it would need to be defensible through demonstrably creating global efficiency in application processes and resources.

Channels

The following service delivery channels are to be used to deliver value propositions to customers.

- Bilingual online portals, to be used to support the key activities of PQAC customer groups as follows.
 - IETs:
 - obtaining pre-arrival/pre-application information
 - application and account management
 - payment
 - document submission
 - including possible links to trusted digital credential repositories, such as MyCreds.ca, an initiative of the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) that focuses on delivering “credential wallets” accessible 24-7 for securely transmitting academic documents
 - assessment
 - status updates
 - customer service communication
 - FAQs
 - guides
 - other support material clarifying the overall process, pricing, procedures and policies of the PQAC
 - receipt of reports
 - appeals
 - Participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies:
 - providing outbound/inbound links to provincial/territorial regulatory information;
 - application volume updates
 - receipt of reports
 - customer service communication
- Bilingual telephone support
- Fax

Phase 2

In light of the potential for the PQAC to work with IRCC in future, a bilingual online portal could need to be developed for IETs directed to the PQAC by IRCC.

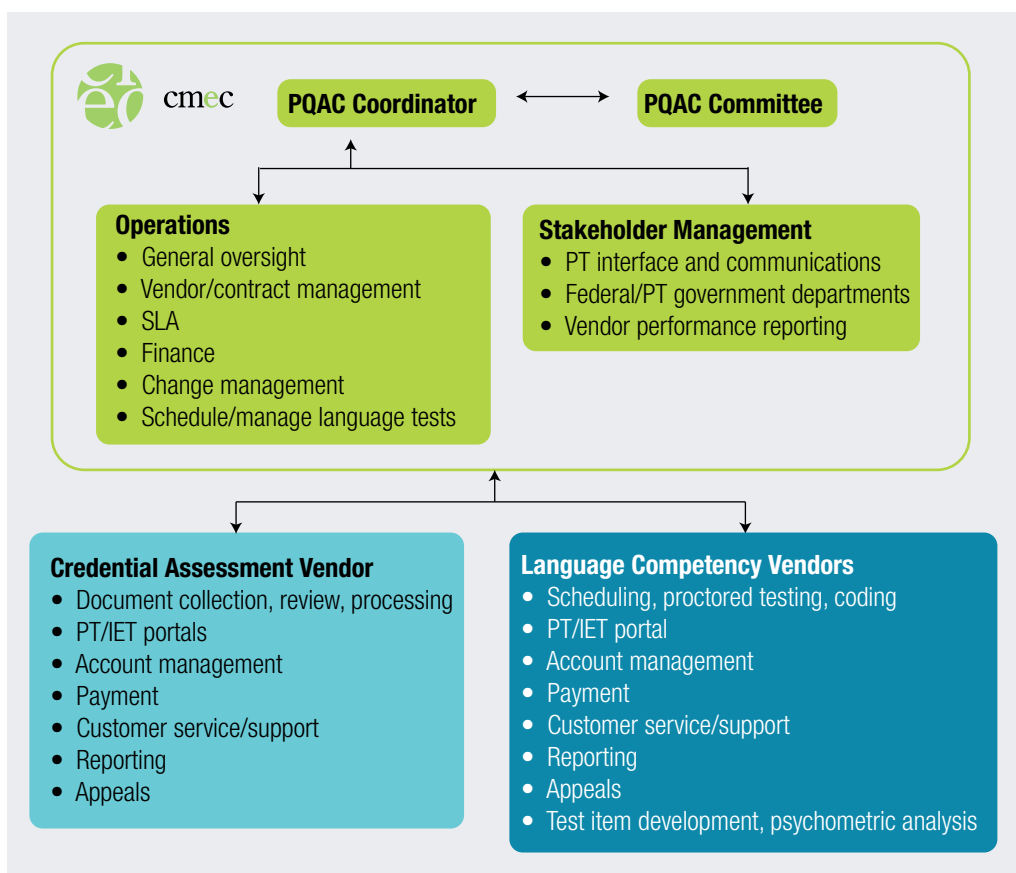
Key activities

Key activities of the PQAC are dictated by the components of its business model. As per Figure 2.3, activities specific to the PQAC are confined within the box at the top. Vendor activities involved in credential assessment and language-competency assessment are shown in the boxes at the very bottom left and right, respectively.

PQAC activities

The key activities of the PQAC are focused on two key areas as illustrated in Figure 2.3: operations and stakeholder management. The roles and relationship of the PQAC (staffed by a coordinator) and the PQAC Committee, housed within CMEC, with respect to these key areas, are described in detail in Section 3, Governance Model. Performance monitoring and service management activities occurring between the PQAC and its vendors are also described in this document.

Figure 2.3. Centre key activities



The roles of the vendors providing services on behalf of the PQAC in its two key areas of activity (credential assessment and language-competency assessment) and the description of their primary activities are provided in this section. All IET and regulator-facing services are available in both English and French. Note that these descriptions are relatively high level and will be refined based on the issuance of a request for proposals (RFP) and associated responses from vendors, which will confirm detailed functionality.

Credential assessment vendor activities

- Provision of portals
Note: security and fraud prevention and detection measures are in place throughout these processes and have not been listed separately.
 - Online portal for participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies, available 7/24 for:
 - login, service (e.g., report downloads), and support requests.

- Online portal for IETs, available 7/24 for:
 - information purposes
 - IETs learn about the service, including registration processes, fees, timelines, policies, and other pertinent information.
 - application and account management
 - IETs establish an account, confirming their identity, user ID/password, contact details, and other pertinent items required to use the service.
 - payment
 - IETs pay for the service. Payment processing will be handled by the vendor's bank of record and will support major credit cards only. Direct deposit and other forms of online payment will not likely be supported due to variability in these processes internationally.
 - document collection
 - IETs download forms/information and upload applicable documents (unless required directly from other parties, such as education institutions, regulators, employers).
- Document review/processing
 - Once all documentation and information have been received, the vendor will compile and review the package to ensure it is comprehensive and all document/information requirements have been met.
 - Once the package has been confirmed to be valid (no evidence of fraud) and complete, it will be reviewed in order to generate the required report for provincial or territorial regulatory bodies.
- Customer service/support
 - Customer support facilities including fax, phone, and e-mail are provided to respond to IET inquiries or requests for support.
- Reporting
 - Reports based on completed assessments are made available for download in an industry standard format such as PDF on a secure basis to IETs and to provincial and territorial regulatory bodies, as directed by IETs.
- Appeals
 - An appeal process is available for the IET with the vendor. If an IET appeals a licensure decision made by a provincial or territorial regulatory body, vendor support will be provided as required.

Language-competency assessment vendor activities

- Online portal for participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies, available 7/24 for:
 - login, service (e.g., report downloads), and support requests.
- Online portal for IETs, available 7/24 for:
 - information purposes
 - IETs learn about the service, including registration processes, fees, timelines, policies, and other pertinent information.
 - registration and account management
 - IETs establish an account, confirming their identity, user ID/password, contact details, and other pertinent items required to use the service.
 - payment

- IETs pay for the service. Payment processing will be handled by a vendor's bank of record and will support major credit cards only. Direct deposit and other forms of online payment will not likely be supported due to variability in these processes internationally.
- Scheduling
 - PQAC staff and/or an IET schedule an assessment session. As already discussed, specific functionality will be determined following vendor response to an RFP.
- Proctored assessment sessions
 - Online, proctored test-taking for all assessment sessions.
- Customer service/support
 - Customer support facilities including fax, phone, and e-mail are provided to support IET inquiries or support requests.
- Reporting
 - Reports based on completed assessments are made available for download in an industry standard format such as PDF on a secure basis to IETs and to provincial and territorial regulatory bodies, as directed by IETs.
- Appeals
 - An appeal process is available for the IET with the vendor. If an IET appeals a licensure decision made by a provincial or territorial regulatory body, vendor support will be provided as required.

Note that neither the PQAC nor its vendors are involved in licensure decisions. Licensure decisions remain the exclusive jurisdiction of participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.

Phase 2

Due to the broad range of options with respect to how services may be delivered in a potential model including cooperation with IRCC, Phase 2 activities have not been described.

Key resources

The key resources required to perform key activities and deliver the value proposition are as follows.

- A financial model to ensure the PQAC is self-sufficient in the longer term.
- Governance skills, experience and expertise to manage the PQAC.
 - A comprehensive description of the PQAC governance model is provided in Section 3.
- PQAC Coordinator, PQAC Committee, and associated policies, processes, and procedures
 - Comprehensive descriptions of the PQAC Coordinator and PQAC Committee roles and responsibilities, associated policies, processes, and procedures are provided in Section 3.1.
- Trained staff/vendors
 - The PQAC Coordinator (staff) will be required to provide operational oversight and support. More details are provided on this role in a later section of this document.
 - Vendors will be required to provide IET credential assessment and language assessment services.

Key partners

The partnerships required to successfully operate the PQAC are as follows.

- Regulatory bodies for the teaching profession in participating provinces and territories.
 - The primary responsibility of the regulatory bodies will be to agree to continue to use the PQAC and direct IETs to the PQAC's credential assessment service.
 - Regulatory body participation in the PQAC Committee represents a commitment to provide policy and subject matter expertise to the PQAC Coordinator and PQAC operations generally.
- Vendors, on an outsourced basis as previously described, will be required to provide credential assessment and language-competency assessment services. These vendors will be identified and confirmed via an RFP process scheduled for the fall of 2022.

Phase 2

The PQAC has the potential to partner with IRCC for the purpose of producing assessments for both licensure and immigration purposes.

Revenue streams and cost structure

Revenue streams are the services which will generate revenue for the PQAC based on value propositions and key activities. Cost structure identifies the primary investments, both fixed cost and variable, which will be required to establish and maintain the PQAC.

The PQAC will have two revenue streams: margins from IET applications for credential assessment, and margins from language assessment services. Both streams are volume-based and will increase/decrease as volumes of applicants for these services change.

The cost structure for the PQAC will be composed of two items: the PQAC Coordinator salary and associated overhead, and costs associated with language assessment. The coordinator's salary and associated overhead are fixed; however, language assessment costs are volume-based and will increase/decrease as volumes of applicants for these services change. Note that costs for IET application processing will be paid for and captured by the vendor directly. Therefore, the PQAC will not bear any additional costs.

Sensitivity analysis

The financial model for the PQAC has been designed to support self-sufficiency and long-term viability. In order to minimize risk and exposure to potential loss, the PQAC's model has been designed to minimize fixed costs and rely on variable costs wherever possible. Using this approach, PQAC costs go down as volumes decrease and rise as volumes increase, thereby matching revenues and expenses to the extent possible. The sole exception to this is the PQAC Coordinator's salary and associated overhead. Specifically, these items represent fixed costs which will not change as application volumes rise and fall.

A sensitivity analysis on this model shows that the PQAC is primarily affected by the following key variables.

- The primary sensitivity is to volume. As application volumes increase/decrease, revenues will rise and fall commensurately.
- The other main area of sensitivity is pricing. Because revenues are generated by adding a small margin to application and language services, increasing/decreasing the price of these services will have large impacts on the revenues of the PQAC.

3. PQAC Governance Model

Following extensive discussion, the PQACWG determined that PQAC operations will be housed within the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), as a consortium of regulatory bodies for the teaching profession in participating provinces and territories. Service delivery will be managed through outsourcing contracts in which third-party vendors will provide virtually all services, with one vendor providing credential assessment services and a series of vendors providing language-competency assessment services.

