

Standards Transformation Project (formerly PG2020)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 14 February 2019

The questions and responses below are reflective of questions and comments we have received from the profession in response to the implementation of the Standards Transformation Project. We will keep them regularly updated over the implementation period in order to reflect members' views and provide answers in a timely way.

What is the Standards Transformation Project?

In 2014, RICS' Governing Council recognised that the organisation needed to become more agile to embrace the impacts of our changing world. At the same time, Council also concluded that our professional group (PG) board structure needed to be fit for purpose to better reflect the needs of RICS professionals and the market demand for our standards. Council delegated the task of reviewing this to a working party of council members and Knowledge Board. They began a review of our current structure and its operational functionality. In the UK, RICS operates 17 PG boards. If scaled up for our world regions, this would mean that we would need to operate 2482 PG boards, which is clearly unsustainable. So, the working group concluded that a more agile and flexible model needed to be adopted. Modes of working have changed dramatically over the years 5 years. Time resource and relying on the goodwill of the profession to attend open-ended board meetings is not an efficient way to manage valued resource. We have already seen a steady decline in productivity and outputs and are very conscious of the fact that we need to be using dedicated time effectively and efficiently.

The Standards Transformation project aims to ensure market relevance for our profession and standards while streamlining operations in the professional group sphere by removing boards and putting in place a more flexible structure. The structure focuses on addressing external market need whilst ensuring better use of time and resource. Physical meetings will still need to take place, but they will be focussed with clear tasks and deliverables. Digital platforms will also be introduced to harvest content and insight from the profession. This will be a more flexible and agile way in which to deliver our standards.

Why is it happening now?

In November 2018, the profession voted in favour of Governing Council's proposals to change the governance of RICS. The vote also enabled the formation of a joint board for the creation and regulation of standards to replace the previously separate regulation and standards boards functions. RICS has been piloting the joint board for the past year, and the interaction and debate between members, regulators, staff and lay people has been very positive.

At its meeting in November 2018, Governing Council reconfirmed their support for changes to the standard setting process and professional group boards. We will be working with the existing active

boards over the next year as they move away single discipline boards to a cross-discipline, collaborative structure with a focus on market insight and standards creation and enforcement. We have already run several successful leader forums, which will be a key function of the new structure, where our members met with clients, fellow professionals from RICS, government departments, and other market influencers.

What does this mean for Professional Group Boards?

It means that the current professional group board structure will be dismantled and replaced with a more flexible and agile structure. RICS will establish leaders' forums where members of the profession can come together to discuss market related topics and the need for standards. These groups are likely to be formed using the members of the profession who currently sit on professional group boards. While we expect the change to happen in the next 12 months, there is no set date when all PG Boards switch to the new model. The timing for each Board to switch over will be confirmed depending on their specific projects and workplan.

RICS will also establish task and finish working groups. Their function will be to undertake projects with clearly established parameters, timescales and deliverables. These will be formed to produce standards and insights from informed insight from the market.

Will the Professional Groups be disbanded?

No. The Standards Transformation project only affects the way in which the PG Boards function. The professional groups, the pathways to qualification, and any chartered designation (e.g. Chartered Building Surveyor) will remain the same. The aim is to make the gathering of market insight faster, easier and to increase the value of the profession's input into creating standards and providing market insight.

Who was consulted?

A wide and varied programme of consultation has been undertaken. Along with Governing Council and an advisory group of diverse members, the PG Boards and their Chairs have been heavily involved in the development of the new structure and we will continue to work with them over the next year to migrate current workstreams to the new model.

What will replace Professional Group Boards?

We are currently in the process of creating the leaders' forums and the digital platform. This work is led by an implementation group of professional members from RICS regions and PGs and is chaired by Justin Sullivan. It will be working with all existing PG boards and carrying out further consultation. Our plans should enable many more professionals to become involved in standards, insight and guidance regionally or globally. A fundamental aim is to move away from the current UK-centric approach to standards, ensuring more involvement from a wider range of individuals with appropriate expertise on a global portfolio of consistent standards responding to genuine, substantive market risks and expectations. While there is a distinction between RICS' recognised role as a self-regulating body in the UK and the enforcement of our standards in other markets, in the latter we aim for our standards and the way they are monitored and enforced to be consistent while attuned, where appropriate, to regional norms or national requirements.

When will the digital platform be operational?

We are aiming to pilot digital communities this summer (2019) which will reflect the activities of our standard setting work. This will be managed through an app-based tool, enabling much more

interaction between the profession, RICS and the market. The new model will also enable better collaboration with the regional structure of RICS.

How can I contribute / get involved?

We are actively looking for members to become involved in generating content through the digital community. We will be piloting several digital communities (which will be topic based) throughout the summer and will inform the profession shortly on the communities which we will establish as part of the pilot and how to sign up.

I have a question on the Standards Transformation project, where do I send it?

Please send any questions to standards@rics.org and we will answer them as soon as possible.