Governance of the PQAC, therefore, will come from two sources:

- CMEC's own structures as described in the Agreed Memorandum on CMEC (2015);
- a best practices framework for managing vendor outsourcing agreements of this nature.

The goal of the governance model will be to provide an effective decision-making and support structure that ensures reliable, high-quality service delivery. The model will provide transparency and accountability into the operations of the PQAC for participating provinces and territories. It will also provide mechanisms for the responsive and efficient identification and remediation of any issues as they occur.

Note that this document does not address the following:

- governance structures required during the build project that establishes the PQAC;
- contractual/legal documentation required to support the building and running of the PQAC, including that required to establish relationships with key vendors.

3.1 PQAC Consortium

The PQAC will be housed as a consortium within CMEC. The PQAC's primary functions and mandate will be carried out by a coordinator, a staff person of the PQAC Consortium, operating at CMEC.

The Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the proposed governance structure. As can be seen, the PQAC Coordinator will be responsible for all vendor relationships: credential assessment and language-competency assessment services.

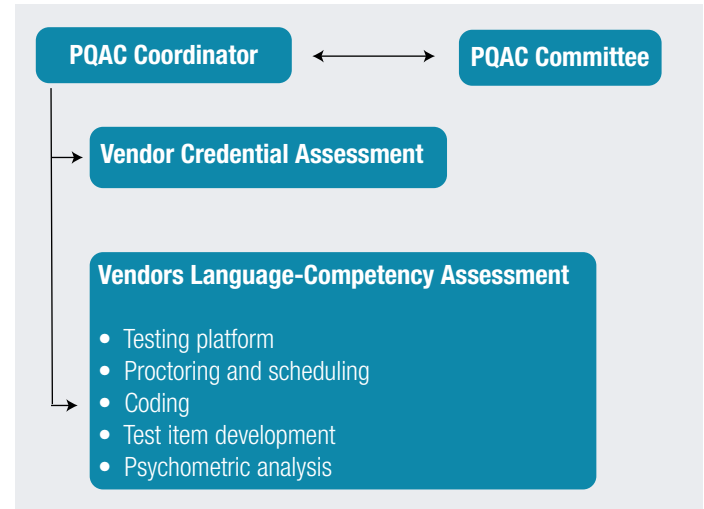
A PQAC Committee comprising registrars (or equivalent) from participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for the teaching profession will also be used for advisory purposes. In this section, both a description of the PQAC Coordinator role and the Terms of Reference for the PQAC Committee are provided.

PQAC Coordinator

The PQAC Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring effective management of all financial, contractual and administrative aspects of the PQAC. The key responsibilities of the PQAC Coordinator will be as follows:

- execute PQAC strategy and policy directions (assumes but does not necessarily require PQAC Committee input)
- financial management of the PQAC
- environmental scanning to maintain IET services in accordance with current best practices
- manage overall service delivery operations by:
 - overseeing terms and deliverables of contracts with key vendors of credential assessment and language-competency assessment;
 - establishing and monitoring operating policies and standards with key vendors;
 - ensuring the PQAC and its primary vendors have a quality and process improvement program in place;
 - establishing a basis for negotiating any contract renewal/updates/changes and conduct negotiations;
 - leading change management processes with key stakeholders, ensuring adequate support and managing risks and benefits accordingly;
 - hiring/contracting any other third-party services as required.
- stakeholder management
 - serve as the primary point of contact within the PQAC for participating provinces and territories, and other interested parties;
 - oversee communications, tailoring messages to the needs of various stakeholders;
 - establish and maintain strong relationships with participating provinces and territories, vendors and funders (as appropriate).
- specific to language-competency assessment
 - establish and implement effective scheduling processes for test-takers;
 - manage day-to-day scheduling of assessment sessions;
 - resolve any related issues and/or address the root cause of ongoing issues and implement modifications to scheduling processes as required.

Figure 3.1. PQAC Consortium Governance Structure



PQAC Committee

A PQAC Committee composed of participating members from provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for the teaching profession will be used in an advisory capacity to support the PQAC Coordinator. The committee will abide by the Terms of Reference outlined in Table 3.1.

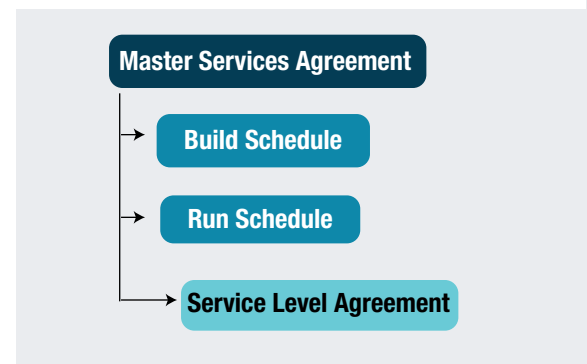
Table 3.1. PQAC Committee Terms of Reference

Mandate	The PQAC Committee is composed of members from participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for the teaching profession and chaired by one participating member. The committee will be used for communication and advisory purposes with a focus on activities of the PQAC.
Deliverables	In addition to providing advice to the PQAC Coordinator as required on matters relating to the teaching profession, the committee's key deliverables are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting the ongoing implementation of the PQAC; • supporting the ongoing alignment of credential-assessment procedures for internationally-educated teachers (IETs) across the participating provinces and territories.
Composition	Each participating provincial and territorial regulatory body shall be represented by the registrar for teacher certification ("registrar"), or equivalent, from its teacher-certifying regulatory organization. Each registrar may designate a second representative from their province or territory who may also participate in discussion, debate, and committee work.
Reporting	PQAC Coordinator
Interaction	Committee members maintain liaison with their own provinces and territories to provide advice to the PQAC Coordinator and maintain currency on issues related to activities of the PQAC, including credential assessment and facilitating mobility of internationally educated teachers in Canada. The purpose of this interaction is to support decision-making towards the committee's deliverables and to ensure the ongoing successful resourcing and operations of the PQAC.

3.2 Vendor management

While beyond the scope of this document, it is recommended that a best practice contract structure be established as part of engaging with any vendors to confirm commercial terms. A proposed contract structure is shown in the Figure 3.2.a as follows:

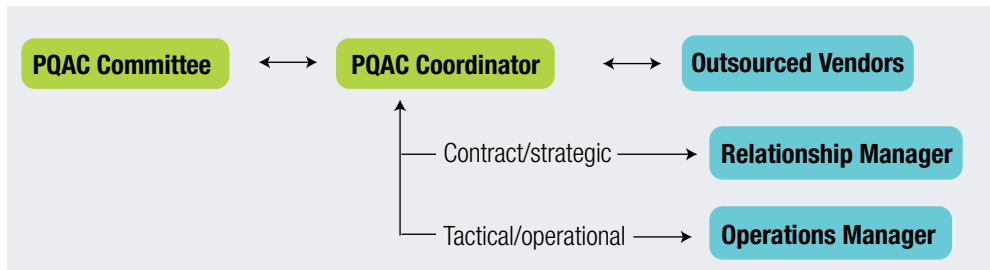
- Master Services Agreement (MSA) containing the essential aspects of the relationship between the PQAC and third-party service providers
- Schedules attached to Master Services Agreement
 - Build Schedule containing details pertaining to activities involved in establishing the service during the implementation project. This is normally further managed by a project structure in which the scope, schedule, and budget of the build are managed via a project charter and related supporting documents.
 - Run Schedule containing details pertaining to the relationship once the build is complete and the system moves into full production. This schedule covers the operating term as discussed in the Master Services Agreement (normally 3 to 5 years).
- Once the build project is complete and the PQAC has moved into full production (i.e., in "run mode"), a Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be used to manage the operations for both credential assessment and language-competency assessment services. SLAs are to be created and agreed upon during the build portion of the project, prior to the start of production.

Figure 3.2.a. Vendor management contract structure

The PQAC will accomplish the bulk of its work through outsourced vendor contracts. This will include credential assessment, and French and English language-competency assessment. As per Figure 3.2.b, vendors will be managed using a consistent best practice framework via the PQAC Coordinator role.

The PQAC Coordinator will manage vendors at two levels. Contract and strategic issues will be dealt with via a vendor Relationship Manager. Tactical and operational issues will be managed via a vendor Operations Manager who oversees day-to-day processing. These roles, as well as the types of interactions anticipated with the PQAC, are described more fully in Section 3.3.

Figure 3.2.b. Vendor governance



3.3 Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Once services move into production, they are revisited quarterly until such time that both parties agree that a less frequent review schedule will suffice. SLAs address the following key areas:

- key roles and responsibilities for the PQAC and the vendor, including contact points and communication channels;
- scope of services provided including performance standards and key obligations for the PQAC, participating provinces and territories where applicable, and vendors;
- performance reporting and support services offered that address core service delivery monitoring, measurement, and issues identification and resolution, as well as processes and procedures that will be implemented in the event of any service interruption;
- change management mechanisms to allow for agreed-upon changes to be introduced into operations.

The SLA is separate from the contract structure in Figure 3.2.a, but uses terms laid out in those contracts as its foundation. SLAs allow for mutually agreed-upon changes to be made to operations without having to revisit entire contracts. From a business perspective, this arrangement allows for more flexibility and efficiency in service management.

The following offers a brief description of each of these key sections.

Key roles and responsibilities

There are several vendor contact points supporting the services outlined in a typical SLA. These include:

Vendor Relationship Manager – responsible for interacting with the PQAC Coordinator as follows:

- is responsible for the overall relationship and coordinating services;
- oversees the various aspects of the services to ensure their effective and timely delivery;

- ensures that vendor obligations are completed in an efficient and timely manner;
 - is readily available to the PQAC Coordinator to respond to requests, queries and complaints;
 - acts as a liaison between the vendor’s executive leadership and the PQAC Coordinator.
- **Vendor Operations Manager** – responsible for interacting with the PQAC Coordinator as follows:
 - day to day oversight and responsibility for production services;
 - management, performance reporting, and issues management as described in the SLA;
 - engagement in other areas with the vendor to assist as needed (subject matter expertise to evaluate change requests and/or develop alternatives for problem resolution, IT support, executive support, etc.).

Scope of services

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) outlines the parameters of all services covered as they are mutually understood by both organizations. Services are typically described in a service catalogue within the SLA so that both organizations understand their respective obligations. It should be noted that service descriptions should be consistent with the contracts noted previously (i.e., MSA, Build, and Run). Table 3.3 is an example of a service catalogue which could be used to manage credential assessment services. It is not comprehensive or accurate for the PQAC and has been provided for illustrative purposes only. A similar catalogue would need to be developed for language-competency assessment services.

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only)

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
Service Category: IET Portal		
<p>The Vendor will provide and maintain the IET Portal that was delivered as part of the Build Statement of Work (SOW). The IET Portal must be user-friendly and enable IET clients who want to apply for registration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● find out how they apply for the Vendor Authentication and Verification service, what process they must follow, what standards they must meet, what information they must provide, and what fees they must pay; ● establish an account with Vendor; ● apply to Vendor and upload/provide/update required information; ● be able to provide the required information in hard copy and have this scanned by Vendor to create an electronic copy; ● pay their application fees; 	<p>Measured monthly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The IET Portal is available and IETs are able to undertake all of the functions listed at left for 99% of each month (based on assumed availability of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, and subject to scheduled maintenance periods agreed in advance with the Centre). ● All hard copy documents received from IETs will be scanned into a high quality, easily accessible and easily readable industry standard electronic format. ● Information on the IET Portal will remain aligned with relevant information on the Centre website. 	<p>The Centre must discuss with the Vendor all proposed content changes that may have an impact on the Vendor website or other communications content at least one month before the change is proposed to occur.</p>

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> request/direct their employers, educators and regulators to provide required information directly to Vendor; request and receive translation services through Vendor (subject to payment of the appropriate fee to Vendor); track the status of their application and associated information (including information being provided by third parties) via a unique Vendor identification number; know how/when they can contact Vendor directly by phone or email; provide all information to, and communicate with Vendor, within a secure and confidential online environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the IET Portal is unavailable for any reason Vendor will post an “out of service” notice on the portal (if possible) and advise the Centre as soon as practical about the cause of the outage and expected restoration time. The IET Portal loads a new screen in less than 5 seconds on average. The portal conforms with industry standard best practice web accessibility standards. 	
<p>Service Category: Customer Support for IETs</p>		
<p>Vendor will provide effective, efficient, user-friendly bilingual customer support for all IET clients for the purposes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that the IET clients fully understand how they apply for the Vendor Authentication and Verification service, what process they must follow, what standards they must meet, what information they must provide, and what fees they must pay; responding to queries from IET clients and supporting them to proceed through the application, authentication, and verification process as quickly as possible and with a great Vendor customer service experience. 	<p>An annual customer satisfaction survey of IETs using the portal shows satisfaction \geq 90%.</p> <p>The following will be measured monthly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vendor website, the IET Portal and email access are available for 99% of each month (based on assumed availability of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, and subject to scheduled maintenance periods agreed in advance with the Centre). 	<p>The Centre must respond to Vendor requests for assistance in resolving calls and emails for unique customer situations within one business day.</p>

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
<p>The customer support mechanisms will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vendor website and IET Portal; • email; • telephone support with access to customer service representatives; • customer support for IET clients, managed and delivered via the Vendor Bilingual Customer Care Centre; • a Customer Complaints service provided by Vendor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone support with access to customer service representatives is available Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. except for Vendor holidays. • 90% of telephone calls are answered within 120 seconds and the remaining 10% receive the option of a call-back retaining their priority in the queue. NB: This standard will be reviewed six months after the Go Live Date, and may then be changed by mutual agreement between the Centre and Vendor. • All emails will receive an acknowledgement within 5 minutes of being received by Vendor. • Customer complaints < 2 per month. 	
<p>Service Category: Authentication and Verification Service</p>		
<p>Vendor will provide and maintain the Authentication and Verification service that was delivered as part of the Build SOW. This service will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the receipt and capture, via the secure and confidential IET Portal, of an application in the specified Vendor format, and of required documents from IET clients; • communications to IET clients or third parties about outstanding requirements; • authentication and verification (as per standard Vendor processes) of received documents against the information in the Vendor institutional databases, and against other relevant Vendor information sources. This will include confirmation of relational aspects of the documents e.g., if the IET client worked in Canada, they should also have provided an applicably-dated Canadian license verification. 	<p>Measured monthly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor will at all times adhere to the Centre standards and business rules that the Centre has specified as relevant to the authentication and verification service. • For each IET client, Vendor must reach an informed, defensible and documented conclusion about the authenticity of the received documents relating to the identity, educational qualifications, registration in country of origin and any other country, and work experience of the IET applicant. No more than 0.5% cases (as a proportion of total IET applications in respect of which an Applicant Report is submitted by Vendor) of document fraud are identified by the Centre for any IET client who has completed the Vendor authentication and verification process and for whom Vendor did not identify any actual or potential fraud. 	<p>The Centre must discuss with Vendor all proposed changes to relevant IET guidance, standards, and business rules at least one month before the change is proposed to occur. The Centre must respond to Vendor requests for guidance within one business day.</p> <p>In order to maintain consistency between websites and other documentation, Vendor and the Centre will jointly undertake an annual review of all Centre-related content.</p>

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of potential/actual fraud relating to received documents; • follow up with the IET client or relevant parties about concerns relating to received documents; • reaching a conclusion about the authenticity and verification of received documents – this to be done by a trained and competent document forensics analyst. • In the expected small minority of situations where an IET client's information does not completely meet all relevant criteria, Vendor will not fully automate the processing of these applications but instead will establish liaison with the Centre for guidance prior to deciding whether to make a "Fail" determination. • Customer information will be retained for a minimum of one calendar year from the first point of application, to support the ability of customers to reactivate their application within a one-year period. • Actioning of all the above activity is to occur within a secure and confidential online environment. 	<p>In order to support consistency between websites Vendor must discuss with the Centre all proposed changes to relevant IET guidance and information at least one month before the change is proposed to occur.</p> <p>In order to maintain consistency between websites and other documentation, Vendor and the Centre will jointly undertake an annual review of all Centre-related content.</p>	
<p>Service Category: Credential Assessment Reports</p>		
<p>Vendor will produce an Applicant Report about the outcome of each IET client application. The Applicant Report will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be in a format and contain the required information, as specified and signed off by the Centre as part of the Build SOW, and including confirmation (or otherwise) of relational aspects of the documents e.g., if the IET client worked in Canada, they should also have provided an applicably-dated Canadian license verification; 	<p>Measured monthly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Applicant Reports are completed in the agreed format (as specified and signed off by the Centre as part of the Build SOW). • The time between the date that all documents required for assessment are received by Vendor, and the date that the Applicant Report is completed and sent electronically to the IET client is less than 15 business days, excluding Vendor-recognized holidays in 95% of cases. 	

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of potential/actual fraud relating to received documents; • follow up with the IET client or relevant parties about concerns relating to received documents; • reaching a conclusion about the authenticity and verification of received documents – this to be done by a trained and competent document forensics analyst. • In the expected small minority of situations where an IET client's information does not completely meet all relevant criteria, Vendor will not fully automate the processing of these applications but instead will establish liaison with the Centre for guidance prior to deciding whether to make a "Fail" determination. • Customer information will be retained for a minimum of one calendar year from the first point of application, to support the ability of customers to reactivate their application within a one-year period. • Actioning of all the above activity is to occur within a secure and confidential online environment. 	<p>In order to support consistency between websites Vendor must discuss with the Centre all proposed changes to relevant IET guidance and information at least one month before the change is proposed to occur.</p> <p>In order to maintain consistency between websites and other documentation, Vendor and the Centre will jointly undertake an annual review of all Centre-related content.</p>	

Service Category: Credential Assessment Reports

<p>Vendor will produce an Applicant Report about the outcome of each IET client application. The Applicant Report will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be in a format and contain the required information, as specified and signed off by the Centre as part of the Build SOW, and including confirmation (or otherwise) of relational aspects of the documents e.g., if the IET client worked in Canada, they should also have provided an applicably-dated Canadian license verification; 	<p>Measured monthly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Applicant Reports are completed in the agreed format (as specified and signed off by the Centre as part of the Build SOW). • The time between the date that all documents required for assessment are received by Vendor, and the date that the Applicant Report is completed and sent electronically to the IET client is less than 15 business days, excluding Vendor-recognized holidays in 95% of cases. 	
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Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contain all relevant information (as specified by the Centre during the Build SOW) collected during the application and authentication and verification processes; be quality checked (generally 100% for junior or less experienced staff and less frequently for more senior experienced staff) by an appropriately trained and competent Vendor resource who is not the document forensics analyst who was assigned as the case manager; be provided to the IET client to review and to give authorization to release the report to the Centre. 		
Service Category: Appeals		
<p>Vendor will provide an appeal process for any IET client to appeal the conclusion reached by Vendor about the authenticity of the received documents relating to the identity, educational qualifications, registration in country of origin and any other country, English/French language proficiency, and work experience of the IET applicant.</p> <p>IET clients must appeal within 60 days of being advised of the Vendor conclusion.</p>	<p>Measured quarterly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appeal process will be aligned with current appeals processes offered by Vendor to IET applicants in its other programs, and as agreed with the Centre. Information about the appeal process (including the process, timeframe and any fees or potential costs) must be included in all cases when Vendor sends the Applicant Report to the IET client or otherwise advises the IET client of their conclusion. 	
Service Category: Centre-PT (Partner) Portal		
<p>Vendor will provide and maintain the Centre-PT Portal that was delivered as part of the Build SOW. The Centre-PT Portal must be user-friendly, and enable secure and confidential access for authorized Centre staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> find out about the overall number of IET clients who have applied to Vendor for authentication and verification services; 	<p>Measured monthly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centre-PT Portal is available and province and territory/Centre staff are able to undertake all of the functions listed opposite, for 99% of each month, based on assumed availability of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, and subject to scheduled maintenance periods agreed in advance with the Centre (such periods taking due consideration of public holidays and time zones). 	<p>The Centre must agree to reasonable requests for Vendor maintenance periods.</p>

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access authorized details about a specific IET client application to Vendor, with authorization from the IET where relevant; submit an electronic ticket query to Vendor about a specific IET client application or for more general process/technology information and support; contact the Vendor Centre Program Manager directly. 		
Service Category: Customer Support for the Centre		
<p>Vendor will provide effective, efficient, user-friendly bilingual customer support for all relevant Centre/province and territory staff for the purposes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising/resolving issues relating to specific IET clients; raising/resolving issues relating to Centre business rules and standards; raising and resolving issues relating to operational processes, procedures and reporting; identifying and developing quality and process improvement opportunities. <p>The customer support mechanisms will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vendor website and Centre-PT Portal; email; telephone support (including a toll free number for Centre staff to call Vendor) with access to relevant document forensics specialists, and customer support manager(s). <p>Customer support for the Centre will be managed and delivered by Vendor Program Specialists for the Centre program.</p>	<p>Annual customer satisfaction survey of Centre staff using the Portal show satisfaction $\geq 90\%$.</p> <p>Measured annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vendor website, the Centre-PT Portal, and email access are available for 99% of each month (based on assumed availability of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, and subject to scheduled maintenance periods agreed in advance with the Centre) Telephone support with access to relevant document forensics specialists and customer support manager(s) is available Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except for Vendor holidays. 80% of telephone calls are answered within 60 seconds, and the remaining 20% are given the option of receiving a call back, remaining on hold, or leaving a voicemail at a manager's extension. Callers will receive a callback within 30 minutes if a voicemail is left by 11:15 a.m. Emails and electronic queries via the Centre-PT Portal from Centre staff have an acknowledgement response sent within 5 minutes of receipt by Vendor. 	

Table 3.3. Scope of credential assessment services for a given centre (sample for illustrative purposes only) [cont'd]

Vendor Services	Vendor Performance Standards	Centre Obligations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of emails and electronic queries via the Centre-PT Portal from Centre staff are responded to with either an agreed resolution or plan of action within one business day, excluding Vendor holidays. The remaining 10% are responded to with either an agreed resolution or plan of action within three business days, excluding holidays. NB: This standard will be reviewed after three months from the Go Live Date and may then be changed by mutual agreement between the Centre and the Vendor. 	

Performance reporting and support

Performance reporting should be provided via regularly scheduled meetings between vendor Relationship Managers and the PQAC Coordinator. Vendor Operations Managers are engaged in these meetings as required. Topic areas will include:

- Volume
 - number of user accounts and trends
 - number and type (e.g., source country, language, suspected fraud) of applications submitted and trends
- Customer service
 - IET services response times
 - issues by severity
 - issues by type
 - IET and/or PT complaints
 - average times to issue a report (once all documentation has been received)
- IT
 - uptime of the system
- Change requests

The PQAC Coordinator and Vendor Relationship Manager should conduct at least two meetings annually. The vendor Operations Manager should meet monthly (or as agreed or required) with the PQAC Coordinator to review more immediate/tactical issues as required. Vendors should also provide monthly and quarterly reporting to support appropriate contract oversight at the strategic and tactical levels.

Below is a best practice approach which should be used with major vendors to govern support. This content is typically provided as part of a comprehensive SLA. It addresses issues such as problem notification, escalation, and response time procedures.

Service interruptions

If any interruption to service occurs, the vendor's objective is to restore normal operations as quickly as possible with the least possible impact on the PQAC, IETs, or participating provinces and territories. An interruption to service, or "incident", is any event which is not part of the standard operation of a service and which causes, or may cause, an interruption to or a reduction in the quality of that service. Incident Management is the process that captures, tracks, assigns, and manages incidents along with communicating with the end-user.

Incident Management intends to:

- reduce business impact of incidents by timely communication and resolution, thereby increasing effectiveness;
- proactively identify beneficial system enhancements and amendments;
- provide business-focused management information related to the SLA.

End-user support channels

Discovery of any service interruption may come from either automation software employed by a vendor to monitor PQAC services, or directly from applicants or the PQAC itself.

It is possible that IETs or provinces/territories may submit a change request (defined as a request to modify an existing service) incorrectly categorized as a service interruption. If so, the service interruption will be updated to reflect that it is a change request, and the appropriate change request process will be followed. (Note: Change requests are to follow the procedure as set out in the MSA and/or as described further in this section.)

Prioritization of service interruptions

The priority given to an incident will determine how quickly it is scheduled for resolution. It will be set depending upon a combination of the incident severity and impact. Priority is established using two criteria: urgency and impact. (Note: Any security breach will be considered Priority 1.)

Urgency is an indication of how long the resolution of the incident can be delayed:

- speed needed to resolve incident
- extent to which the PQAC can bear delay in resolution or completion.

Urgency is assessed using the rubric in Table 3.3.a.

Table 3.3.a. Urgency assessment

Urgency Value	Definition
High (Service Restoration Target = four hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users (IETs or provinces/territories) are unable to complete their work, and there is no viable workaround, and service restoration must be completed immediately, or significant loss of revenue, reputation, or productivity will occur.
Medium (Service Restoration Target = eight hours/one business day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users are unable to complete parts of their work, and there is no viable workaround, and service restoration must be completed within one business day or there is potential for significant loss of revenue, reputation, or productivity.
Low (Service Restoration Target = two business days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users can complete their work using a workaround, or users are unable to complete their work using a workaround. However, service restoration can be delayed by up to two business days without significant loss of productivity or operational goals.

Impact is the effect on the business due to the loss of the service. Impact is assessed using the rubric in Table 3.3.b.

Table 3.3.b. Impact assessment

Impact Value	Definition
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All users of the service specified are affected regardless of location, OR critical process is interrupted, and no workaround exists.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a localized service interruption affecting a specific but entire group of users OR all users affected by the service interruption are confined to a geographical location, AND non-critical process is interrupted.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A service interruption affects a single or small number of users across departments or geographical locations, but does not affect everyone in those locations.

Once impact and urgency are assessed, priority is calculated according to the rubric in Table 3.3.c.

Table 3.3.c. Calculating priority

		Impact		
		High	Medium	Low
Urgency	High	1	2	3
	Medium	2	3	4
	Low	3	4	5

The calculated priority of the incident is used to determine the order in which incidents should be addressed. Higher priority incidents will take precedence over incidents with lower priority. Regardless of priority, the restoration goal for any incident should be to meet the service restoration target determined by the incident's urgency.

Change Management

This section is intended to provide a high-level overview of a best practice Change Management process. Final version(s) will be confirmed through the contract negotiation processes with key vendors. Note that change management processes and procedures are typically described in Run contracts as noted previously, with more detailed descriptions of the approach noted in individual vendors' SLAs. The following description is relevant to an SLA.

The PQAC and vendors may discuss proposed changes from time to time during the course of normal service delivery and informally agree that some changes merit a more formal review. The formal review of all proposed changes will take place quarterly, during which approved potential changes should enter the Change Management process. The quarterly review will also be a mechanism the PQAC and vendors use to review completed changes.

The PQAC Coordinator, through their oversight of vendors, will be responsible for implementing and maintaining a Change Management process that will allow the PQAC to request changes to services, and allow vendors to manage, approve, and control changes.

A change is defined as the addition, modification, or removal of a service, or service component, and/or its associated elements. The PQAC Coordinator will support the Change Management process by approving requested changes and assisting in the assessment and prioritization of changes. The PQAC Coordinator may draw upon subject matter expertise and or the PQAC Committee as required.

The Change Management process begins when a Request for Change (RFC) is submitted. In this activity, all required information about the change and supporting documentation is provided. RFCs from vendors, provinces/territories, or the PQAC will be aggregated by the PQAC for joint review between the PQAC and vendors. Vendors may also bring forward RFCs.

Once RFCs have been reviewed and priorities are established, RFCs will be compiled and analyzed by subject matter personnel for completeness, duplication, conflicts, impact, and resourcing required. This process usually occurs quarterly with all change requests generated during the period compiled for review.

Depending on the nature of the request for change, a variety of supporting documents may be required. Overall, however, there are two broad types of change: proposed new services and modification to the existing services. The following are the change management processes for both.

Proposed new services

- Proposed changes must be described in writing for review by both parties. The description must include at a minimum the following information:
 - service components
 - service availability implications
 - service level objectives
 - service support to
 - IETs or other customers
 - provinces/territories or another stakeholder group as required
 - pricing and fees
 - to IETs or other customers
 - to the PQAC

- The proposed service must then undergo a preliminary review by both parties.
- Once the preliminary review is complete, a proposed statement of work must be provided to support operationalizing the potential service.

Modification to existing services

- Proposed changes must be described in writing for review by both parties. The description must include at a minimum the following information:
 - impacts to
 - service components
 - service availability implications
 - service level objectives
 - service support to
 - IETs or other customers
 - provinces/territories or another stakeholder group as required
 - pricing and fees
 - to IETs or other customers
 - to the PQAC
 - The proposed change must then undergo a preliminary review by both parties.
 - Once the preliminary review is complete, a proposed implementation plan must be provided to support operationalizing the potential service.

Statement of Work (SOW)

Regardless of the nature of the change, all projects will require a Statement of Work (SOW) with the following minimum set of parameters:

- scope and intended outcome(s)
- governance and reporting structure
- required resources and budget
- timeline for completion

The SOW would be reviewed by the PQAC Coordinator and affected stakeholders for final review and approval. The SOW would be signed by representatives of both parties (i.e., PQAC and associated vendor) and appended as an update to appropriate agreements in order to keep a comprehensive list of services.

The approved SOW will be used to authorize proceeding with the implementation.

4. Legislative Review to Support PQAC Implementation

Provinces and territories will not be owners of the PQAC. They would not be responsible for setting the terms of its vendors' detailed operations and procedures. Participating provinces and territories would have an arm's-length relationship with the PQAC. The PQAC would be responsible for managing vendors and their output. Provinces' and territories' responsibilities for IETs and their applications would commence once an IET applied and paid for an application for certification within one or more province or territory.

A jurisdictional scan of provincial and territorial legislation was conducted as part of the planning exercise to establish the PQAC and confirmed the following.

- Legislation in each province and territory confers the rights and responsibilities associated with standard setting to specific institutions and/or organizations within the province or territory. It does not, however, dictate detailed standards or operational policies and procedures. This is typically done within the responsible organization or institution at the level of rules, policy, and/or detailed operating procedure.
- Due to the arm's-length relationship between individual provinces and territories and the PQAC, migration to the PQAC will not require changes at the level of legislation.

A list of provincial and territorial legislation reviewed as part of this exercise is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Provincial and territorial legislation included in legislative review

Province or Territory	Education and Teacher Legislation
British Columbia	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/manual-of-school-law
Alberta	https://www.alberta.ca/K-12-education-legislation-and-regulations.aspx
Saskatchewan	https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/education#legislation
Manitoba	https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/legreg.html
New Brunswick	http://laws.gnb.ca/en/deplinks?subjectnumber=4
Nova Scotia	https://beta.novascotia.ca/government/education-and-early-childhood-development/legislation
Prince Edward Island	https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/legislation/education-and-lifelong-learning/514
Newfoundland and Labrador	https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/departement/legislation/
Yukon	https://legislation.yukon.ca/edu.html
Northwest Territories	https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/legislation
Nunavut	https://gov.nu.ca/education/information/education-act

However, some amendments to provincial and territorial policies and procedures will be required at levels below legislation. Exactly where these changes will be required will depend on the often unique structure of the education regulation, employment, advocacy, and oversight functions within individual provinces and territories. The presence of provincial and territorial regulatory bodies in/outside of provincial education departments, the involvement of unions and other stakeholder organizations, and the presence of teachers' councils all make the topography of each province and territory highly unique.

It is beyond the scope of this document to provide detailed policy and procedure changes required in every unique circumstance and organization. Rather, this document provides a flexible approach for all provinces and territories contemplating using the PQAC's services to successfully confirm, communicate, and ensure any policy or procedural changes required within their individual province or territory.

4.1 Approach to the Legislative Review

Legislation within each province and territory stipulates which institutions are granted the responsibility for determining standards within the province or territory. However, detailed standards, processes, policies, and procedures such as those affecting IET application and language-competency testing are typically set within the institution itself, below the level of legislation.

Regardless, the shift to a common approach for application processing and language-competency testing will necessitate some changes within each participating province and territory. Section 4.2 provides a series of issues to consider within participating provinces and territories as part of migrating to using the PQAC. Issues common to all provinces and territories are reviewed first, in Section 4.3, followed by a few examples of unique issues faced by some provinces and territories, based on their specific circumstance, in Section 4.4. Note that this list is not exhaustive. It is highly recommended that individual provinces and territories perform their own due diligence to ensure they have a comprehensive understanding of all changes required.

4.2 Common issues for PQAC implementation

Migrating a portion of IET application processing to the PQAC will necessitate changes in individual provinces and territories. Based on previous examples of such changes in other Canadian professions that have recently migrated to similar centres using an outsourced business model (Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Licensed Psychiatric Nurses in 2014²; Registered Psychologists in 2020³), the following issues should be considered by all provinces and territories.

PQAC: a third-party service

There is a broad variety of standards in place across participating provinces and territories with respect to IET application processing and language-competency testing. Many provinces and territories use third-party vendors today to provide services associated with IET applications and language-competency testing.

World Education Services (WES), for example, provides the following services with respect to application processing:

- credential authentication
- Canadian equivalency
- credit information to determine the amount of pedagogical training and practicum
- determining majors and minors (to inform teachable subjects)
- sending reports to a province or territory

Many provinces and territories also use third-party vendors for language proficiency testing in which applicants are assessed using standardized tools such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). A full list of tests and standards used by individual provinces and territories is provided in Table 4.2 – Language-competency testing standards by province and territory.

Provinces and territories use third-party services today and are accustomed to working with various language-competency testing standards. Therefore, transitioning to the PQAC will not represent a shift to a completely different operating model. The key change will be a shift to the PQAC as a new service provider

² National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS). <https://www.nnas.ca/>

³ Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations (ACPRO). <https://acpro-aocrp.ca/>

for both application processing and language-competency testing. A flexible approach for coordinating and communicating these changes within each participating province and territory is provided in Section 4.3.

Privacy and security

The PQAC will be responsible for ensuring the protection and security of IET data. Provinces and territories will become responsible for an IET and their information once they apply for certification in a province or territory and pay the associated fee. This relationship is similar to what is in place today when individual provinces and territories use third-party vendors such as WES for application processing and IELTS for language testing services.

The PQAC itself will manage privacy and security primarily through its vendor contracts, ensuring that appropriate standards are in place. These standards are expressed in the terms and conditions IETs will sign as part of establishing their account with the PQAC.

The PQAC will ideally be using the most exigent standards for privacy and security. In this way, no province or territory will be “ahead” of the PQAC in this area and will not need to be concerned about receiving data from an organization without the appropriate measures in place. Currently that standard is General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁴, which came into effect on May 25, 2018. This legislation was enacted in order to align how European Union member countries manage personal data. It is not in effect in Canada, but represents a best practice, and Canadian entities are not immune if they are receiving data from EU based organizations.

Data location

Many provinces and territories express concern over storing applicant data outside of Canada. Of particular concern is data stored in the United States, as the stored data may be subject to the *Patriot Act*, which allows for the United States government to obtain and inspect data as required under the Act.

While different provinces and territories interpret legislation through their own lens, it will be important to understand that this does not necessarily represent a change. In recent conversations with WES executives and CMEC, it was confirmed that providers such as WES currently store some of their information in the United States. The PQAC will consolidate applicant volume and may engage with a vendor such as WES. The PQAC represents a change in the IET’s journey, but not the location of their data. As is the case today, individual provinces and territories become responsible for IET data once the IET applies to a specific province or territory.

Canada’s Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)⁵ will require the PQAC to obtain IETs’ consent to the collection, use, or disclosure of their personal information as part of sending reports to provinces and territories. As noted, this will be accomplished through the terms and conditions which IETs will agree to prior to using PQAC services, and most likely again when IETs apply to a specific province or territory.

Language-competency testing

Migration to a common language-competency tool and standard will perhaps be the most complicated change involved in using PQAC services.

Table 4.2 provides an overview of various provincial and territorial approaches to language-competency testing. This information was collected on behalf of CMEC by Duklas Cornerstone Consulting, Inc. in a previous phase of the project. There are a few main language proficiency tests in use today, including TOEFL and IELTS. While there are some differences across provinces and territories, when a particular test such

⁴ General Data Protection Regulation. <https://gdpr-info.eu/>

⁵ Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). Retrieved from the Canada Justice Laws Website: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/P-8.6/>

as IELTS is applied, scoring requirements tend to be very similar. Note that Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, and Yukon Territory do not have formal language testing policies in place and leave it to registrars' discretion.

Table 4.2 Provincial and territorial legislation included in legislative review

Assessing language competencies	Applicants required to complete language proficiency test	Required English language proficiency scores by acceptable test type	Required French language proficiency scores by acceptable test type
British Columbia	Language proficiency for English and French is required in legislation for both public and independent school teaching certificates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL-iBT: reading 23, listening 23, speaking 27, writing 25, total 98 • TOEFL-CBT (137) (237 ISC) • TSE-P (50) • IELTS: speaking and writing 7, listening and reading 6.0, and overall score of 6.5 	Language appraisal at UBC or Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF)/ Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF). Written assessment from faculty of French at a Canadian University
Alberta	Applicants are required to complete a language proficiency test if English or French is not the applicant's first language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL-iBT: reading 23, listening 23, speaking 27, writing 25, total 98 • IELTS Academic: speaking and writing 7, listening and reading 6.5 	Taped interview in French with an Alberta certificated French teacher.
Saskatchewan	Applicants who completed teachers' education in countries where the official language is not English or French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL-iBT: reading 23, listening 23, speaking 27, writing 25, total 98 • TOEFL-CBT 237 and TSE-P 50 • IELTS Academic: Overall band score 6.5, no band below 6, and minimum of 7 on speaking and writing 	N/A
Prince Edward Island	Applicants who completed their education in a language other than English or French are required to submit satisfactory results on a Language Proficiency Test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL-iBT: reading 23, listening 23, speaking 27, writing 25, total 98 • TOEFL-CBT 237 and TSE-P 50 • IELTS Academic: Overall band score 6.5, no band below 6, and minimum of 7 on speaking and writing 	TESTCan: 5 in writing, reading, listening, 4.6 in speaking
Northwest Territories	Applicants who completed their education in a language other than English or French are required to submit satisfactory results on a Language Proficiency Test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL-iBT: reading 23, listening 23, speaking 27, writing 25, total 98 • TOEFL-CBT 237 and TSE-P 50 • IELTS Academic: Overall band score 6.5, no band below 6, and minimum of 7 on speaking and writing 	TESTCan: 5 in writing, reading, listening, 4.6 in speaking

Regardless of approach, all provinces and territories will need to discuss the PQAC approach to language-competency testing as it will represent a change from current tests in use, and overall testing approach. Testing approaches, standards, and results should all be reviewed, including any other proposed changes to language requirements. While a consensus has been reached among the participating provinces and territories on the use of the language-assessment tool and the application of a common standard for certification (Appendix B), provinces and territories should explore formalizing standards in regulation, in addition to adopting them in internal policy.

4.3 Common approach to PQAC implementation

Given their unique and specific circumstances, it is recommended that each province and territory develop a tailored implementation plan that ensures the smoothest transition possible to the new processing arrangements and associated standards.

The primary activity involved in these plans is anticipated to be stakeholder management, including communication and education, as well as refreshing communications materials and website content. It is also anticipated that many individuals and organizations beyond immediate stakeholders will be interested in these standards. Therefore, activity should be planned for the broad communication of new standards, including the creation of clear and easy-to-follow materials clarifying changes.

The following checklist covers the people and groups provinces and territories should communicate with so that the new standards can be in place and well communicated prior to the PQAC's anticipated launch date in winter 2022-2023.

1. Communicate with the Policy Director (or equivalent) in the Ministry/Department of Education or responsible entity. This person is responsible for knowing the regulations and policies that could be affected by changes to teacher requirements.
 - 1.1. Note: The legislation (Acts or Laws) of each province or territory will not be so specific as to require language competency or to specify types of acceptable language-competency evidence required to become a teacher. The Act will, however, enable government regulations or authorize a registrar of teachers to set the standards.
 - 1.2. Note: Each Ministry/Department of Education, or in the case of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB), may also need to update any communications or webpages they have related to language requirements to become a certified teacher. This can likely be checked with the Policy Director or the Communications Director, or the equivalent role at SPTRB.
 - 1.3. The two primary changes to be discussed are as follows:
 - 1.3.1. Application processing, including document collection, authentication, and verification processes, will be migrated from provincial and territorial standards to those agreed upon as part of the pan-Canadian alignment exercise conducted with the PQACWG (Appendix A). In this exercise, all participating provinces and territories agreed to a common set of standards for processing. These agreements are available under separate cover.
 - 1.3.2. Provinces and territories currently accept a range of standardized language-competency tests as described in Table 4.2. Migrating to a new test and standards (Appendix B) will require consultation to explain the basis of the test, confirmation of its validity, and the steps required to put it into place as the new standard.

2. The offices of provincial and territorial registrars of teachers (or equivalent) issue teacher certificates based on meeting requirements, including language competency. If not already aware, the personnel in these offices will need to be apprised of the new processes and standards. They will need to update established policies and communications, following their set processes for making changes.
3. Provinces and territories may have separate or combined teacher associations and teacher unions. It would be appropriate to advise them of the changes to be implemented and identify any implementation issues.
4. The hiring authority in most provinces and territories can be devolved to district school boards, principals, or other recognized persons or organizations. Provinces and territories will likely have a combination of public sector, private sector, and possibly religious sector education systems. These decision-makers may have questions about the new language requirements, especially any transitional provisions, so that they can remain confident they are hiring qualified teachers.
5. Any number of teachers currently certified under previous requirements may be wondering how the new processes and standards will apply to them. Pending available resources, a communications campaign may be organized to share relevant information and to answer frequently asked questions.

This checklist addresses issues which will be a concern for all provinces and territories. The checklist can be used as the basis for developing specific change management plans that include stakeholder consultation and communication plans.

A discussion regarding individual provinces and territories follows, as some of them may require a somewhat unique approach given their specific circumstances.

4.4 Differences in approach to PQAC implementation

The following provinces and territories have designated their provincial or territorial governments, through their Ministry/Department of Education or equivalent, to be responsible for IET standards including language competency requirements.

- Northwest Territories
- Alberta
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia
- Prince Edward Island
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Nunavut

Migration to using the PQAC will involve discussions within these provinces and territories regarding their approach to privacy, as well as discussions on their views about privacy standards. For example, most provinces and territories regard GDPR as an effective standard; however, it may not have been broadly discussed within all stakeholder groups. Therefore it will be important to begin discussions in each province and territory now so they are aware of the approach and can be informed regarding this potential change.

Data storage standards may also have slight variations across various provinces and territories. While the overall situation as described above stands, it will be important for each province and territory to understand how their stakeholders see the issue so they are best positioned to explain the PQAC's approach.

The issue of language-competency testing must also be addressed. There may be differences in the approach to adopting a new standard based on the linguistic environment within individual provinces and territories. It will be important to understand this, so changes may be explained effectively.

Note: Pending issuance of the RFP for vendor services and receipt of responses, details regarding privacy standards and data storage may vary somewhat. Therefore it will be important to inform local stakeholders of the overall approach and timing of these key steps. Final confirmation will be available once vendors are under contract. The timing of this is expected to be the winter of 2022-2023.

British Columbia and Saskatchewan would be two examples of provinces who are in a somewhat unique position.

British Columbia

The *Teachers Act* tasks the BC Teachers' Council with setting Certification Standards, including requirements for English and French language proficiency. These requirements will be in conflict with the language-competency consensus of the LCWG. The BC Teachers' Council is an independent board. The BC Teacher Regulation Branch operates separately from the Council, but its work is dependent on standards set by the Council. It is recommended that the registrar's office in BC contact the Council and begin discussion regarding the new standards.

Saskatchewan

With the proclamation of the *Registered Teachers Act*⁶ on July 1, 2015, the government of Saskatchewan granted the teachers of Saskatchewan the privilege of becoming a self-regulating profession. The Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board is responsible for setting language competency standards. It is recommended that discussion within the SPTRB begin to discuss the migration to new application processing and language testing standards.

⁶ *Registered Teachers Act*. Retrieved from the Publications Saskatchewan website: <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/api/v1/products/73688/formats/82545/download>

5. PQAC Implementation

The implementation of the PQAC will require the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to identify vendors to provide credential assessment services, language testing services in French and in English, proctoring and scheduling services for language testing, and test coding.

Assessment of the overall application, and the decision about licensing, will remain the responsibility of participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.

The following implementation plan describes how the PQAC will be developed, beginning with procurement of key services, followed by contracting, building, and finally launching of the PQAC.

5.1 Objectives of the implementation plan

The implementation plan covers a broad scope of activities; below are the key objectives of the plan.

1. Ensure that all activities required to implement the PQAC – commencing with funding and approval to proceed, through to post-production stabilization – are clearly identified and understood by key stakeholders.
2. Ensure continuity of services for IETs, both leading up to and throughout the transition period after the PQAC goes into full operation.
3. Ensure all project activity is based on an enquiring and collaborative approach that supports a productive ongoing relationship within the internal project team – comprising RTCC, PQACWG, LCWG, and the CMEC Secretariat – and between the team and associated vendors.

Note: Activities required to prepare individual provinces or territories for their respective internal changes are not within the scope of the PQAC implementation plan. These activities may include internal resourcing, business processes, websites, and policy and/or communication activities unique to a participating province or territory. The anticipated internal changes may be briefly summarized at a high level:

- Participating provinces and territories will need to make changes to their business processes, resourcing models, tools and technology, and information for staff and IETs, so that they are able to:
 - Direct any new IETs enquiring about licensure to the PQAC for credential assessment (i.e., authentication and verification) and for language-competency assessment in English or French, as required.
 - Provide a seamless service for IETs to transition from the PQAC process (i.e., application for assessment) to the provincial or territorial regulatory body process (i.e., application for teacher certification).
 - Receive and process applications for provincial or territorial teacher certification from IETs who have completed PQAC processes.
 - Receive the PQAC's credential assessment and language-competency assessment reports, and integrate them into the regulatory body's process for determining eligibility for teacher certification.

5.2 Assumptions for implementation

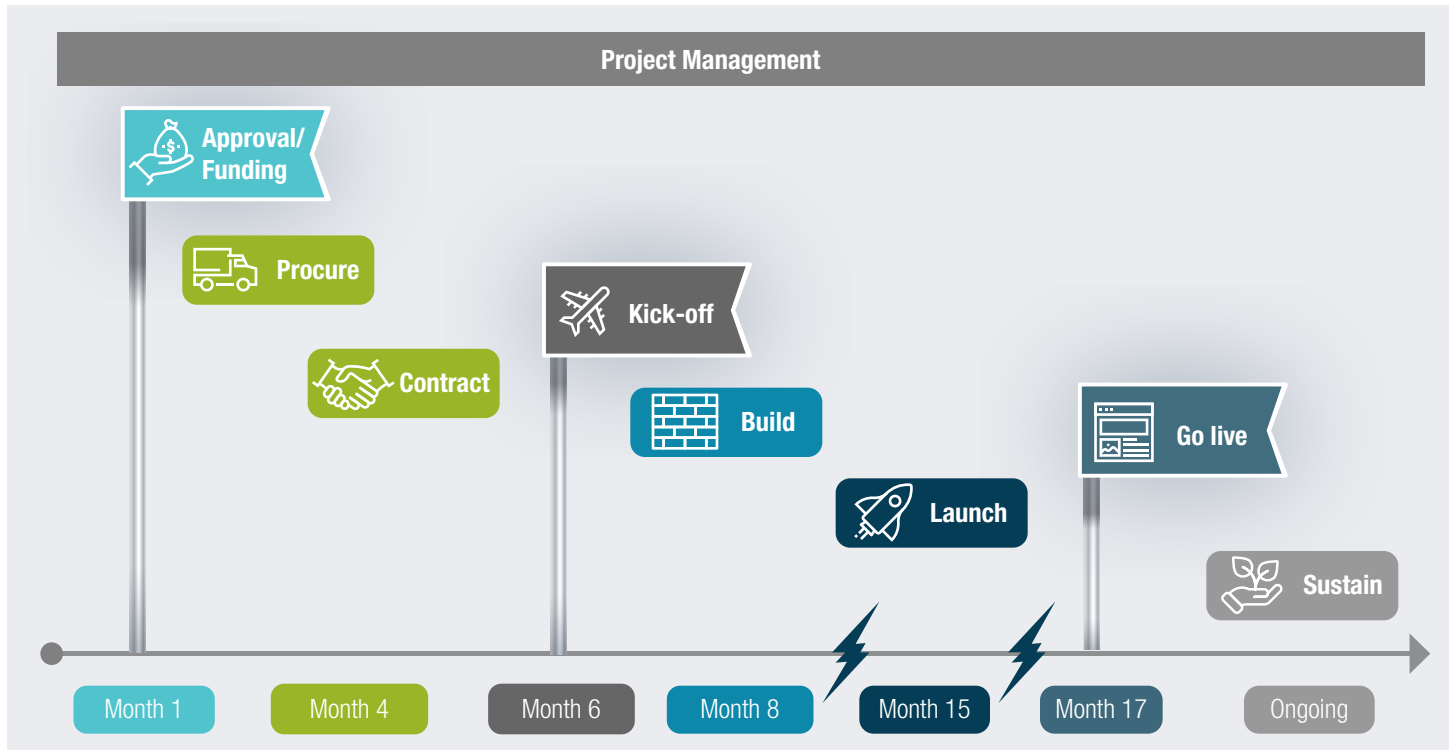
The PQAC implementation plan is based on the following assumptions. Note that these assumptions and their fulfilment are critical to the success of the project and will be monitored for progress as part of the implementation process.

1. The implementation of the PQAC has been reviewed and approved through Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) memorandum.
2. Funding necessary for PQAC implementation has been approved through memorandum.
3. All IET applications received by participating provinces and territories prior to the PQAC launch remain the responsibility of participating provinces and territories and will be actioned within their processes and systems. From the PQAC launch, participating provinces and territories will direct all new IET applicants to PQAC.
4. RFP processes are successful, identifying vendors who are able to meet scope, schedule, and budget requirements.
5. Contracts are able to be negotiated and signed with successful vendors in the time frames provided.
6. Pan-Canadian agreements achieved in the previous phase of the project are adhered to for all services.
7. Complexity within the vendors' technology solutions is minimized by automation in processing the majority of applicant files. Using the "80/20 rule", applications with standard documents will follow a standard process (the vast majority of applications). Applications for which standard documentation may be unavailable, or the standard process cannot be followed, will initially require manual intervention into the standard process (a limited minority of applications).
8. The PQAC maintains a relationship with an IET's data; however, through its contracted vendors, the PQAC is responsible for the relationship with the IET only until all applicable assessment reports have been completed and successfully transferred to a participating provincial or territorial regulatory body.
9. Participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies become responsible for the relationship with the IET upon successful receipt of an assessment report via the vendor's portal and application of the IET to the specific province or territory where they intend to settle and work.
10. The PQAC complies with relevant provincial, territorial, federal, and international legislation and information privacy requirements.
11. There will be no significant change requests during the Build phase.

5.3 Implementation plan

As per the chart in Figure 5.3, implementation planning will occur in five key phases upon approval of the implementation plan and associated funding, and will end with the PQAC being fully operational. In total, it is anticipated that these phases will occur across a 17-month time frame.

Figure 5.3. Implementation plan phases



Each major phase of the project – in terms of primary deliverables, key activities, and resources required – is described in detail in this section.

Each phase of the implementation project will be subject to oversight from the RTCC and its two working groups, the PQACWG and the LCWG, who will be responsible for decision making. This governance structure is described in detail in Section 5.4 – Implementation project governance.

Procure

Months 1-4

1. RFP issued for IET credential assessment vendor
2. RFP issued for language testing vendor
3. RFP issued for IET language test proctoring and scheduling vendor
4. Vendors selected

Key activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm governance structure• Confirm detailed requirements• Create/issue RFPs• Create evaluation rubrics for RFP responses• Conduct evaluations• Select vendors (credential assessment, language testing, proctoring and scheduling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project governance (RTCC/PQACWG/LCWG)• Project management (Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives at the CMEC Secretariat, RFP Consultant)• Pan-Canadian requirements (PQACWG /LCWG)• Vendors (credential assessment, language testing, proctoring and scheduling)• RFP evaluation process (RTCC)• CMEC support services (including contract/legal support)

The PQACWG and LCWG will confirm final requirements for vendors and procure the services required. Requests for proposals (RFPs) will be issued for credential assessment services, language testing, and language test proctoring and scheduling services. Each RFP will be based on the pan-Canadian requirements achieved in earlier stages of the project.

Assessment of RFP responses will be based on an objective set of criteria and their relative importance, based on CMEC's established procurement process.

Contract

Months 5-6

1. IET credential assessment vendor contracted
2. IET language testing vendor contracted
3. IET language test proctoring and scheduling tool vendor contracted

Key activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negotiate contract• Sign contracts• PQAC project charter and governance established	Key resources from Phase 1, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RFPs/responses• Participating provincial and territorial support (RTCC)

Once successful vendors have been identified, contracts will be negotiated to confirm services. Contracts will focus on the scope, schedule and budget of deliverables, as well as on the specific terms and conditions relevant to the services provided. A project charter will also be created to govern this phase of the project. Please see a sample table of contents for a project charter In Appendix C.

Build

Months 7-15

1. **Build services and portals**
2. **Test/refine services and platforms**
3. **Establish the PQAC's public identity**
4. **Launch portals**
5. **Hire PQAC Coordinator**
6. **Train PQAC Coordinator**
7. **Establish PQAC Committee**
8. **Contract coders**

Key activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PQAC project kicked off • IET credential assessment and language-competency assessment portals created • Language test, scheduling, and proctoring services integrated • Test/refine services and platforms • Establish the PQAC's official name and develop public-facing communications on its identity and implementation • Launch portals • Hire PQAC Coordinator • Train PQAC Coordinator • Nominate and confirm membership on PQAC Committee in accordance with its Terms of Reference • Contract coders 	<p>Key resources from Phases 1 and 2, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed contracts • Detailed requirements based on RFP responses • Vendor teams (including Project Managers and Chief Client Engagement Officers) • Signed project charter • PQAC Committee (including Terms of Reference) • Coders

Once contracts have been signed, an implementation project will be established. Vendors will leverage their core capabilities to develop the customized services required by the PQAC.

The Build phase will lead to the development of the following credential assessment services from vendors:

- hosting pre-arrival information and providing pre-application information;
- application intake;
- document intake and authentication, including:
 - verification of documents (as per standard vendor processes) against the information in vendor databases, and against other relevant vendor information sources;
 - confirmation of relational aspects of the documents (e.g., ensure conformity with document standards in the country of origin);
 - identification of potential or confirmed fraud relating to received documents;
 - follow up with the IET and other relevant parties about concerns relating to received documents;
 - reaching a conclusion about the authenticity of received documents (led by a trained and competent document forensics analyst);
- conversion of IET study units into a Canadian context;
- issuing standardized bilingual credential assessment reports to provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for assessment and decision making;

- bilingual customer care for IETs, and participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.

The Build phase will also assure the availability of language-competency testing services at the time of initial registration. IETs will be given the choice of obtaining language testing services in conjunction with their initial assessment or at a later date. Language-competency vendor services will include the following:

- providing a portal for IET registration for a test and test scheduling;
- administering French and English language-competency assessments via an online platform;
- coding completed language-competency assessments;
- reporting language-competency assessment results.

Note that required language-competency vendor services also include maintaining and updating language-competency assessment tools through the development, testing, and psychometric analysis of test items as well as through periodic standard-setting exercises; however, these services will be secured in the Sustain phase.

Identification of requirements, development, testing, and sign off are the primary concerns of the Build phase. As vendors typically start with generic platforms and customize them to suit the needs of specific clients, the following steps will likely occur on a cyclical basis:

1. Initial business requirements are gathered and represented in a prototype platform which is demonstrated via web-conferencing.
2. The platform is then enhanced and customized to meet requirements identified in the demo session, and a subsequent prototype is developed for further review and confirmation at the next workshop.
3. At each prototype and enhancement/customization point, additional functionality is added to allow the PQAC internal project team to incorporate/review additional requirements within the context of the growing solution. Development and system testing occur in between prototypes.
4. This pattern repeats itself until all requirements have been reviewed and approved. Using this approach, each new prototype provides a broader view of the growing solution, until the entire solution is reviewed and approved through project governance.

Once all major solution requirements and components have been identified, prototyped, and agreed upon, the overall development will be completed. Testing will then be conducted by vendors, PQAC project participants and management, and finally by PQAC staff, to ensure that delivered solution components meet expected requirements.

During this period, vendors will source and train internal staff as required to focus on PQAC applicant processing and support. Finally, PQAC staff will be trained on usage of the individual solution components.

System implementation will be based on a set of go/no-go criteria jointly established by vendors and the PQAC internal project team. System components, and the solution overall, will be evaluated against these criteria as a final check-point prior to implementation.

Upon successfully passing the go/no-go criteria, the system will go into production. A back-out plan will be developed in case the system must be removed or temporarily shut down after implementation.

Launch

Months 16-17

- 1. PQAC is launched**
- 2. Service level agreements (SLAs) with vendors are signed**
- 3. PQAC enters post-production stabilization**
- 4. PQAC is stabilized and ready for transition to operational state**

Key activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch IET credential assessment services• Launch IET language test, proctoring and scheduling services• Contract coders• Negotiate and sign SLAs• Transition governance from project to PQAC• Stabilize PQAC• Close out project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PQAC Coordinator• PQAC Committee• Signed contracts• Vendor project team (Customer Relationship Managers and vendor operational teams)

Once the Build phase is complete and all services are in place, the PQAC will be launched, including all credential and language-competency assessment services. A period of post-production stabilization will commence to ensure smooth operations. Once stabilized, the PQAC will be asked to formally accept the solution. Formal acceptance will be based on all requirements described during the Build phase being met, and a specified number of IET applications having been successfully assessed, resulting in the production of vendor performance reports to PQAC based on SLAs. At that point the solution will transition from project to operational mode.

The project team will be disbanded and governance and operational tasks will be transitioned from the project to the operational team. The vendors' PQAC Customer Relationship Managers will commence their roles, taking over from vendors' Chief Client Engagement Officers. The PQAC Coordinator will take over managing the day-to-day solution from the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives and vendor Project Managers, and the PQAC Committee will be activated.

Following this transition the project will shut down.

NB: Given the current breadth and complexity of IET applications, the approach will be to focus system development on automation of the bulk of applications that do not have special or unusual circumstances attached. Applications with unusual circumstances may not be fully automated in this initial phase, but rather will be handled on a somewhat more manual basis and via direct consultation with PQAC staff. Automation will be provided where possible; however, it is not this project's intent to fully automate all potential IET applications at this time.

After Month 17

- 1. Vendor-PQAC relationship management begun**
- 2. Service level agreement (SLA) meetings scheduled**
- 3. Language test maintenance plan developed and implemented**

Key activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee operations • Monitor SLAs • Deliver PQAC services to IETs and participating provinces and territories • Stakeholder management and communications • Maintain test (item development, item performance monitoring, standard setting) • Develop and implement a language test maintenance/update plan, including procurement of vendor services for the development, testing, and psychometric analysis of test items. 	<p>Key resources from Phase 4, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing participation and support from participating provinces and territories (PQAC Committee) • Test coders • Vendors to maintain/update language-competency services: assessment, psychometric, and language expertise (consultant(s)/PQAC Committee)

Finally, the PQAC will enter into a sustainment phase. Project teams will be disbanded, with PQAC governance and staff resources now entirely responsible for service delivery and operations. At the outset of this phase, PQAC will initiate service level agreement (SLA) monitoring and relationship management processes and procedures to ensure ongoing productive relationships with key vendors.

5.4 Project management approach

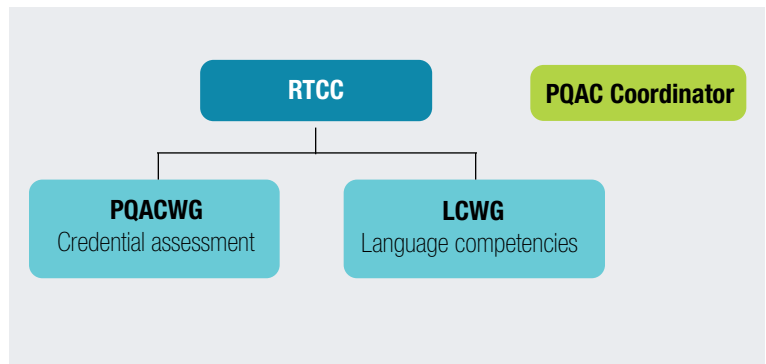
This section is a framework for decision making and communication in the implementation project. In addition, it outlines the responsibilities of key resources in the PQAC’s internal project team and within vendor teams.

Note that this section is limited to the implementation phase of the project. For a description of governance once the PQAC is fully operational, see Section 3.

Implementation project governance

Figure 5.4.a proposes a governance structure for the implementation project. This structure could be established at the outset of the implementation project and remain in place until completion of the Launch phase.

Figure 5.4.a. Project governance structure



RTCC would provide strategic support and oversight for this project. To support the transition to the Launch phase, the PQAC Coordinator would participate in governance ex officio. Note that the CMEC Secretariat would coordinate the project on behalf of RTCC and serve as the Project Sponsor, and be the direct liaison among all parties to the project.

The PQACWG and LCWG would be authorized to make decisions on behalf of the RTCC in their areas of expertise – credential assessment and language competencies, respectively – except where issues arise that require escalation to the RTCC as a whole for discussion and decision.

Key resources

The Build phase of the project will be the most resource intensive. Project management teams from all participating vendors will be involved alongside project resources from the CMEC Secretariat, RTCC, PQACWG, and LCWG.

As per Figure 5.4.b, it is assumed that a project manager acting on behalf of RTCC (Manager, Teacher Certification Initiatives) will oversee all resources and report to the steering committee.

The primary roles and responsibilities of project team members are described in Table 5.4.a.

Figure 5.4.b. Project roles and responsibilities

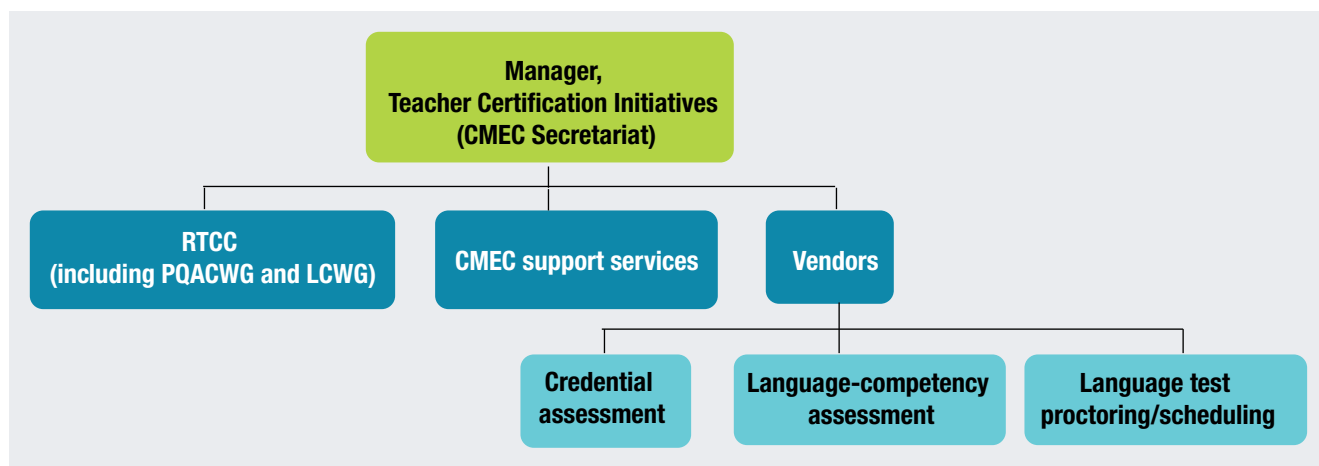


Table 5.4.a. Responsibilities of project resources

Role	Primary responsibilities
Manager, Teacher Certification Initiatives (CMEC Secretariat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be responsible and accountable for the successful completion of the project within the approved scope, schedule, and budget as detailed in this implementation plan and any subsequent approved changes. • Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project plan, scope, activity, deliverables, schedule, resources, budget, issues, and risks. • Escalate relevant risks, issues and change requests to the PQACWG or LCWG, and RTCC where necessary, for consideration/direction/approval. • Ensure the project achieves deliverables within agreed time frames, budget, and quality standards. • Provide reporting and assurance to the Project Sponsor (the CMEC Secretariat) for the attention of RTCC and its working groups (PQACWG and LCWG). • Maintain an effective working relationship with the vendor Project Managers.

Table 5.4.a. Responsibilities of project resources [cont'd]

Role	Primary responsibilities
PQACWG and LCWG, on behalf of RTCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in project team meetings and project planning. • Contribute to identification and resolution of risks and issues. • Contribute specialist knowledge about project activities, deliverables, issues, and risks. • Participate in the development, design, and implementation of new/changed business requirements, rules, processes, and procedures. • Contribute to the definition of required configurations for relevant system components. • Participate in user acceptance testing.
Vendor Project Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible and accountable for the successful delivery of vendor deliverables as described in the project charter. • Responsible for day-to-day leadership and management of vendor resources, activities, and effort. • Assist the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives in developing a project charter and ongoing project work plans. • Provide vendor input into project reporting (weekly team meetings; RTCC, PQACWG, LCWG meetings; ad hoc meetings, as required). • Assist the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives with project reporting. • Monitor, evaluate, and report monthly on the project performance and financial status against the baseline work plan to the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives. • Raise project issues, risks, quality, and scope deviations and recommend corrective actions to the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives. • Prepare change requests in order that the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives may review the proposed change and the impact on the project, and communicate change approval/rejection based on decisions made by project governance. • Obtain written approval and sign-off on all project deliverables from the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives.
Vendor Service Delivery Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for defining, documenting, and leading any vendor business process reviews and subsequent changes associated with the project. • Conduct vendor business process review sessions. • Map vendor business processes with key stakeholders. • Confirm change impacts and manage overall implementation of vendor business processes with stakeholder departments. • Confirm that final business process and system configurations are in alignment.
Vendor IT Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop IT design, development, testing, and deployment plans. • Oversee build, testing, and delivery of all contractual components of the system. • Support vendor IT resources through all phases of the project, including post-launch and the transition to the sustainability phase.

Communications and stakeholder management

It will be essential that the project communicates effectively with internal and external stakeholders. Table 5.4.b summarizes the stakeholders and the reasons for communicating with them.

Table 5.4.b. Stakeholders and purpose of communication

Stakeholders	Project personnel will communicate with these stakeholders so that they...
Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a full understanding of project requirements and are building their solution to meet those requirements. • have effective access to the Manager, Teacher Certification Initiatives, and PQAC subject matter experts (SMEs) to facilitate the achievement of the project objectives. • understand and respond to PQAC issues and concerns. • can contribute to the development and maintenance of effective relationships between PQAC and vendors.
PQACWG, LCWG, and RTCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are key and active participants in the design, development and implementation of the changes that will affect teacher certification processes, tools, and staff. • are equipped to lead, manage, and support their staff through the transition to the new approach, processes, and procedures. • understand the purpose and nature of the changes and are keen to contribute their skills and experience to support the direction and success of the changes. • are fully aware of the impact of the changes on their roles and daily activity and know what options/opportunities are open to them as a result of the changes. • understand and are equipped to work with changed/new business policies, processes, and tools. • understand the purpose and nature of the changes. • can identify any impacts on policies, processes, and tools in their own areas; provide input about how best to manage those impacts; and lead the implementation of any necessary changes. • fully understand the strategic importance of the project and can actively support the successful achievement of project objectives.
IETs who applied before launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know if/how the changes will affect their current application, and they understand what they need to do/provide to have their application assessed and finalized.
New IETs wanting to apply from launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that they need to successfully go through the vendor's process before they can apply for teacher certification to a participating provincial or territorial regulatory body. • understand what they need to do and what they need to provide to the PQAC through each of the vendors. • contact vendors in relation to the vendor processes and contact PQAC in relation to PQAC processes. • are not deterred from seeking certification as teachers in Canada because of the "dual process".
All PQAC members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are aware of the purpose and nature of the changes stemming from PQAC implementation.

Change request process

It is recommended that any changes to the implementation plan be requested via a formal change request process. As noted above, it is assumed that no significant changes will be made during the Build phase of the implementation plan, as this would have a negative impact on schedules.

The following change request process is proposed for requesting changes to previously agreed upon deliverables, schedule, scope, and budget of the implementation plan.

1. A potential change can be identified by anyone and brought forward to the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives.
2. The project team member will enter the change request into the Project Change Register.

3. The vendor Project Manager will determine if the proposed change can be accommodated within the current project charter.
 - 3.1. If so, the change request will be assessed, decided on, and managed at the project level.
 - 3.2. If not, relevant members of the project team (the Manager of Teacher Certification Initiatives, PQACWG/LCWG leadership, and RTCC leadership, where appropriate) will analyze the change request to determine the impact on the project.
4. The proposed change may also be discussed directly with the Project Sponsor, to determine if it requires further analysis, or if a decision can be made immediately.
5. The vendor Project Manager will prepare a formal change request for the PQACWG or LCWG. Where the proposed change would have an impact on vendors, the vendor Project Manager will document the vendor view within the change request.
6. The PQACWG or LCWG will review and make decisions on change requests as part of the regular meetings. Decisions will be recorded in the meeting Summary of Decisions (SoD).
7. The vendor Project Manager will action approved change requests in terms of changes to the project deliverables, schedule, scope, and/or budget. This will be done in conjunction with relevant project team members.
8. The final change request documentation will be stored in the project repository on the vendor SharePoint site. See Appendix D for a sample change request form.

Risk and issue management

Appropriate risk and issue management protocols must be in place for all phases of the project. All project team members must actively contribute to the identification and management of risks, and any issues that arise. Identified risks will be tracked through a project risk register (see sample in Appendix E), and mitigating steps will be applied where possible, in order to minimize the impact of any risks prior to their becoming active issues. All high-level risks and issues will be escalated to the Project Sponsor, and reported through the monthly project status report.

Key risks for each phase of the project are noted below, with corresponding mitigation.

Procure

- Approval from ACDME and the associated funding is not provided to support procurement.
 - Close adherence to initial project goals, a strong briefing note submission highlighting progress made to date, and a solid approach to implementation will be necessary in order to support approval.
- No vendors respond to the RFPs, or responses are not able to meet core requirements including services provided, cost, and implementation timelines.
 - The PQAC internal project team must continue to engage with key vendors in the marketplace, in order to ensure alignment of requirements with service offerings. Further engagement must take place during the RFP phase to ensure that requirements are in alignment with current capabilities and pricing is realistic.

Contract

- Additional provinces and or territories withdraw from participation, further reducing applicant volumes.
 - The PQAC internal project team must continue to engage with key stakeholders, including participating provinces and territories, to confirm commitment to the project. Commitments would be confirmed via

the quarterly reporting process, and ongoing discussions with RTCC would be used to gauge overall participation.

- RTCC and its working groups cannot give clear direction or business rules to vendors at the required times, due to diverging stakeholder demands.
 - Pan-Canadian requirements for the PQAC, which were established during a previous phase of the project, must be used as the foundation for requirements. Provincial and territorial agreement and adherence to these requirements will ensure efficient service contracting and delivery.
 - The PQAC internal project team must draw on the breadth of vendor experience and enable vendors to provide direction during meetings and discussions with PQAC to obtain necessary information.
- The contract process takes too long, affecting implementation timelines.
 - The PQAC internal project team must keep close attention to the implementation plan, to effectively schedule and maintain the plan and timelines as the project evolves. Consequently, legal resources and the timing of their involvement must be identified early to provide suitable support, as required.

Build

- Availability of, or changes to key resources (PQAC internal project team or vendors) may have a negative impact on timelines, the quality of the implementation project deliverables, or IETs.
 - Establishing a clear implementation plan at the outset and identifying all resources required during the Build phase of the project will assist in resource planning. All vendors must be held to contractual commitments for providing sufficient resources to complete the Build phase of the project, according to the schedule.

Launch

- Participating provinces and territories are not able to make required internal changes in accordance with the overall project plan.
 - Early engagement and communication within participating provinces and territories must be used to identify key changes that each will have to make in order to participate in the PQAC. This communication must remain constant throughout all phases of the project.

Sustain

- Participating provinces and territories are not satisfied with PQAC services.
 - The PQAC internal project team must provide effective communication to ensure a clear understanding of the services to be provided. This will ensure that expectations from key stakeholders are in line with deliverables.
 - If warranted, a change management process (see Section 3.3 – Change Management) will be used to identify, scope, and implement any agreed-upon changes. The change management process must be defined in the project charter, which will be a foundational document governing all aspects of the project.
- Volumes from participating provinces and territories decline due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., labour market conditions, immigration program reform), resulting in higher than expected vendor fees.
 - Contracts must be negotiated such that volumes will not be “guaranteed”. Most likely, prices will be guaranteed within volume ranges, to allow for unexpected fluctuations.
- Some participating provinces and territories choose to no longer use PQAC services, after launch.
 - The PQAC coordinator role will focus on stakeholder engagement and management. This individual will be tasked with keeping abreast of provincial and territorial needs, issues, and concerns, and must address them proactively to ensure satisfaction of the PQAC services.

Pan-Canadian Qualification Assessment Centre Working Group (PQACWG)



PQACWG Consensus



Scope of activity related to the pan-Canadian qualifications assessment centre (the “Centre”) for internationally educated teachers (IETs)

General scope

1. Participating provinces and territories have agreed on the following goals for the Centre, based on goals stated in the project proposal.
 - Improving access to pre-arrival information for IETs seeking to settle in Canada to teach in a given province or territory.
 - Promoting the adoption of fair, transparent, consistent, and timely assessment and recognition procedures leading to the issuing of licences to practise to IETs in the provinces and territories of Canada. This includes the assessment of French and/or English language competencies.
 - Improving labour market integration outcomes of IETs within the teaching profession in the provinces and territories.
2. Implementation of the Centre will require participating provinces and territories to officially recognize the Centre’s mandate to provide services and expertise to the provinces and territories.
3. The Centre will align its practices with recognized conventions and that the quality assurance context for all Centre activities will be informed by laws, regulations, policies and treaties at all levels (provincial/territorial, federal, and international).
4. The Centre must outsource credential assessment services to a vendor outside the Registrars for Teacher Certification Canada (RTCC).

Applicants to the Centre

The Centre is being established to assess the qualifications of IETs.

The Centre’s responsibilities and activities

1. The Centre is to be the single-entry point for IETs applying for teacher certification in Canada (other than Quebec and Ontario) and will be responsible for the authentication, verification, and assessment of international qualifications to support provincial and territorial certification processes. The Centre does not prevent provinces and territories from acting as the first point of contact when recruiting IETs.
2. The “assessment” services offered by the Centre through a credential assessment services vendor will be limited to the following:
 - gathering, authentication, and validation of information and documentation for the purpose of producing a report on IET qualifications and transmitting it to the provinces and territories for assessment and decision making.
3. Core services to be provided and activities to be undertaken by the Centre:
 - a. communicating Centre responsibilities and distinguishing them from provincial/territorial responsibilities;
 - b. providing information or linking to information on the websites of the individual provinces and territories on requirements for qualifying to teach in individual provinces and territories in Canada;

Provincial/territorial responsibilities vis-à-vis the Centre

The provinces and territories will retain exclusive jurisdiction for determining an applicant's eligibility to teach (leading to the decision to grant certification, refuse certification, grant or refuse higher levels of certification, and/or impose additional certification requirements).

Centre tools

1. A robust information management infrastructure is essential to serve IETs and provincial and territorial certification authorities.
2. The Centre and any contracted service vendor must prioritize digitization in order to improve service delivery to IETs, with specific emphasis on maintaining the privacy and security of collected documents and information.

Eligibility to work in Canada

Proof of eligibility to work in Canada will not be requested during the application to the Centre and will instead be requested in the provinces and territories, as applicable.

Language Competencies Working Group (LCWG)



LCWG Consensus



The RTCC language-competency assessment in the provinces and territories

1. Members agree that the language-competency assessment of the Registrars for Teacher Certification Canada (RTCC) will be adopted by all participating provinces and territories.
2. Applicants to all provinces and territories will have to meet the same language-competency standard in order to be eligible for certification on the basis of the RTCC language-competency assessment.

The Centre and the requirement of evidence of language competency

The Centre will be responsible for the RTCC language-competency assessment tool, including:

- a. oversight
- b. administration
- c. maintenance and renewal of test items
- d. coding

RTCC will maintain responsibility for regularly reviewing and adapting standards for demonstrating language competency through the assessment.



Sample Project Charter



Below is a sample table of contents outlining the typical sections one would expect to find in a project charter. Given the timing and nature of next steps in the implementation plan, these details may change pending the development of an RFP, submission of responses, and contract negotiation process.

1. Background
2. Purpose
3. Objectives
4. Critical success factors
5. Workstreams
 - 5.1. Assessment
 - 5.2. Language testing
6. Assumptions
7. Scope of work – Assessment Workstream
 - 7.1. Introduction
 - 7.2. Approach
 - 7.3. Deliverables and milestones
8. Scope of work – Language Workstream
 - 8.1. Approach
 - 8.2. Scope
 - 8.3. Deliverables and milestones
9. Project management
 - 9.1. Project roles and responsibilities
10. Budget
11. Risks and mitigations management
 - 11.1. Issues management
12. Monitoring and reporting
13. Change request process
14. Document management
15. Communications and stakeholder management
16. Appendix 1 – Deliverables and Milestones



Change requests



The following is a sample change request form which would be used to discuss potential changes to the project with the steering committee. Once approved, this change request would be appended to the project charter document.

Project Change Request [NUMBER]	[DATE]		
Purpose or change:			
Rationale:			
Impact if not approved:			
Detailed budget notes:			
Project cost categories	Details	Amount	Fiscal month/year
Approvals:			
[AUTHORIZED ENTITY] made the following decision:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved: Unanimously approved			



Risk register



The following risk register tracks potential risks which may have an impact on the project. Each risk is categorized in terms of its probability of occurrence with one being the lowest probability, and ten the highest. The impact of the risk is further categorized based on what aspect of the project it may affect. The scope of deliverables, the quality of deliverables, the schedule, or the cost are all potential impacts. For each potential impact, the risk is again scored on a scale of one to ten. Multiplying the probability score by the impact creates an overall priority for each risk.

Risk ID	Risk Statement	Probability	Impact				Score	Response
			Scope	Quality	Schedule	Cost		



Business Case and Implementation Plan of a Pan-Canadian Credential Assessment Centre for Internationally Educated Teachers

